



Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe

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## Oikosnet Europe News

 May 2026

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### Welcome Message



Dear Members and Friends of Oikosnet Europe

Christ is Risen – Christos Anesti!

A new Resurrection time has started by Easter and the world needs for this new beginning, new inspirations.

We hope that our newsletter will give you some motivations for you and your work.

The new board of OE is doing its best to prepare the next General Assembly in Vilnius/Lithuania and we need your suggestions and ideas. Please, give us your feedback!

We all are looking forward for this and of course to welcome you in our projects and our GA in September.

Katerina Karkala-Zorba, President of Oikosnet Europe

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## NO PANIC:

learning resistance in a world at risk

📍 Agape Centre, Italy 📅 17 24-29 May 2026



Oikosnet's European Youth Dialogue this year is high in the 🇮🇹 Italian Alps at the **Agape Centre**.

Europe's young generation faces uncertainty and the feeling that what's happening in the world at the moment is worrying. The old consensus – to respect national integrity and borders, to foster economic exchange and integration, to stick to the rule of law and democracy - has changed.

The program invites young adults to explore possibilities for hope and pathways for a socio-ecological transformation. There will be creative workshops, mountain hikes, meals together and evening activities. For further information, please contact Hannah Schilling [schilling@eaberlin.de](mailto:schilling@eaberlin.de).

*image: Oikosnet Youth Dialogue 2024 in Potsdam & Berlin, Germany*

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## GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2026

 Vilnius, Lithuania

 17 16-20 September

Father Gintaras Sungaila and Father Georgy of the Orthodox Academy of Lithuania will welcome us to Vilnius for our annual gathering.

They will introduce us to Vilnius and lead part of the programme on faith, identity & responsibility in times of global tension: Christians in the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe.

The rest of the programme will respond to what Oikosnet members suggest. If you have not already sent us your ideas, **please do so** by 11 May. We have received some excellent suggestions which are being included in the schedule for our days together.

We will share current concerns, worship together, explore potential exchanges and projects, and enjoy each other's company.



Visit us at the Oikosnet website

## WHAT'S ON?

### **Learning Bibliolog in an Intercultural Context** in English language **8 to 12 June 2026 at Christian Jensen Kolleg Breklum Germany**

The Bibliolog takes people quickly and at the same time deeply into a biblical text from the perspective of biblical figures. In a biblical story, the thoughts 'between the lines' come to the fore – that is, what the characters might have thought, hoped or felt at the time – or what we think and feel today when we put ourselves in the characters' shoes.

The intercultural Bibliolog training offers interested people from different countries and cultural backgrounds the opportunity to learn the basic steps of Bibliolog in English. Through intercultural exchange, participants learn how to practise Bibliolog in their contexts so that people can discover biblical texts interactively and in a personally meaningful way in their context. This approach is examined from a hermeneutical perspective, taking into account the understanding of the text, one's own understanding of one's role, and the significance of the subject in the interpretation of the Bible. Participation costs: 599 € in a single room with meals. Discounts are available on request.

Registration until 11.05.2026 [info@christianjensenkolleg.de](mailto:info@christianjensenkolleg.de)

### **4th European Conference of Churches in rural areas 11 – 13th of November 2026 in Christian Jensen Kolleg Breklum Germany**

**"Living together.** How can churches contribute to building social sustainability?"

Across Europe's rural regions, churches stand at the heart of community life-places where people gather, support one another, and seek hope for the future. Many individuals in rural communities are often acutely aware of their interdependence with one another, with all creation and with God. With true connection and understanding, strong relationships can be built in which each individual's circumstances and gifts contribute to the whole. Let us come together and share with one another experiences of living and serving in rural areas so that we might gain a broader understanding of both the challenges and unique possibilities in our local contexts. Through keynotes, workshops, discussions and simply gathering, we are invited to learn together, celebrate together, eat together and be renewed with new energy. Participation costs: 280 € in a single room with meals. Discounts are available on request. Registration mail to [info@christianjensenkolleg.de](mailto:info@christianjensenkolleg.de) An invitation with details of the programme will follow shortly.

### **Northern European Conference on Counselling, Therapy and Theology 6–9 January 2027 in Sankelmark Germany**

#### **Seeing the Invisible**

#### **Hope as a driving force between uncertainty and drive**

To shape our future in the face of global crises, we need perspectives that are stronger than helplessness and uncertainty. What if our thinking were not dominated by fear and pessimism, but by trust, courage and a hope that enables us to overcome crises? Hope represents the ability to make effective decisions amidst global and individual uncertainties. Medicine and psychology show that positive expectations for the future influence therapeutic success, modulate stress regulation and promote resilience. What mechanisms are at work – and how can therapeutic and counselling practice make use of this knowledge?

The 54th Northern European Conference offers reflection and inspiration for participants' own professional work through lectures from theological, psychological

and sociological perspectives, as well as through practical workshops.

The conference is aimed at psychotherapists, pastoral carers, pastoral psychologists, supervisors and counsellors. The conference languages are English and German.

Registration Katy Johannsen, phone.: +49 4630 55155 mail:

[k.johannsen@sankelmark.de](mailto:k.johannsen@sankelmark.de)

Akademie Sankelmark, Akademieweg 6, 24988 Oeversee, GERMANY

**Walking a different way:** A weekend of reflection on our lives, challenges and hopes through the lens of Rene Girard. **12th–14th June Ballycastle Centre**, Corrymeela Community, N Ireland.

Over the years the work of Rene Girard on violence, our mimetic rivalry and our tendency to scapegoat others for our difficulties has shaped the life of many in Corrymeela. His work also allowed us to rethink our faith and take time to rediscover what it means to 'follow Jesus'.

The weekend is made up of group sessions exploring these issues as they affect our own lives and hopes. It is a chance both to revisit some of that learning and/or to discover it for the first time, by thinking about the real challenges in our lives and by asking questions together and exploring some of Girard's thinking about how we might find ways to freedom. The weekend will be led by Duncan Morrow, You do not need any prior knowledge to be part of it, only curiosity. **To learn more: contact [alastairkilgore@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alastairkilgore@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Practising Hope at Iona Abbey, Scotland, 20-26 June** with the Iona Community.

This week will invite us to explore the meaning and practice of hope from multiple dimensions—spiritual, theological, relational, and communal. Set within the rhythms of community life at Iona Abbey, the week offers a space for reflection, worship, and shared conversation rooted in the Iona Community's commitment to justice, peace, and the renewal of all creation. Through prayer, group dialogue, and intentional community living, we will engage with hope not as a vague ideal, but as a lived and transformative force in our lives and in the world. With Jane Hodges and Catriona Robertson. **[More information and booking.](#)**

The ecumenical **Centro Los Rubios** near Malaga in 🇪🇸 Spain opens its doors for retreats, groups, conferences and also for holidays in its quiet courtyard near the sea.



Oikosnet Europe is proud of its members, and the network is more meaningful if we are familiar with each other's work and activities.

One easy way to share our experiences is through social media. Kjell is responsible for managing these pages. He would like to remind you of our [Facebook](#) page and our [Instagram](#) account.

Do you have any information/thoughts to share with us? Please mail Kjell! And we'd love to see your likes and sharing stuff!

## Member Profile

# Evangelische Akademie Baden



### **Where are you based?**

Our offices are in Karlsruhe, Germany. At the same time, we understand ourselves as a mobile academy: much of our work takes place in different locations, in partnerships, public settings and local contexts. Compared with some other German academies, we are a relatively small team.

### **What do you do? Who are your people?**

We work across theology, ethics and public life. Our fields include religious worldviews, digital ethics, the world of work, agriculture, spirituality, music, peace and theology. We also run a youth academy with a particular focus on queer issues, pastoral care and support.

Alongside lectures, conferences and public debate formats, we are involved in mediation and consultation for NGOs, companies, political actors and civil society initiatives. Because Karlsruhe is an important legal and political location, legal and constitutional questions are also part of our context.... and we run many really big events.



### **Do you have a particular focus for this year?**

This year, we are focusing especially on two major themes: democracy and how it can be protected, and AI as a profound global transformation. In the field of democracy, this includes work on right-wing Christianity, public discussion formats and cultural, theater & music events. In the field of AI, we are particularly interested in its ethical, political, theological and social implications.

### **Do you have a spotlight event in 2026?**

One major focus in 2026 is a conference on war and peace in the age of digital escalation. It will address drones and autonomous weapons, algorithmic disinformation, and the influence of bot networks on political culture and democratic processes.

### **What are your main concerns/challenges right now?**

Like many church-related institutions, we are facing financial pressure and the need to work with fewer resources. At the same time, we are moving into closer cooperation with the field of adult education. We see this not only as a structural challenge, but also as an opportunity: it can strengthen our public profile, create

synergies and open new forms of collaboration.

**📰 Do you have a publication /image /article /video /graphic to share?**

Yes — our [website](#) offers a good overview of our work, current themes and public events. It is the best place to start if you would like to get a sense of our profile and activities.

**📌 Tell us about one project or line of work that is important at this time.**

One of our most important lines of work at the moment is the societal, ethical and theological interpretation of AI. In our view, the significance of AI is still widely misunderstood: sometimes exaggerated in spectacular ways, but often underestimated in its real structural consequences.

For us, large language models are not the endpoint, but an early sign of a much broader transformation. AI is already reshaping communication, knowledge, education, labour, political discourse, care, theology and public culture. This is why we see it not as a niche topic, but as one of the central civilisational questions of our time.



**★ What do you value about being part of Oikosnet?**

We value Oikosnet as a space of international relationships, exchange of ideas and spiritual inspiration.

After 13 years in the network, it is exciting to see its development from an annual gathering into a more visible and genuinely European platform for discourse, education and theology. For us, this is especially important at a time when theological reflection and public debate need stronger transnational spaces of exchange and discernment.

**🎯 What would you like Oikosnet to do at the next GA?**

We would like the next GA to engage more deliberately with a small number of urgent common themes:

- new forms of imperial power in the 21st century
- Ukraine and the reconfiguration of the global order
- digital literacy as a basic precondition for theological judgement, political agency and responsible public action

Beyond this, we would like Oikosnet to become a stronger European space for discourse, education and theological discernment — one that not only convenes people, but also fosters sustained reflection, intellectual exchange and common initiatives in public theology.

*Thank you Gérot Meier of Evangelische Akademie Baden for being the first Oikosnet Member to be profiled here. Would you like to be the next? [Contact us](#)*

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**European-Arab Civil Dialogue on Religion and Society**



Veronika Matějková, Oikosnet Europe's Vice-President, has written about her experiences in Cairo, Egypt, as part of Oikosnet's [European-Arab Civil Dialogue](#).

“At a time when our society is, on the one hand, frightened by the prospect of crowds of immigrants of different faiths arriving, and at the same time when people are moving to different parts of the world for work, love or other reasons, it may happen that our neighbour, (someone who is "close" to us) may be someone with a different worldview than ours ...”

Read the full article from [the link on this page](#) of the Oikosnet website.

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Not too little.

Not too much.

Just right.

## A Swedish way of life!

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Alf Linderman, former director of Sigtuna, writes ...

“One magazine in Sweden, Språktidningen, every year asks a representative sample of the Swedish population about what they think is the best Swedish word.

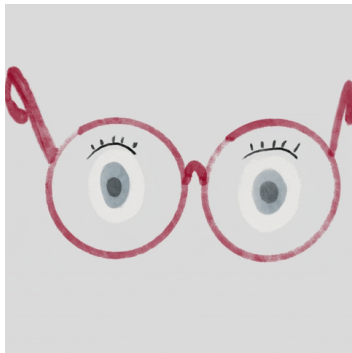
They did so also early in 2026. With a great margin, the most popular Swedish word was “lagom”.

It means not too much, not too little, but just right.

To my knowledge, there is no single word with this meaning in any other language. This word in a sense also represents the Swedish mentality, not too little, not too much, but just right.

Thus, the next time you meet a group of people from Sweden, remember to be “lagom” to fit in!”

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## THANK YOU FOR READING!

We hope you enjoyed this new-style newsletter.

We welcome your feedback and ideas on all we do. Let us know:

- ➔ What was good?
- ➔ What could be better?

To share your news, images and upcoming events; please contact us at [office@oikosnet.eu](mailto:office@oikosnet.eu).

**!!** Our next newsletter is in August. Make sure you contact us before 15 July.





*image: Oikosnet Board 2026*

## Keep in touch

Like and share our social media posts. We will follow you back.



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