

CCME Press Release

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Migrants' Rights Central for Future Migration Policy in Europe – General Assembly of Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe formulates churches' responses to challenges of international migration

Delegates from Churches and Christian agencies across Europe met in London 27-31 October 2005 for the 16th General Assembly of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). The Assembly decided upon the work programme for the coming years in light of the conference "Global Governance of international migration" organised by CCME and the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice in the UK (CCRJ). The Assembly also decided on the next steps in the process of the merger of CCME and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and elected a new Executive Committee.

Discussions on the CCME work programme were dominated by the debate on global governance of migration which a CCME and CCRJ sponsored conference had addressed on 28 October at London City Hall. Dr Khalid Koser from the Global Commission on International Migration informed the conference on the conclusions of the Global Commission published this month. Members of the European Parliament, Mrs Jean Lambert and Baroness Sarah Ludford addressed the conference. The World Council of Churches and two of CCME's interregional partners from the Middle East and Africa contributed to the debate. The work programme adopted by the assembly underlines the need for European churches to advocate for the human rights of labour migrants as well as undocumented migrants and migrants facing new forms of slavery. Diversity and anti-discrimination should be at the heart of policies for integration.

Shocked about the death of 11 migrants at a detention center at Amsterdam Schiphol airport, the assembly voted on a resolution expressing concern about life-threatening detention of migrants across Europe.

The Assembly welcomed the progress in the process of integration with the Conference of European Churches (CEC). In the presence of the President of CEC, Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, and CEC General Secretary, Rev. Keith Clements, the Assembly agreed on the integration of CCME and CEC and decided on the further steps needed to finalise the process. It affirmed that this integration provided the chance "to better meet the challenges of migration to societies, political institutions and churches".

The Assembly welcomed the Ecumenical Council of Slovakia as a new member. A new Executive Committee was elected with Rev Arlington Trotman from the United Kingdom serving as moderator. Upon his election, he stated: "migrants and minority ethnic people are in current debates often only seen as a labour force commodity, a burden, or even as a threat. Churches are more than ever called to stand up for the dignity and equality of all people created in the image of God. I am happy that here in London we have taken important steps to make this commitment visible and effective on European level."

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The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant

Churches and Councils of Churches as well as church-related agencies across Europe. CCME formally cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.