



**Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

# CCME Work Programme 2009-2015

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## Work Programme 2009-2015 of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe of the Conference of European Churches

Adopted at the 17<sup>th</sup> CCME General Assembly 2008

### A. WHERE WE COME FROM

*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, in order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and minority groups. (CCME mission statement)*

#### I. FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORK OF CCME

1. 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). CCME will do so as part of the Conference of European Churches.
2. The Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe in their memorandum of understanding "Different Backgrounds - Joint Future" adopted by the CCME ExCom and the CEC Central Committee respectively, have agreed to journey together to make the witness of churches in Europe more visible.
3. The work of CCME in fostering Christian reflection and action on migration is grounded the clear command in both the Old and the New Testaments to act humanely and compassionately towards the strangers who share with all human beings the dignity of the Being of God, (Genesis 1,26-27; John 1,1). That "You shall love the alien as yourself" (Leviticus 19, 34; Hebrews 13, 1-3) is typical of the humane attitude towards 'the other' found in the Moses law, an obligation recognized by the three Abrahamic world religions and other faith communities. It is believed to have been given both by revelation and natural law, that is, a moral principle which is capable of being recognized by all human beings.
4. The CCME Mission Statement adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> CCME Assembly in London, October 2005 continues to guide the work of the Commission.

#### II. MANDATE OF THE CCME (of CEC)

As outlined in the joint memorandum of understanding "Different Backgrounds - Joint Future" signed by the leadership of CEC and CCME in Vienna in November 2007, the CCME General Assembly and CEC Central Committee have affirmed the mandate of the CCME of CEC, namely to

1. serve the churches in their commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being, in order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and minority groups;
2. work on issues of migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination, undertake research, initiate, develop and implement projects in these fields;
3. represent the common voice of the churches in Europe on the above issues vis-à-vis the European institutions.

#### III. PROCESS TOWARDS THIS WORK PROGRAMME

This work programme is the result of a participatory process: in December 2007 an invitation to CCME members was sent out, asking for input to the future work

programme of CCME. These inputs were discussed and further developed by the ExCom meeting in Mechelen (Belgium), April 2008. A provisional version of the work programme was circulated prior to the CCME General Assembly in Protaras/Cyprus 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> October 2008, where the final version was discussed, amended and on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008 adopted.

## **B. WHAT WE WILL BE DOING**

### ***IV. WORK PRIORITIES 2009-10***

The European Union will hold European Parliament elections in June 2009; a new European Commission will take over in autumn 2009. The Czech Republic and Sweden will hold the Presidencies of the Council of the EU in the first and second half of 2009. During this period, the priorities of the EU for the coming five years will be established in the area of asylum and migration and be adopted in autumn 2009 (Stockholm Programme).

Since 1999, substantial EU framework legislation has been adopted in the field of migration and asylum. These framework laws, known as directives, set out a general legal framework for all EU member states. Member states then within 2 years after their adoption need to transpose these directives into national law. These national laws will contain more precise provisions for the different EU member states, which are compatible with domestic legislation and law traditions.

#### **Asylum and refugees**

1. The assessment of the previously adopted EU framework legislation on migration and asylum, both in terms of legal transposition into national law by EU Member States, as well as in terms of practical impact, will be of critical importance for identifying next steps.
2. CCME will contribute towards discussions on the future of asylum and refugee protection in the EU: Plans are already discussed and proposals made for the "Future Common European Asylum System", which shall be completed by 2012. Proposals for amending the current EU directives in the field of asylum will be proposed in autumn 2008 and spring 2009. An EU Asylum Support Office will be further defined and established. It will in particular assist in practical cooperation between EU Member States in areas like country of origin information as well as sharing technical experience.
3. Plans will be elaborated for an EU Refugee Resettlement scheme. , aAdvocacy for refugee resettlement will be done in the context of the CCME project ASPIRE - Assessing and Strengthening Participation In Refugee resettlement to Europe (co financed by the ERF ).

#### **Labour Migration**

4. Jointly with Christian organisations, the EU legislative proposals in the area of labour migration will be examined and commented where appropriate.:Currently the Blue Card Proposal and the directive on a single residence/work permit are negotiated in the Council of the EU. As the Lisbon Treaty has not entered into force - due to the No-Vote in the referendum in Ireland - migration related legislation remains the competence of the EU Council with consultation of the European Parliament.
5. While more and more EU member states need, and actively recruit, migrants for various sectors in the labour markets, there is wide disparity with regard to the rights of migrants across the EU. The Council of Europe has addressed the issue of labour migration in September 2008 in the conference of ministers responsible for migration, and the Council of Europe standards, conventions and recommendations on labour migrants ought to be taken as a common basis also for developing EU standards. In addition, the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation

in this field provide a good framework for advocacy with governments, employers and trade unions. The call for ratification of 1990 convention on the rights of migrants and members of their family will be at the heart of CCME's advocacy in this field.

#### **Irregular Migration and rights of undocumented**

6. Removals of migrants and detention prior to removal have been an advocacy focus for the past years. As the EU directive has been adopted in June 2008, transposition into national legislation will now be a crucial issue. CCME will encourage members to advocate that those provisions of the directive which strengthen the rights of undocumented prior to and during removal will be adequately transposed when drafting national legislation.
7. CCME advocates for developing alternative to forced removals and detention of migrants and persons seeking international protection. At the same time, legal and social counselling for these migrants in detention and monitoring of removals is important for upholding human rights standards. Pastoral care for these migrants in detention is a specific calling on the church. Jointly with member organisations, CCME will explore how monitoring and counselling can be improved in this field. In particular CCME will explore how cooperation with the All Africa Conference of Churches in monitoring removals to Africa can be enhanced.

#### **Integration**

8. Integration of migrants and societies has become important at the EU level with annual reports. The Integration of Migrants Index developed by the Migration Policy Group MPG has received considerable attention and provides important insights.  
  
The role of religion in and for integration will be a focus of CCME's work in this area. Building on the results and methodology of the POLITIS project on civic participation of immigrants, the MIRACLE project will be carried out to gain insights into the role of migrant congregations, and to develop material for churches, congregations and church related agencies to win migrants as active members. This project aims to underline how religion can play a positive role for integration.
9. CCME will with CEC CiD and CSC Commission explore possibilities on further developing work on living together of different cultures and faiths in Europe. This should result in developing practical and pastoral orientations for this living together.

#### **The Roma minority in Europe**

10. The EU held a high level meeting on Roma inclusion in September 2008. The decade for Roma inclusion has produced a variety of good programmes in a number of European countries. However, stigmatisation and marginalisation is still a critical issue. For example, in certain European countries the crime committed by one individual Roma is attributed to the whole of the Roma community population. To make it worse, confusion with migration and migration control is mixed with policies to control Roma people.
11. In some European countries, an increase of Roma movement from Central and East European countries is currently observed. While policy responses as well as programmes to assist Roma people need to be developed, further stereotyping of Roma persons ought to be avoided.
12. A considerable number of activities and programmes are addressing the issue, also organised by churches and church-related agencies. However, the visibility of the activities is not very high.

CCME partners in Romania and Finland have expressed an interest to cooperate with CCME, and in cooperation with them, CCME will explore a possible project in this field. This will particularly look at the issue of churches become more inclusive communities of Roma and non-Roma.

### **Migrant Churches in Europe**

13. Building on the consultation between African and European churches on migrant churches and congregations in November 2008, further cooperation with the All Africa Conference of Churches particularly with regard to churches and congregations of African descent will be further explored.
14. The WCC project on migration and the changing ecclesial landscape foresees for 2009 the migration study to be undertaken in Africa, and a hearing on migration in Europe. The Europe Hearing could serve as a launch for the European Churches Year focussing on Migration.

### **Migration and Development**

15. The Global Forum on Migration and Development 2009 will be held in Athens, Greece. CCME will cooperate not only with its Greek member, but also with the World Council of Churches and the Global Ecumenical Network in the preparation of this event.

With APRODEV and development agencies, further cooperation in this field will be explored.

### **Work against Trafficking**

16. Trafficking in human beings is a crime and violation of the rights of those who are trafficked and as such addressed by authorities and non-governmental organisations. The European Commission had published a comprehensive report of an expert group, which outlines the need for further action.
17. With the entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, European countries have agreed on legal standards for the fight against trafficking in human beings.  
  
CCME will advocate for a binding set of human rights for those trafficked, including ratification of the convention and its transposal into national law.
18. CCME will continue the networking and awareness raising activities in the fight against trafficking in human beings as well as cooperation with the COATNET. Further activities against trafficking for forced labour are foreseen in the context of a project.

### **Global and interregional cooperation**

19. As an active member, and in cooperation with WCC, CCME will participate in the Global Ecumenical Network meeting and other activities.
20. For the exchange with the Middle East Council of Churches on migration in the context of the Amman Process an Interregional Meeting, possibly in the context of or close to the Global Conference on Migration and Development, will be explored.

### **Integration of CEC and CCME**

21. Following agreements of the CCME Assembly and the CEC Central Committee, the integration of the two organisations shall be concluded. To this effect, CCME will actively participate in the preparations for the CEC Assembly 15-21 July 2009 in Lyon/France. CCME will seek to ensure a high visibility of persons representing migrant churches and persons working on asylum and migration in the churches at the assembly.
22. CCME will organise one or two thematic hearing during the CEC Assembly.
23. Together with CEC, CCME will seek to increase the visibility of churches actions and positions on migration, refugee protection, and on building inclusive societies in Europe.

## **European Year Churches responding to Migration - 2010**

24. CEC and CCME will jointly prepare a European Year Churches responding on Migration 2010. A calendar of possible activities on and with migrants, refugees, and minority ethnic people will provide a common framework for publicity and communication. Regional conferences could highlight various fields of the churches' migration work and facilitate exchange of experience and cooperation beyond border. Intensive preparations for the year 2010 will have to start intensely in 2009.

### ***V. THEMATIC PRIORITY AREAS OF WORK 2009-15***

*(to be received by the CEC General Assembly July 2009 as part of the policy reference document)*

Within its general mandate, CCME of CEC will seek to focus its activities on 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. In its work CCME will together with the wider ecumenical family monitor developments influencing the life of migrants (such as economic development, conflict around the world, climate change) .

*For the period 2009-15 the following thematic areas will form work priorities for CCME:*

#### **Europe's role in refugee protection in the 21st century**

The large majority of refugees are currently hosted by poorer countries in the world. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was the scene of displacement but also of providing protection. In the past years, the numbers of refugees in Europe has drastically declined, in disproportion to the global level. Numbers of refugees vary significantly between different European countries. Overall, fewer refugees find access into Europe and access to effective protection.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. Defending asylum (including complementary protection)*
- b. Additional forms of refugee protection; including resettlement of refugees to Europe*
- c. Revising the need for protection (e.g. environmental refugees, internal displacement)*

#### **Human Dignity in the process of labour migration**

With economic globalisation, patterns of international migration are changing. While the majority of migrants move within their region, more migrants travel further distances for a job and a living. While they are welcome when (cheap) labour is needed, permanent settlement and participation in societies meet barriers and restrictions. Currently a trend can be observed in many European countries to increase labour migration, while their status and rights remain uncertain. The right to family life for migrants is particularly under threat in many countries.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. A uniform set of rights for all migrants*
- b. Ratification of binding legal instruments Europe-wide and globally*
- c. Advocating for the right to family life as sine qua non of integration*
- d. Monitoring expulsion, detention and removal of migrants*
- e. Address situations of migrants in irregular situation*

#### **Countering contemporary forms of slavery, in particular trafficking in human beings**

Parallel to stricter immigration controls trafficking in human beings has become more visible in the past two decades as a new form of slavery. While joint efforts of authorities and non-governmental organisations and churches against this international

crime have produced some results, trafficking for forced labour is still a rather unknown field. The human rights of trafficked persons are generally still insufficiently protected.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. Trafficking in women*
- b. Trafficking for forced labour*

### **Uniting in Diversity: Migration as an opportunity and challenge for the unity of the church**

Migration is changing the ecclesial landscape: more congregations of migrants are found, a greater diversity of denominations is observed. Separate and segregated church life is a phenomenon similar to fragmentation in societies, at the same time more transnational and international congregations emerge. Migration constitutes an enormous opportunity and yet a considerable challenge for churches in Europe.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. Being Church together*
- b. Integration and the role of religion*
- c. theological reflection on migration*

### **Churches as witness to inclusive communities in Europe**

Various forms of exclusion exist in societies, and are becoming even more dramatic. Vulnerable groups of migrants are particularly affected by exclusion, e.g. asylum applicants and undocumented migrants, children of migrants, but also ethnic minorities are often marginalised. Anti-discrimination legislation provides an important instrument even if it also poses challenges and needs improvement.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. Anti-discrimination legislation: monitoring and promotion in churches*
- b. Inclusion of ethnically discriminated groups: within church and society*
- c. Churches addressing racism*

### **Migration and development**

The nexus between migration and development is recognised in communication and statements., Policies and concrete cooperation activities (e.g. the European Neighbourhood Policy) are however still largely dominated by the aim to use development cooperation as a tool for migration restriction and control. . Churches as actors in the fields of migration and development are ideally placed to explore positive ways of action which go beyond remittances. However, this potential of being actors of migration and development is not yet fully used.

*Therefore, priorities will be:*

- a. Monitoring policy development at European level*
- b. Cooperation with other regions*
- c. Networking with church development agencies and identifying relevant projects*

### **European year of churches responding to migration 2010**

Recognising that migration is an overall reality in society today, and aware that migration is posing challenges to societies, political institutions and churches, CEC and CCME are planning a European Year of Churches focussing on migration. During this year, churches activities for migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination shall be made more visible through joint activities,



a joint calendar of meetings and at least four regional meetings. The study "Mapping Migration in Europe – Mapping Churches' Responses" provides a starting point.

The European Year of churches responding to migration 2010 shall also assist churches to share their good experience, to strengthen existing work, and to identify possible new areas of work to become more effective in pursuing the aims of inclusive societies in Europe and welcoming the strangers.

All potential activities of CCME will 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 be complementary to or to have specific added value in relation to activities of other actors and to achieve synergy with them;
- to give a voice to the voiceless;
- to have a clear impact among churches or
- to have an impact in voicing the churches' concerns towards policies on the national level;
- to provide specific added value by addressing an issue on a European level.

## **C. HOW WE WILL BE WORKING**

### ***VI. PLANNING MECHANISMS***

Elements of planning:

1. A thorough needs assessment,
2. Reflection on possible alternatives (e.g. other actors addressing issue, other working method),
3. Initial reflection on methodology and strategy of activity
4. prior assessment of potential impact, in particular of the potential added value for member organisations of addressing a particular topic on European level and in the context of CCME of CEC,
5. Reflection on how CCME of CEC activities would link to similar activities undertaken by other actors in the same thematic area,
6. Potential impact on CCME-CEC advocacy work for refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people,
7. Thematic and financial support, in particular among members and strategic partners,
8. Support for project methodology among members,
9. Adequate methods of impact assessment and evaluation will be developed

### ***VII. WORKING MECHANISMS***

The CCME working mechanisms are derived from the main mandate of the CCME:

1. to serve the churches in their commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being, in order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and minority groups.
  - Plenary meeting of the Commission every two years
  - Communication with CCME and CEC members
  - working groups and ad hoc task forces

- trainings
  - visits
  - membership in and cooperation with the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration of WCC
2. work on issues of migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination, undertake research, initiate, develop and implement projects in these fields;
    - networking with Christian and non-governmental organisations
    - partnerships with academia (theological faculties, migration researchers)
    - thematic public hearings
    - international conferences
    - mid- term and long-term projects
  3. represent the common voice of the churches in Europe on the above issues towards the European institutions and international organisations active in Europe:
    - European Union
    - Council of Europe
    - UN (ILO, UNHCR)
    - Global Forum on Migration and Development
    - IOM

### ***VIII. PARTNERSHIPS***

CCME as ecumenical agency in Europe can only realize its mandate to serve the churches if it works in partnership with other Christian organisations as well as secular partners. CCME seeks to develop partnerships with like-minded organisations. Existing partnerships, which will be maintained, include:

1. Ecumenical
  - a. within CEC  
Church and Society Commission  
Commission Churches in Dialogue  
PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND THE MEMBERSHIP
  - b. within the European ecumenical family  
Group of European Christian organisations (Caritas Europa, COMECE, International Catholic Migration Commission ICMC, Jesuit Refugee Service JRS Europe, Quaker Council on European Affairs)  
APRODEV, Euro diakonia, Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe EYCE, WSCF-Europe, Community of Protestant Churches in Europe
  - c. In the global ecumenical family  
World Council of Churches, Global Ecumenical Network on Migration  
All Africa Conference of Churches, Middle East Council of Churches, Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program US
2. Secular partners  
NGO Platform of European organisations on migration and asylum

European Network Against Racism, ENAR

European Council on Refugees and Exiles ECRE

European Coordination for Foreigners' Right to Family Life

IMISCOE – Network of Research Institutes on International Migration Integration Social Cohesion in Europe

*Adopted in Protaras/Cyprus on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008 – with 44 votes in favour and 3 abstentions*