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International day of Human Rights: Churches and MEPs underline need for uniting forces against trafficking in women

Launch of results of networking project signals boost to cooperation between churches and public authorities

On the occasion of the International day of Human Rights, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and Caritas Europa in cooperation with three prominent members of the European Parliament (MEPs) presented the brochure

"Action and Networking against trafficking in women" in the European Parliament in Brussels. The brochure contains results of the project "Christian Action and Networking against trafficking in Women" (CAT). CCME and Caritas underlined that trafficking in Human Beings is one of the most dramatic form of Human Rights violation of our days and needs a coordinate response of all actors.

The organisations participating in the project in the brochure give practical hints for awarenessraising and social intervention on:

- General suggestions for practical work
- Standards of assistance to trafficked persons
- Cooperation with authorities
- Prevention of trafficking
- Work as churches/within churches

The brochure is targeted at staff and volunteers of Churches, NGOs and public services. It seeks to enable interested organisations and persons to become practically involved in concrete work to assist trafficked persons. The suggestions for practical work underline the importance of a good cooperation between public authorities and other important actors like churches and church-related services.

Baroness Sarah Ludford, hosting MEP, commented: "The trafficking of so many women and children is a human rights abuse that shames us all. This very welcome guide reminds us we are not helpless: practical steps like promoting gender equality, opening up legal migration opportunities and involving NGOs can make a difference". MEP Marianne Eriksson in her contribution at the launch underlined the need to focus on the "demand" side of trafficking, i.e. those men buying the "services" of women trafficked into prostitution.

Doris Peschke, General Secretary of CCME said: "Of particular importance throughout this past year has been the development of increased cooperation between organisations assisting trafficked women and public authorities This cooperation is regarded as vital by our organisations, as we share the common conviction that combating the crime of trafficking requires coordinated and cooperative responses". MEP Anna Terron i Cusi underlined the importance of the "Brussels declaration" in this context.

Martina Liebsch, Chairperson of Caritas Europa's migration commission, emphasised the need for common standards to assist and protect trafficked women effectively: "We need standards for assistance to trafficked women, to ensure that trafficked women get the adequate help, and to understand each others' work across borders".

CCME and Caritas also briefly introduced the future work in phase II of the CAT project, in which the cross-sectional cooperation will be developed further and extended to new partners.

Phase II of the project is made possible through financial support by the European Commission and the World Council of Churches.

For further information please contact Torsten Moritz at CCME, Tel. + 32 2 234 68 00 or visit <http://www.coatnet.org/en/6389.html> involved: "traffickers, women and clients!".

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The views expressed and information provided by the project and the partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the European Commission or the World Council of Churches and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission or the World Council of Churches.

