

CCME PRESS RELEASE OF 28th September 2007

Refugee resettlement to Spain: churches and NGOs initiate debate which will “help government to take positive decision”

CCME debate encourages next steps as Spain emerges as resettlement country

Some forty representatives of national NGOs, churches, national and regional government as well as EU and international organisations met in Madrid on 27th September to discuss future perspectives of Spain as a country receiving refugees through resettlement. The Spanish NGO ACCEM co-organised the event as part of the project “Refugee resettlement – broadening the basis in Europe which is coordinated by the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)

During the one day debate at the Ministry of Labour, representatives of the Spanish Ministry of Interior as well as the Ministry of Labour underlined that it would be both logical and possible for Spain to officially declare itself a country of resettlement and to decide on an annual quota for resettlement to Spain. Spain had in recent years regularly accepted emergency cases for resettlement, but so far not committed to an annual quota. Roberto Amurrio, Deputy Director General of Social Integration at the Ministry of Labour underlined that, “based on the practical expertise gathered over recent years, we could commit to a quota at any moment”. It would however depend on the political decision by the Spanish government and parliament to make such a commitment. “Debates like the one today will certainly help the government to take such a positive decision” he added.

Raimon Obois I Germa, Spanish Member of the European Parliament encouraged the Spanish government to take further steps in committing to resettlement. He outlined “resettlement is something which is necessary, worthwhile and manageable. It is something where national and European policies can go hand in hand. We should not end up in a situation where the EU waits for member states and member states for the EU, but both should move forward together in this area.”

Participants also learnt about the experiences gathered in neighbouring Portugal, which recently committed to an annual resettlement quota as well as in Argentina, which through joint efforts of the MERCOSUR countries is involved in resettling refugees in Latin America.

Torsten Moritz of CCME welcomed the commitments made by Spanish government representatives : “This debate shows how practical experience and political debate can build up momentum in favour of refugee resettlement. While it will probably not happen before the parliament election next spring, I am optimistic that Spain will emerge as an official resettlement country next year” he commented.

Note to editors:

Refugee resettlement is the process by which refugees who have to flee their home country and find initial, but insufficient or temporary protection in another country, are resettled into a third country and find permanent protection and a durable, sustainable solution there. While around one hundred thousand refugees are annually resettled to the US, Canada and Australia, resettlement is since the 1960ies scarcely used in Europe: currently only six EU member states carry out resettlement, resettling around 3.500 refugees annually. The Churches’ Commission for migrants in Europe is since 2004 actively promoting resettlement as an additional tool for refugee protection in Europe. For more information contact CCME at +32 2 2346800 or info@ccme.be



ERF-CA 2005

The Project ‘Resettlement – broadening the basis in Europe’ is coordinated by CCME and funded by the European Refugee Fund Centralised Actions 2005 (European Commission, Directorate-General Freedom, Security and Justice).

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 and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission.

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.