**With faith and hope for environmental protection at the foot of Vesuvius**

*At the invitation of the European Federation of Christian Teachers (SIESC), we were able to attend the organisation's annual conference for the third time in July 2025, which this time took place in Naples. The organisation is committed to ecumenism, so we were able to represent the Protestant European School Association (IV), the author of these lines as a member of the IV Presidium, and Petra Horváth from the Péterfy School in Győr, as representatives of the Protestant Church in Hungary. Forty-three teachers from ten European countries attended the lectures and then exchanged their experiences on the topic of ‘Building the future: School as a path to gentle ecological change’.*

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the conference on one of the most important global issues, the climate crisis, took place in Naples, where the tragedy of Pompeii occurred in 79 AD. Thanks to our brothers in Naples, we were able to visit the destroyed city, where archaeological excavations are still taking place today.

Climate protection also receives special attention in educational work, which is why all three speakers addressed the tasks of local communities and the importance of grassroots initiatives. We heard three valuable presentations on this topic.

**Mauro Bossi** studied theology in Paris and Rome. Since 2018, he has been a member of the editorial board of the Italian magazine Aggiornamento (Renewal). In 2023, he was appointed Ecological Delegate of the Euro-Mediterranean Province of the Society of Jesus. He gave a lecture on the general and geopolitical aspects of the ecological transition. He emphasised ‘bottom-up’ multilateralism – that is, comprehensive cooperation between local authorities, businesses, civil society organisations and academia.

"Are climate negotiations also an opportunity to restore dialogue between nations in a fair and inclusive manner? My answer is that we have no other choice if we want to protect the climate and global commons and thus secure a livable future for the people who come after us. However, tackling the climate crisis is not only a necessity, but also an opportunity to strengthen a more democratic multilateral system and prevent conflicts. In my opinion, we should not miss this opportunity," he concluded his lecture.

**Gael Giraud** taught political economy at Georgetown University in Washington and founded and directed the Environmental Justice Programme. He is a senior economist at Sorbonne University and the French Development Agency. In his lecture, he drew attention to the multi-layered ecological crisis and the role of artificial intelligence by presenting dramatic data. He described the common goods as a horizon of hope.

"We cannot overcome the polycrisis with the same recipes that caused it: the endless pursuit of material growth, the illusion of omnipotent technology, or the exploitation of resources as if they were infinite. We must reintroduce collective, democratic regulation and shared ownership. The climate needs solidarity among people to reduce emissions, artificial intelligence requires wise use, and the common goods offer us a framework to organise this solidarity and wisdom. This will be the challenge of the coming decades: learning to build community on a global scale without denying the diversity of local contexts," he concluded.

Professor **M. Carmela Agodi**, a sociologist at the University of Naples Federico II, spoke about the anthropological and sociological consequences of ecological change. She based her findings on the results of a long-term study in Italy. She identified the respondents as pragmatic, sceptical and solidaristic groups. She emphasised that institutional actors must work with communities, recognise their diverse perspectives and create the conditions for their meaningful engagement in order to take effective climate action. Ultimately, the energy transition is not only a technological challenge, but also a socio-political transformation. Educators and decision-makers must pay attention to who is involved in the transformation, under what conditions, with what ideas and with what vision. Only when this complexity is recognised, can the energy transition be fair and lasting – in other words, sustainable.

Christian teachers attach great importance to protecting young people from a bleak vision of the future while encouraging their students to take responsibility and action. It was wonderful to spend these days together and to exchange practical examples from school on how we can bring our students closer to creation and what everyone can do in their micro-environment to bring about change in many areas of climate and environmental protection.

In addition to the intensive work, there was also time for spiritual rest and relaxation. We lived and worked in a historic building of a St. Vincent de Paul monastery. Together with the sisters, we attended morning Mass. The hospitality of the sisters, the local specialities and the sights of the historic town enriched us with unforgettable experiences. At the end of the meeting, our hosts took us to the island of Capri, where we were able to admire one of the wonders of creation.

The SIESC board has asked us to organise next year's meeting in Győr, Hungary, and we are of course happy to accept this invitation.

**Judit Hallgatóné Hajnal**