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## Zero Carbon Long-term Strategy of the Church in Northern Germany (Nordkirche)

### About Nordkirche - The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Northern Germany

- one of several ev.-Luth. Churches (Landeskirchen) in Germany, encompasses northern and eastern coastal regions: Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Hamburg (about 10% of German territory). Roughly one third of population lives in the Hamburg metropolitan region.
- 2.25 Mio church members (about 1/3 of population), more than 80.000 volunteers engaged, owns about 8.000 buildings and 2.4% of arable land (58.000 hectares) and particularly in the east large forest areas.
- democratic and federal structure: Congregation of 13 church districts, founded in 2012 by merger of formerly two “Landeskirchen”. Decision making by Congregational and regional legislative and governing bodies with independent decision powers, own administrative offices and a total of 1000 parishes. The legislative bodies (synod of the Landeskirche and synods of the church districts) constituted of roughly 40% laity / ordinary church members,
- Ownership of local buildings lays with the parishes (average 2,250 church members, 1 pastor per parish), therefore investment decisions are taken by the parishes’ governing boards (mostly Laymen), church district administration acts as controlling body – also for building activities. Problem in the past: most district administrations have had little expertise, particularly with regard to energy efficiency and supply in buildings. Energy efficiency investments in parishes completely depended on local initiative.

### The Climate Protection Law of the Church in Northern Germany (of 2015)

- stipulates the obligation to reduce carbon emissions to zero until 2050. Three steps: reduce consumption needs, substitute remainder by renewable sources, compensate for inevitable emissions. Three fields of action:
  - BUILDINGS: accounts for 70% of CO2 emissions, MEASURES: refurbishment of houses, improve energy efficiency of heating systems, switch to renewable energy sources, use efficient appliances and lighting equipment

- TRANSPORT. MEASURES: encourage use of car pooling, public transport and bicycle use, avoid transport needs (video conferences),
- PROCUREMENT is to consider ecological and social effects of production processes, MEASURES: reduce consumption, preferably purchase certified products
- For the coming ten years (i.e. from 2016 until 2025), it obliges the regional districts and the administration of the confederation to reserve 0.8 percent of the annual budget derived from tax related income (excluding rents or lease) for climate protection investments incl. spending for personnel.
- several concrete measures are spelled out to the administrations:
  - to introduce energy management system and build up energy consumption database
  - to support parishes by technical advise
  - to build up internet based common procurement platform for certified products
  - to offer training for employees and laymen
  - to establish climate change management at confederal level in support of activities at church districts
  - to survey the complete building stock (each church district) and draw up a plan to future needs and future income as well as maintenance costs.
  - to revise ordinances to reflect climate protection goal (e.g. on procurement, on travel cost reimbursement)

### **Driving forces of legislation process**

1. PRO ENVIRONMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STANCE OF THE CHURCH and PREVIOUS POSITIVE EXPERIENCE WITH INDIVIDUAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS: Already since the 1970s, environmental protection, social justice, international justice had been made issues in the debates among church members and subject to numerous projects of the church, reflecting public debates and the development of the environmental movement to become an important political interest in Germany. Several initiatives on church district level had been started, to implement energy and environmental management processes, to establish an emission reduction fund. The federal church carried out an awareness campaign. Individual parishes decided to refurbish their buildings or use renewable sources for heating.
2. CONCEPTUAL BASIS FOR ZERO EMISSION STRATEGY: from 2010 to 2012, the North Church had prepared a climate protection concept, an in-depth analysis. It served as the basis for formulating the zero emission goal. For the first time energy

consumption had been analyzed in a systematic manner for the whole church. The concept spelled out an action plan with roughly 45 very concrete measures and also assessed the mid-term financial gains that may be derived from the investments. The concept's results substantially promoted debate within the various church bodies and its legislative body, the synod.

3. **FEDERAL FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE (NKI):** In 2008 the federal government of Germany laid out the National Climate Initiative, which includes a program to fund community governments and also the church. The long-term aim of the program is to instigate administrative change and the integration of climate change issues in decision processes, to support communities and churches to take a lead and serve as a model for others. As part of this program, climate protection concepts and management are supported: in a two-steps procedure it provides 65% funding, first, for drawing up climate protection concepts and, second, funds staff for professional climate change management for three years on the condition that the local community or church officially states its support for the sketched action plan. Since there is a three year time limit to be adhered to from step one to step two, legislation process in the North Church was sped up.
4. **DEBATE ON BUILDING MANAGEMENT WAS ALREADY ONGOING:** due to continuous loss of members, decreasing income from taxes and rising costs of maintenance for an aging building stock, already well before 2015 debates had started on how to deal with the situation. Energy efficiency aspects as a new criterion for future planning had been introduced in the debate. The Climate Change Law provided the opportunity to include legislation on this matter and to oblige church districts to systematically analyze their building stock also with respect to energy efficiency.
5. **ORDINANCES WERE IN NEED FOR REVISION AFTER MERGER TO FORM NORDKIRCHE.** The compilation of administrative ordinances originating from before the merger of the churches in 2012 must be reviewed and revised. This is a window of opportunity to introduce new principles and approaches to administrative processes. Some of these principles therefore made its way into the Climate Protection Law.

#### **Actions taken by Mid-2018 (incomplete)**

- Climate change office of the North German Church (Klimaschutzbüro der Nordkirche) was established (Oct 2016), staff: three, advises church administrations and parishes on energy efficiency options in buildings and transport, promotes networking and exchange internally within Church and externally with local and regional community climate change management officials, with German churches.
- information materials on energy efficiency options for parishes compiled
- networking and exchange among church districts initiated (meetings, mailing list,
- awareness raising and information campaign

#### **ZERO Emission Strategy of the North Church**

- BUILDING EFFICIENCY: 11 of the 13 church districts have established new positions in their administrations, to administer energy management systems or to promote climate protection in the church districts and to advise parishes in energy efficiency. This process is ongoing.
- concepts for training courses for parish employees and volunteers on the governing boards on energy efficiency measures / renewable energy are being developed and carried out.
- TRANSPORT: advise on revising ordinances, supportive structures to promote electric vehicle infrastructure, provide tools to enable and promote car-sharing, support cycling to work by bonuses for employees.
- PROCUREMENT: Certification scheme for parishes put out and promoted. New ordinance for procurement, online purchase platform will be established by 2019. This will provide also rural parishes with easy access to products which meet the stipulated environmental and social criteria, at the same time reduce administrative costs of accounting.

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