

CCME Work Programme 2006-2008¹

Mission

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.

Objective

CCME aims at promoting an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority groups.

Global context

1. CCME is dealing with issues, which are of great concern to societies and churches in Europe. They are high on the political agenda of countries all across Europe. Churches in Europe and worldwide share a commitment to stand with migrants and refugees, as has been emphasized at the General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches CEC in 2003 and in the World Council of Churches WCC Central Committee statement on Migration in 2005. While asylum, immigration and anti-discrimination were topics on the national political agenda in the past; these issues have come under the competence of the European Union since 1999.
2. In May 2004, the European Union was joined by ten countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Further enlargements in South East Europe are on the agenda from 2007 onwards. As a consequence, more and more countries in Europe have to incorporate the *acquis communautaires* into their legislation on asylum and migration.
3. Migration is widely regarded as a phenomenon of people seeking refuge for various reasons. While the number of persons "of concern" to UNHCR has decreased over the last years, new patterns of persons seeking refuge emerge. More and more persons are internally displaced without being formally recognised as refugees. Many of them face situations in which they can neither move back to where they came from nor find durable protection in the place they have fled to.
4. The securitisation of migration policies and the logic of dissuasion have lead to a global trend of detaining persons or keeping them in geographic isolation - irrespective of their possible vulnerabilities and future perspectives. This "warehousing" of persons is a growing global trend leaving millions of persons who have sought refuge or a better life in deplorable conditions.
5. While the numbers of refugees decrease, migration is affecting more and more people. The Global Commission on International Migration in its report of October

¹ This work programme shall be the basis for the work of CCME as an independent organisation as well as for a Commission of CEC, at the time this is achieved as a result of the CEC-CCME integration.

2005 assumed that around 200 million people worldwide are migrants. Economic globalisation and its consequences in many countries of the South lead to migration to other regions. However, the actual percentage of migrants among the population on a global level is relatively stable.

6. While the zero migration policies of countries of the North are gradually abolished, the official policies to organise migration are still dominated by logic of containment - limiting migration to a few selected "highly skilled" migrants. The migration of most migrants is therefore taking place through irregular channels, i.e. associated with very dangerous and precarious circumstances. The tragic deaths of hundreds of migrants at the EU's external borders are one of the most dramatic consequences of these policies.
7. As a result of improved technical means to control the movement of people across border, smuggling of migrants has become an even more lucrative business for organised crime. The need to resort to smugglers and organised criminals lead many migrants into indebtedness and pave the preconditions for new forms of slavery such as trafficking in human beings.
8. EU asylum and migration policies are increasingly influencing other EU policy areas such as development or external relations. EU migration policies therefore directly or indirectly have an impact upon countries worldwide. Churches in their worldwide community are called to carefully monitor these developments and are in a unique position to develop common responses.
9. Discrimination on racial or ethnic basis remains a global concern: while a number of countries have undertaken efforts to combat racial discrimination, phenomena of racial hatred are widespread along with new patterns such as islamophobic tendencies; old forms of discrimination such as anti-semitism and the discrimination of Roma have gained new visibility.

Guiding principles

1. The activities of CCME are guided by the calling to be living witness of the Christian faith and ministry among those uprooted - in a situation characterized by a secularizing society on the one hand, and increasing concern on migration issues on the other hand. CCME's activities are therefore guided by the search for the specific contribution of churches on the one hand and the search for sustainable partnerships with other actors on the other.
2. Given the limitations of both financial and personal resources, there is a need for a clear prioritization of activities. CCME will seek to rather limit activities to a number of strategic areas, in which it engages with high quality contributions and potential for impact, rather than trying to address every issue of potential relevance. All potential activities of CCME will therefore need to be evaluated against their potential
 - to make a specific contribution of churches to a wider debate and serve the churches' witness in the area of migration on a global level;
 - to achieve complementarities and synergy, or to have specific added value in relation to activities of other actors;
 - to give a voice to those who would otherwise be voiceless;
 - to have a clear impact among churches or in voicing the churches' concerns towards policies on the national level;
 - to provide specific added value by addressing an issue on a European level.

I. Activities to be continued:

Churches: Communication and Information

1. CCME will inform Churches in Europe on relevant political developments on migration, asylum and anti-discrimination in Europe. CCME will in particular inform the Churches about the further process of harmonisation of migration/asylum legislation in the EU, activities of the Committee on Migration and Demography of the Council of Europe as well as activities of UNHCR and the Global Commission on International Migration which are of relevance to Europe.
2. CCME will provide information on these relevant developments to churches in a form, which underlines the relevance for national policies and outlines how churches can in their countries respond to these developments and engage with refugees and migrants and in advocacy for migrants and refugees. For this purpose new working methods such as trainings should be explored.
3. Jointly with the Church and Society Commission of CEC, CCME will monitor the developments of the integration of Europe/EU enlargement and seek ways to inform churches in the new member states of the EU and neighbouring countries on the challenges in the area of migration and asylum arising from it.
4. Visits to churches and other forms of direct communication (attendance of seminars, presentations) will be the privileged form of directly linking members to the work of CCME. Preferably they should have a synergetic effect e.g. combining presentations of the work of CCME with thematic events and networking possibilities.
5. The existing forms of written communications, such as biannual circular letters to members and ad hoc e-mail alerts on subjects of immediate concern, will be provided. The feasibility of establishing additional and in particular low-threshold instruments such as a monthly "this month at CCME" overview will be explored.
6. CCME will distribute its press releases in cooperation with the CEC Communication Office and regularly contribute to the CEC "MONITOR".
7. The website www.ccme.be will be launched and updated in a format ensuring accessibility and maintenance-friendliness for users and web-manager, despite limited resources. This website will complement the CEC website and shall be linked.

Partnerships and networking

1. CCME will maintain its role as a platform for exchange among churches about the successful schemes and future steps to develop ministry among migrants and minority ethnic people. Of continuing particular interest would be the question how the presence and participation of migrants changes the churches, and how traditional churches can together with newly arrived be church together.
2. Given the enlargement of the European Union and the integration process with CEC, CCME will seek to develop particular activities of outreach towards Churches in the Baltic region, Central and Eastern Europe as well as Southeast Europe
3. As an essential part of its mandate, CCME will continue to represent Churches through its memberships and partnerships in broader networks of relevance to CCME's mandate such as the NGO platform on migration and asylum, the European Network Against Racism, the European Platform for Foreigners' Right to Family Life, the European Platform for the Migrant Rights Convention. CCME will

represent the Conference of European Churches in the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

4. In the wider context of the NGO platform on migration and asylum², the Christian Group³ will remain the privileged partnership, in which CCME will engage in ecumenical advocacy towards the European institutions through e.g. development of common positions or joint activities.
5. CCME will maintain contact with other like-minded religious organisations on the issues of migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and will seek to explore the prospect of future interreligious cooperation.
6. The cooperation framework on the WCC's Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted people will remain the privileged platform for interregional cooperation on advocacy.
7. CCME will explore if support and interest in the CEC Church and Society Commission and the membership of APRODEV can be mobilised to jointly develop the potential of churches and their agencies to address the links between migration, globalisation and development.
8. CCME will continue to engage in the WCC sponsored initiatives to overcome racism and other activities addressing racial discrimination, in the context in which they are continued after the WCC General Assembly 2006.
9. In cooperation with CEC and European Roma organisations, CCME will seek to further develop the initiatives of churches to overcome discrimination against Roma in church and society.
10. A critical evaluation of the comparative merits of CCME engaging in broader partnerships with more widely known partners versus a stronger visibility of CCME will need to be undertaken.

Advocacy

1. Given the increasing importance of the policies on migration and asylum in the wider Europe, advocacy towards the institutions of the European Union will be the priority area of CCME's advocacy work.
2. Advocacy towards the Council of Europe will focus on those areas where the human-rights-oriented approach of the Council of Europe offers an added value for European debates.

3. Priorities:

Current debates suggest that CCME needs to engage in advocacy in the following five areas:

- Policies ensuring the respect of human rights of persons without valid residence permit during a removal procedure, and developing alternatives to forced removal.

² The NGO-Platform on Asylum and Migration comprises some +/- 20 NGOs and other organisations. It is hosted by the UNHCR EU office.

³ The following organisations are regularly participating in the Christian Group: CCME, Caritas Europa, CCME, COMECE – Council of Catholic Bishops Conferences of the EU, ICMC – International Catholic Migration Commission, Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe and the Quaker Council for European Affairs

- 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.
4. Thematic priorities for advocacy will regularly need to be reviewed according to the guiding principles outlined above.
 5. CCME will closely monitor the development of policies driving persons into irregular situations. CCME will also monitor development of existing structures of cooperation in the area of support to undocumented migrants and migrants in detention. CCME will seek to identify if additional European coordination needs to be provided in these areas and what resources could be mobilised to this effect.
 6. CCME will provide a platform of exchange for member organisations on the transposition of relevant EU legislation on migration, asylum and antidiscrimination into national law. It will facilitate exchange about the advocacy on transposition and where appropriate on possible legal challenges of transposition.
 7. In close cooperation with the World Council of Churches CCME will monitor the development relating to UN reform and around the report of GCIM published in October 2005. With WCC CCME will explore ways to proactively engage with the UN system in view of a multilateral system of migration governance.
 8. Where appropriate, CCME will advise the CEC Church and Society Commission on its work towards the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in areas related to migration.
 9. CCME will seek to establish a coherent framework of developing advocacy messages, which strike a balance between a sometimes confrontational impetus of "speaking truth to power" and targeting broader audiences with a message presenting "realistic alternatives".

II. CEC-CCME Integration

1. The integration with CEC constitutes a strategic chance but also substantial organisational challenge for CCME in the next years. CCME will strive to reach and engage more CEC member churches in the work of CCME in the coming years.
2. CCME will continue the active participation in the relevant working areas of CEC, particularly the Church and Society Commission, and will seek broader cooperation on issues of common concern, e.g. with Churches in Dialogue on "being church together – uniting in diversity".
3. CCME will participate in the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly planned for Sibiu/Romania in September 2007, particularly looking into the possibility of providing a forum with its ecumenical partner organisations on migration in Europe – depending on more clarity on the format and resources needed and available.

III. Project work

1. Currently the areas, among which focus work should be continued or started, are:
 - Membership development initiatives in view of a geographic extension of CCME's membership and a fuller participation of all denominational traditions and in view of facilitating capacity building among churches and Christian specialised agencies which are interested in addressing migration issues but currently lack the know how to address them.
 - Initiatives to address new forms of slavery in particular Trafficking in Human Beings, with a view to further sensitising churches for the problem and its changing patterns and enabling churches to respond to new forms of slavery - in prevention, support and advocacy. Under this heading the "**Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women** " (CAT) project will enter phase III looking at "Trafficking in human beings: new challenges - new partnerships".
 - Continuation of CCME's work promoting **refugee resettlement** as an additional provision of durable solutions for refugees as an option for European countries, with a view to addressing the protection needs of most vulnerable refugees, and underlining the responsibility of European countries for refugee protection.
 - Further studies and networking on the process of "**Being Church Together**" identifying and exchanging existing best practice e.g. in cultural mediation, in church legislation - through mapping them and offering training.
 - Exploration of the appropriate form of continuing the partnership with the Middle East Council of Churches on migration in the Mediterranean - **Amman Process** - with a view to address issues of common concern and enabling joint activities on these issues beyond the meetings of the process. This exploration should include reflections on the feasibility of broadening participation in the process both towards European countries outside the Mediterranean region and involving partners from the All African Conference of Churches.
 - Studying the feasibility of new forms of interregional partnerships, in particular in view of responding to requests from the AACC to cooperate on the issue of **monitoring of forced returns from Europe to Africa**. CCME will in particular examine if sufficient support can be mobilised to start a pilot project on trans-national cooperation monitoring forced removal by air from Europe.
 - CCME will continue its commitment to the ongoing partnerships of the projects on "**Promoting equality in diversity**" (coordinated by the ILO under the INTI Programme, until mid-2006) and "**POLITIS - Building Europe with new citizens?**" (coordinated by the University of Oldenburg under the 6th framework Programme on research, until mid-2007). CCME will further involve its membership in disseminating the results of both projects.
2. Activities mentioned above, as well as other new projects or work areas are depending on the following premises:
 - The work under core activities should be further enhanced and deepened by more intensive work on issues of particular relevance, e.g. in the form of project work, seminars, symposia, publications, participation in research etc.

- This deepening of particular areas of interest through focus work will need to be developed according to the work on the priorities identified under core activities.
3. However, all activities complementing thematic core activities will depend on two preconditions:
 - Active participation of member organisations (including CEC and WCC members), and
 - Availability of necessary resources (personnel and financial) by members, partners or third parties (e.g. EU Commission, foundations, Christian agencies).
 4. Activities under focus work will need to take full account of the sustainable development and management capacity of CCME as coordinating organisation. This will practically mean that only a limited number of priorities can be developed further in the area of focus work unless additional resources for the core infrastructure on which focus work activities are based.
 5. Based on thematic orientations of the General Assembly, the Ex Com will decide which priorities of focus work can at which point in time be developed further.
 6. The development of each possible focus activity should include the following elements of planning:
 - A thorough needs assessment,
 - Reflection on possible alternatives (e.g. other actors addressing issue, other working method),
 - Evaluation of the potential added value (for members and non-member churches in membership of CEC and WCC) of addressing a particular topic on European level and in the context of CCME,
 - Reflection on how CCME activities would link to similar activities undertaken by other actors in the same thematic area,
 - Potential impact on CCME advocacy work for refugees, migrant and minority people,
 - Basis of thematic and financial support, in particular among members and strategic partners (in particular WCC and CEC),
 - Support for project methodology among members,
 - Development of impact indicators,
 - Development of an evaluation methodology (preferably internal and external),

IV. Working mechanisms

1. Priority will be given to working mechanisms assuring a flexible, targeted and process-oriented response to the issues CCME is addressing. These can include trainings, task forces and one-off thematic ad hoc events.
2. Permanent working groups will be established if there is a long-term need for a permanent working mechanisms and continuing commitment and relevant expertise and participation can be assured.

3. When deciding on the establishment of working mechanism, the ExCom will identify mandate and working method of a specific working mechanisms as well as impact indicators for the work under this working mechanism. In the case of long-term mechanisms, the ExCom will assess the usefulness of a specific mechanism and decide upon its continuation based on these indicators
4. Apart from additional working mechanisms, ExCom and office staff will specifically devote time for a regular update and adaptation of this work programme as well as further strategic and detailed planning.

With this work programme, CCME seeks to contribute to the Christian witness in Europe seeking to develop a Europe welcoming the strangers and building inclusive societies: **“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).**

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.