

CCME' s General Assembly meets every three years to review and further develop CCME' s programme of action. Between the General Assemblies the Executive Committee functions as the governing body. It is mandated to establish working groups, ad hoc groups or task forces to cover the main areas of the CCME work programme.

Members of the CCME Executive Committee

Moderator: Rev. Arlington Trotman, United Kingdom
Vice-Moderators: Dr Antonios Papantoniou, Greece
Ms Franca di Lecce, Italy
Treasurer: Mr. Michael Bubik, Austria
Members: Mr. Joel Le Billan, France
Ms Kristina Hellqvist, Sweden
Ms Katharina Wegener, Germany

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Ms. Elena Timofticiuc, Romania

Representative of the Conference of European Churches:
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Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

„CCME is an ecumenical organisation that serves the churches in their commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being. CCME aims at promoting an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority groups.“ (CCME mission statement)

Migration comprises an integral part of Europe's history and an important dimension of its current reality. European citizens continue to emigrate from or move within Europe, while migrants and refugees from other parts of the world arrive to build new lives in a European home. Although there are challenges associated with the settlement of newcomers and longer-term residents in Europe, such individuals widely contribute to Europe's economic well-being and serve to further enrich its diverse cultures.

Europe's tradition of protecting human rights, integrating migrants and refugees and cherishing cultural diversity, however, is currently under strain. By vocation, churches are well positioned to promote mutual understanding and acceptance between various communities and to play an active part in the building of a just society of cultural, racial and religious diversity.

The Treaty of Amsterdam, which came into force in 1999, has conferred considerable powers on the European Union (EU) to act on immigration and related issues of integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the EU has been given the competence to take measures against discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin and religion. This development demands an even closer co-operation of churches not only in the old and new member states of the European Union but also in the countries in the neighbourhood of the enlarged EU.

Founded in 1964, the **Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)** is an organisation of churches and ecumenical councils from currently eighteen European countries.

Since the General Assembly of CCME in October 1999 in Järvenpää/Finland the mandate of CCME has been expanded to cover the whole area of migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and racism and xenophobia. CCME's work on uprooted people is part of the cooperation with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches

CCME provides a space for churches and Christian agencies to share their experiences in the ministry among migrants, refugees, and minority ethnic persons. CCME is part of a wider ecumenical network of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches. It participates in a network of NGOs throughout Europe and has launched the Migration News Sheet and the Migration Policy Group.

CCME maintains regular contacts with the European Commission, the European Parliament and Council of the European Union. CCME also holds official observer status with the Council of Europe (Strasbourg/F) and observes the Migration Committee of the Council of Ministers. This enables CCME to monitor European policy-making in the migration, integration and asylum spheres and to present the concerns of the churches to the relevant institutions.

CCME promotes the adoption and implementation of international standards such as the European Social Charter, the European Convention on the Protection of the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, and the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. CCME has also made specific proposals for the adoption of a European immigration policy and for equal treatment of European citizens and third-country nationals.

Mandate of the Commission

- The Commission monitors European policy developments in the areas of migration, asylum, integration and anti discrimination and informs churches on these developments.
- The Commission provides a platform of exchange for its members, members of the World Council of Churches (in Europe) as well as of the Conference of European Churches and other ecumenical or church bodies working in the same field.

- The Commission monitors and co-ordinates efforts and initiatives undertaken by churches and other bodies in this field and formulates common European ecumenical advocacy positions on these issues.
- It promotes awareness-raising on issues of racism and xenophobia within the churches and in society; it monitors the situation of migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people at local, national and international levels.
- The Commission represents its members towards the European institutions such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, and at meetings and conferences on relevant issues. It contacts and co-operates with public authorities, international organisations, trade unions, employers' associations and associations of migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people.
- It organises consultations, seminars and long-term projects encouraging co-operation between members and non-member churches and between churches and other bodies; it identifies, in consultation with churches involved, projects and programmes including training and capacity building, and assists churches to implement them or to carry them out themselves.

Work priorities for the years 2005-2008 for CCME are:

- Policies ensuring the respect of human rights of persons without valid residence permit during a removal procedure, and developing alternatives to forced removal.
- Rights-based policy approaches to labour migration, addressing rights both during the migration process and after arrival.
- Policies to maintain and strengthen an accessible and fair system of asylum and to open up additional forms of protection for refugees and displaced persons.
- Policies to combat new forms of slavery, in particular trafficking in human beings, and to facilitate safe migration.
- Policies facilitating integration: with respect for diversity and a focus on the fair treatment of migrant residents, including anti-discrimination policies.