



**Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

# CCME ACTIVITY REPORT 2008

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### ***CCME's MISSION and MANDATE***

*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 ethnic minority groups.*

CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. CCME members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, Councils of Churches and diaconal agencies in presently 19 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in advocacy for migrants', refugees' and ethnic minority concerns and rights with European institutions, promoting integration and anti-discrimination. Currently, CCME is in the process of integration with the Conference of European Churches.

### ***CCME objectives***

In particular, the objectives of CCME are:

- to monitor European and national migration, refugee and anti-discrimination policy, to inform the churches about these policies;
- to support and serve the churches in their advocacy;
- to challenge the European institutions to act in accordance with human rights and international obligations;
- to strengthen on a global, European, national and regional level the cooperation of churches, NGOs and others in this field;
- to support and challenge churches to include migrants (churches, groups or individuals) in the communion of churches;
- to address fears in societies around migration and facilitate churches'

initiatives on finding ways to peaceful living together.

Working instruments of CCME are conferences, seminars, studies, information and communication, working groups and thematic ad hoc meetings.

### ***POLITICAL BACKGROUND***

Since 1999, with the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union has competence on a wide range of issues related to refugees' and migrants' concerns. The Council of Tampere in October 1999 determined an ambitious work programme of harmonisation in the area of asylum and migration of which the first round should have been terminated in May 2004. Most of the envisaged directives and regulations had been decided by the end of 2005, while by the end of 2006 the adopted directives should have been transposed into national legislation by EU Member States. In 2007 the European Commission as the guardian of EU treaties and EU legislation had started a review of the transposition of EU asylum and migration law into national law. The year 2008 was characterised by - moderate - activities by the European Commission to enforce compliance of EU member states in the transposition process. At the same time, the European Commission started to initiate a revision of some of those directives, often inviting contributions from civil society.

The EU Council had adopted in November 2004 new orientations for the area of freedom, security and justice (including asylum and migration policy) in the so-called "Hague Programme" for the years 2004-2009. The European Commission had translated these orientations into an action programme which was adopted by the Council in 2005. While not all areas of the "Hague Programme" have been implemented yet, debates on the priorities beyond 2009 were continued. The so-called "Future group", launched in 2007 by the joint troika of the Portuguese, German and Slovenian Presidencies, with participation of the

2008-2009 troika as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament presented its report in June 2008. The Chapter III of the report: "Managing Migration, Asylum, External Borders and Integration" is likely to determine in many ways the process towards the "Stockholm" Programme for the years 2010-2014.

Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty also stipulates that the EU is to take measures against discrimination on various grounds, including racism. In 2008, the European Commission initiated legislation to combat additional relevant grounds of discrimination, such as religion or belief.

On this basis new legislation has been drafted in the EU which is not only affecting persons residing in EU member states, but also in neighbouring countries and, indeed, globally. Against this background, lobbying with European institutions at the level of the EU has progressively gained importance since 1999. The importance of the EU for pan-European policies on migration is continuing to increase - in particular in the context of the development of the "European Neighbourhood Policy" and so-called "mobility partnerships" with third countries. EU decisions are increasingly influencing all EU neighbours in the East and South.

Decision-making in the harmonisation of EU members' asylum and migration legislation was influenced by the general uncertainty about the future basis of cooperation in the EU. While the European Parliament since 2004 has co-decision power in the areas of asylum and irregular migration as well as the status of migrants (but not for labour immigration), the Lisbon Treaty would have meant further communitarisation of asylum and migration and related areas, thus extending the influence of the European Parliament.

The uncertainty regarding the future of the Lisbon Treaty after the Irish "no" in the ratification referendum in June 2008

therefore had a considerable impact on the work of the European institutions in this area. As far as the European Commission was concerned, the departure of the Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security Franco Frattini in May and the handover to previous Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot also had an impact.

As negotiations on the return directive have shown (see underneath), finding a new inter-institutional balance in the process on European asylum and migration legislation remains a complicated challenge for all actors.

### **ADVOCACY, NETWORKING AND INFORMATION**

CCME continued to monitor the development of European policies in the fields of migration, asylum and anti-discrimination, notably in the context of the EU and the Council of Europe.

#### *European Union*

Monitoring of the EU migration and asylum policy was done in cooperation with Christian partner organisations in Brussels (Caritas Europa, COMECE, ICMC, JRS-Europe and Quaker Council, the so-called "Group of Christian organisations") and secular NGO partners.

#### - Returns/Removals



*CCME event in the European Parliament on returns monitoring ( with MEP Weber)*

In the first half of 2008, the negotiations on the directive on common standards for return policies continued to be a CCME priority. Based on the work of the

coalition of NGOs since 2005, CCME jointly with members, Christian organisations and NGO partners, has held several meetings with members of the European Parliament, particularly the rapporteurs from the different political groups. Major issues have been the length of administrative detention, the conditions of detention, the mandatory re-entry ban as well as the particular vulnerability of children.

In the negotiations on the return directive, and for the first time in the area of asylum and migration, the EU institutions worked in the highly informal "trialog" method between Council, Commission and Parliament. This trialog, which is characterised by meetings behind closed doors and work with "non-papers", posed additional challenges for the advocacy of CCME and other civil society actors. The European Parliament's rapporteur MEP Weber, after the Committee vote on his draft report in September 2007 had become the EP's representative in this informal "trialog" and was therefore a key interlocutor.

While a number of issues of concern, which had been addressed in the draft EP report, were included in the emerging compromise, the overall compromise between the European Parliament and Council remained disappointing. A high-level meeting of CCME, Conference of European Churches, COMEC and Caritas Europa with European Parliament President Pöttering on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008 as well as a joint letter of the four Christian organisations immediately prior to the EP's vote on 18<sup>th</sup> June raised the issues of concern – however with no significant impact on the vote.

EU Member States continued to cooperate closely in the organisation of deportations with the instrument of common EU charters. They are funded through the EU return budget line and particularly West African countries were chosen for return operations. On a number of occasions CCME and its members have sought to develop

cooperation with the All Africa Conference of Churches in monitoring these deportations.

A seminar comparing various monitoring mechanisms in a number of EU Member States had been co-organised with CCME's German member organisations EKD and Diakonisches Werk, as well as with the German refugee organisation Pro Asyl. Results of the seminar were published in a documentation in spring 2008. CCME organised a presentation of this documentation in the European Parliament in June 2008. The event was hosted by MEP Weber.

#### - Legal migration

Following up on discussions around the green book on labour migration and the subsequent policy plan in 2005, the European Commission had put forward a number of proposals concerning legal labour migration in 2007. The most prominent among them were the so-called "blue card" proposal<sup>1</sup> and the "framework directive"<sup>2</sup> as well as a communication on "circular migration and mobility partnerships"<sup>3</sup>. CCME and Christian partner organisations in their response underlined that "we welcome the new dynamics which the European Commission's proposals bring into the deadlocked debate on a Common European Migration Policy." However at the same time CCME and partners expressed disappointment: "We have the impression that the political courage to change the migration debate into a positive one is lacking. In general, we are convinced that economic considerations should never overwhelm

<sup>1</sup> Proposal for a Council Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment ("Blue Card Initiative"), COM (2007) 637 final

<sup>2</sup> Proposal for a Council Directive on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State ("Framework directive"), COM (2007) 638 final

<sup>3</sup> Communication on circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries, COM (2007), 248 final

ethical and human aspects when new instruments or initiatives in the field of migration are devised.”<sup>4</sup>

In the field of labour migration, CCME cooperated also with the Church and Society Commission in the dialogue with the European Commission on Employment in February 2008, and joint statements were issued on “Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market (COM (2007) 620)” and, also with Eurodiakonia, on “Europe’s Social Reality” and the Communication “Towards a new social vision.”

#### - Intercultural dialogue

The European Union had declared 2008 as the year of intercultural dialogue. Among the many events to which CCME contributed, the dialogue meeting “Quality education in an intercultural environment” between representatives of the European churches and the European Commission was of considerable importance. The Commissioner for Education and Culture of the EU, Jan Figel, underlined in the dialogue between Churches and EU institutions, organised on 15 December 2008 by the Bureau of Policy Advisors of the European Commission, Church and Society Commission of CEC and COMECE, that intercultural dialogue and dialogue with religious communities needs to continue. The topic offered the opportunity to comment also on the Commission’s Green Paper on “Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for the EU education systems” (COM (2008) 423 final) of 3.7.2008.

#### - Monitoring of transposition of EU law

CCME has been monitoring and advising member churches in the process of

transposition of EU legislation into national legislation, particularly on the area of a common European asylum system. CCME contributed partly to the official evaluation commissioned by the European Commission, particularly on the transposition of the Dublin II Regulation. The assessment of the transposition on the ground, which some CCME members had undertaken, was brought to the attention of the EU institutions.

#### - Migration and development

CCME and Christian partner organisations have been actively involved in the discussions on migration and development. CCME undertook a small-scale study on EU financing for projects relating to migration and development. CCME was again involved in the process around the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which this year was hosted by the Philippine’s government in Manila in October 2008. Since a pre-meeting in January 2008 in New York, efforts were geared towards common efforts by Christian partners from both the migration and development fields. A joint statement process with Roman Catholic partners was unfortunately abandoned by the partners in favour of individual organisations’ statements. However, CCME facilitated a joint Christian caucus and de-briefing meeting in Manila and liaised with the National Council of Churches of the Philippines - also on behalf of WCC.



Opening of the Global Forum Migration & development  
Manila 17.10.2008

<sup>4</sup> Comments on the European Commission’s proposals on instruments regulating labour migration to the European Union of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

CCME and APRODEV met for exchange on several occasions and, given changing priorities in APRODEV, it was hoped that with this cooperation positions and instruments could be further discussed and developed. Unfortunately staff changes within APRODEV member agencies led to a situation, in which the future of the APRODEV work in the area of Migration and Development became again unclear.

#### - Refugee protection

CCME continues to represent CEC in the European Council of Refugees and Exiles ECRE and participated in the bi-annual meetings in Brussels in June 2008, where CCME coordinated a meeting on refugee resettlement, and in Paris in October 2008. CCME and ECRE continued the intensive cooperation on issues of refugee protection and in particular the issue of refugee resettlement. (see also resettlement project).

#### *NETWORKING*

CCME cooperates with other European NGOs in the NGO platform on asylum and migration. CCME continued to be one of the conveners of the platform. In 2008, members of the platform of NGOs organised briefings for members of the European Parliament in view of their activities, e.g. on removals and detention conditions. Members also met with staff of the European Commission for background meetings and briefings. CCME facilitated efforts of the platform to engage in a more systematic way with the European Commission, as it was felt that the consultation procedures of the Commission's Directorate-General on Freedom, Security and Justice were often very much happening at random or through unsuitable communication patterns (e.g. online-consultations). CCME also managed to re-establish intensive contact with the European Parliament's LIBE committee, which had lost intensity after staff changes in the secretariat.

CCME is playing an active role as member of the European Coordination of the

European Network against Racism (ENAR). The ENAR European Coordination met on several occasions in 2008 convened by CCME. CCME has been re-elected chair of the European coordination of ENAR and thus also a board member of ENAR. CCME represented the European Coordination at the ENAR board meeting under the French Presidency in 2008.

The European Coordination has particularly focussed on ENAR's contribution to the Durban Review Process<sup>5</sup>, emphasising that a focus should be placed on the review of national action plans. However, as in the political arena, also in the network the Durban process has been rather controversial.

CCME has followed-up on previous work with Romani minorities in Europe, particularly by convening a meeting of several church agencies working on Roma issues with a view to re-establishing more proactive work on the issue. CCME in May 2008 denounced racist incidents and discriminatory policies against Roma, which developed in Italy. The internet newlist on Roma issues is also maintained by CCME and was used more particularly around the EU Summit on Roma Inclusion in autumn 2008.

CCME maintains regular exchange and cooperation with the offices of the Church and Society Commission of CEC, Eurodiaconia, APRODEV, the European Ecumenical Association of Lay Academies and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, as well as the various offices of national churches, which are represented in Brussels. As mentioned above, the "Group of Christian organisations" in the asylum and migration field comprising Caritas Europa, CCME, COMECE, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe and the Quaker Council

<sup>5</sup> Review conference of the Durban World Conference against Racism 2001 scheduled for April 2009

for European Affairs continued to have a high degree of visibility.

CCME continued its contacts and cooperation with international organisations, first and foremost the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR – particularly in view of resettlement, but also other international organisations with a migration-related mandate, such as the International Labour Organisations ILO.

### *Council of Europe*

As an NGO with consultative status at the Council of Europe, CCME maintained its working relations at the Council of Europe as observer of the Committee on Migration (CDMG) as well as the relevant Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly and participated in the two CDMG meetings in May and November 2008 as well as the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for migration affairs on '*Economic migration, social cohesion and development: towards an integrated approach*', 4-5 September 2008, Kiev, Ukraine.

CCME contributed also to the consultation process of the Council of Europe leading to two reports and recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and participated in the conference "on specific challenges facing European democracies – the case of diversity and migration and measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants" in Strasbourg where these were discussed in June 2008.<sup>6</sup>

### Visits

An important part of CCME's work is to provide information services on the European migration agenda and related issues for Churches, church-related groups and agencies and civil society at large.

CCME together with other Brussels-based ecumenical organisations developed a "Guide for Churches and Christian organizations in the European Union" for the elections to the European Parliament, which will take place between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The 16-page booklet briefly introduces the European Parliament and its role in EU policy making. It highlights churches' visions, concerns and questions in a number of key areas of EU policy such as migration, climate change, poverty and social exclusion and suggests ways for churches in the EU to engage in the debate around the EP elections.

Groups or representatives of Churches and NGOs are regularly visiting the Ecumenical Centre and/or CCME Secretariat in Brussels, and CCME organises a visitors' programme for these groups/ individuals, or representatives of CCME are invited to give thematic inputs at various events. Often CCME is invited to present the work of Churches in Europe on migration and related questions. In 2008, groups and representatives of Churches and civil society organisations from across Europe visited CCME. In addition CCME provided input to the meeting of European regional representatives of UNHCR.

In 2008, CCME representatives gave presentations in Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, (The FYR of) Macedonia, Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Switzerland and the UK, often in connection with project events. In addition, an increasing number of researchers and journalists contact the CCME secretariat for information, often requesting in-depth background information.

CCME is part of the preparatory group organising three panels on globalisation, one focussing on migration, for the German Protestant Kirchentag to be held in Bremen in May 2009.

<sup>6</sup> The state of democracy in Europe Specific challenges facing European democracies: the case of diversity and migration, Rapporteur: Mr Andreas GROSS, Switzerland, Socialist Group  
State of democracy in Europe, Measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants, Rapporteur: Mr John GREENWAY, United Kingdom, European Democrat Group

## ***PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES 2008***

- Work on modern slavery/ trafficking in human beings

CCME had intended to use the year 2008 to broaden its work on trafficking to include forms of exploitation outside sexual exploitation, based on the reflection on the future of anti-trafficking work undertaken in 2007. Lack of the envisaged funding however meant a downscaling of the ongoing work.

An international workshop "*Combating Trafficking in Human Beings - going beyond*" took place in Bucharest 27-30 March. It served as a forum to present regional realities, best practice, and to establish thematic working groups (identification, legal support, prevention). It intended to set up a task force to map existing expertise and available support for trafficked persons in a number of relevant countries (origin, transit and destination).



Opening of Bucharest anti-trafficking workshop

CCME continues to prominently raise the issue of trafficking at European ecumenical fora. A one-day conference "Churches addressing trafficking in human beings" was organised by CCME on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008 in Protaras/Cyprus, on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> CCME General assembly. CCME was very happy that the thematic conference was attended by CCME delegates and members of the CEC Central Committee. The conference provided important insight into the variety and depth of European Churches' commitment against trafficking. Input

from church experts, but also the Council of Europe highlighted the human rights for trafficked persons.

CCME continued to maintain its role as a competence centre in the area of trafficking for sexual exploitation. CCME gave input at events in Estonia/Finland, Moldova and Germany and at the regional meeting of WCC partners from Eastern Europe in Ohrid (FYR of Macedonia).

Funding for a project, in which expertise against trafficking for other forms of exploitation, is built has been granted at the end of 2008 by the EU - the project will be carried out in 2009-2011.

The activities of the projects were connected with ongoing information activities and European advocacy activities: The advocacy work on the one hand focussed on follow-up to the Council of Europe anti-trafficking convention. This included mobilisation of churches in those countries, which had not yet ratified the convention, to advocate for ratification. As the convention entered into force on 1st February 2008 the monitoring mechanism GRETA has become an additional focus of work. So far this area of work included encouragement of churches to get active in the nomination of experts as members of GRETA and provision of expertise on the fairly complex mechanisms around GRETA (composition, terms of reference, nomination of members). The list of appointed members of GRETA [http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/trafficking/campaign/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/trafficking/campaign/default_en.asp) signals that some of the experts are likely to contribute civil society expertise.

In its work with the EU, CCME has asked for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention by the European Union. CCME together with other civil society actors forms the Brussels-based anti-trafficking group of the NGO network on Human Rights and Democracy. This group has remained in continuous advocacy efforts with the

European Commission regarding the Commission's review of the EU action plan against trafficking as well as the review of EU legislation. Based on a commitment made by the new EU Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, Mr Barrot, to review the EU framework decision on trafficking, CCME is advocating for amendments which would introduce genuine and binding protection standards for trafficked persons. An initial consultation by the European Commission however gives reason to believe that the scope of possible improvements will be limited. While the nomination of a person from the CCME network to the EU expert group on trafficking in human beings had not been successful, CCME maintains with the above-mentioned NGO group regular contact with the members EU expert group.

CCME has joined efforts by a coalition led by Anti-Slavery International and La Strada International to advance the cause of compensation of trafficked persons.

#### - Refugee Resettlement

Work towards building more political support in EU Member States for resettlement as an additional tool of refugee protection continued throughout 2008.



Resettlement event in the European Parliament, May 2008

In May 2008 CCME held a debate in the European Parliament on resettlement in cooperation with ECRE and UNHCR.

The "Resettlement Fact Sheets" which had been produced in 2007 and printed

in English, German and French (with Czech, Dutch, Italian and Spanish translations being available as pdf-file) served as a good basis for advocacy work. A number of churches are increasingly engaged in advocacy for more resettlement for particularly vulnerable group.

Partly due to the continued advocacy activities, an increasing number of EU countries are getting actively involved in resettlement either on an ad hoc basis or devoting annual quotas.

The project ASPIRE, with financial support of the European Refugee Fund, allows continuation of regular information sharing through the resettlement newsletter and continuing to inspire national debates on resettlement.

In 2008, CCME and some of its members were highly active on the resettlement of Iraqi refugees, as the situation of two million Iraqis in neighbouring countries had become a crisis situation. While not focussing on Iraqi refugees only, CCME had supported efforts to help clarify the concept of refugee resettlement which was confused with evacuation and repatriation in the public debate.

The decision of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2008 to resettle 10.000 Iraqi refugees to the EU in this context might signal a willingness of member states to engage in more resettlement as European Union.

The core group on resettlement which ECRE had started in 2006 to pursue further steps was supported thematically by CCME. One of the common activities was joint input at the UNHCR's annual tripartite consultation on resettlement as well as a joint position on the envisaged EU resettlement scheme. CCME in the context of the core group advocated for increased EU funding possibilities for resettlement to EU member states.

#### **Uniting in diversity - black and migrant churches in Europe**

More activities around uniting in diversity underline the increasing importance of

this field of work. CCME participated in a conference organised by CEVAA in Lyon in May, where particularly French speaking churches from Europe and Africa worked together on the issues around migration. CCME participated also in the conference organised by Swiss Churches and Mission 21 on migrant churches at the end of October in Basel, which offered possibilities for exchange also with UK and Dutch experiences and provides a good basis for continued work.

A first African-European consultation on migration and the changing ecclesial landscape was held in Palermo/Italy, 20-23 November 2008, organised by the All Africa Conference of Churches, the World Council of Churches, the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy and CCME. The consultation was an important step to look at the changes in churches due to migration. The participation of African churches, European churches and migrant churches at an equal level was highly regarded by the participants.



Palermo: Director Arthur Shoo (AACC) and Bishop Michael Bunker (CPCE)

CCME was successful with an application to the European integration fund and a contract for a project "Migrants Integration through Religion, Activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange (MIRACLE) was agreed in December 2008. Activities started but will be more visible in 2009 and 2010.

Study "mapping migration"

In the context of the WCC project on migration and the changing ecclesial

landscape, CCME undertook the study "mapping migration - mapping churches' responses" in cooperation with the Nova Research Centre in Gloucester (UK). Some introductory theological and sociological reflection elaborated on the theme of migration, while country profiles provide a short overview of the migration situation and churches' responses in 47 member states of the Council of Europe. CCME and CEC member churches had been requested to submit information. Their information and statistics of EU and the Council of Europe were used to compile the country profiles.

The study was launched in April 2008 at the meeting of the National Councils of Churches in Europe in Palermo, Italy, and has received considerable attention. It inspired many, often controversial discussions on a more standardised inventory of churches' activities on migration. The study was also presented publically at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva.

#### - Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) of the WCC

The Global Ecumenical Network of the WCC met in Beirut in April.



Opening of the GEM 2008 Beirut

The hosts of the Middle East Council of Churches during the first three days of the meeting presented a vivid picture of the reality of migration in their region during the hearing on Migration and the Changing Ecclesial Landscape.

The second meeting of the global network after it had been re-named Global Ecumenical Network on Migration

(GEM) was characterised by the renewed participation of some traditional members of the Global Ecumenical Network, who had in the previous year feared that the network would no longer adequately address the issues of uprooted people. Repeated concern was expressed about plans of WCC to phase out the multilateral funding arrangements with partners.

A delegation of WCC, among them CCME General Secretary Doris Peschke, undertook a solidarity visit to the churches in the Gulf region, which are active in many areas in the ministry among the many migrant workers in the region.



Holy trinity church compound, Dubai

### *CCME General Assembly*

The 17<sup>th</sup> CCME Assembly met in October in Protaras/Cyprus to review progress since the last general assembly in 2005 and to give direction for the next years of CCME's life. The assembly overwhelmingly decided to finalise the integration with CEC and adopted the



first 6-year work-programme of CCME,

which set out the priorities for the first years of CCME as a commission of CEC.

A substantial part of the assembly consisted of joint meetings of the Assembly and the CEC Central Committee which met in parallel in Protaras/Cyprus.

### *CEC-CCME INTEGRATION*

Based on the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, which had been adopted by the CCME Executive Committee (ExCom) and CEC Central Committee at their meetings in Vienna mid-November 2007, integration was pursued.

The senior management team of CEC, in which the CCME General Secretary fully participates, was developed further as the attempt to organise a renewed CEC with three commissions in a way, which would ensure accountability within the organisation while allowing enough flexibility to respond to pressing issues and concern for the churches in Europe.



Joint staff meetings of CEC staff and CCME staff helped to move forward on a way towards a CEC team spirit. Plans for a joint corporate design of CEC and its three commissions to reflect a common identity of CEC were developed.

The CEC-CCME Memorandum of Understanding had clarified changes and requirements for both organisations to facilitate the integration taking effect. The CCME Assembly therefore adopted revised statutes and the CEC Central Committee, adopted the structural

proposals needed, incorporated CCME staff in its staffing plans and clarified the process for other pending decisions.

The aim of the integration remains to strengthen the churches' common witness and service on the important issues of migration today. "To realise this Memorandum of Understanding, we have a challenging journey to go," concludes the paper.

A focal point to make the churches' commitment and engagement visible was highlighted by the decision of CEC Central Committee and the CCME Assembly to declare 2010 the European year of churches responding to migration.

### *CCME internal*

The ExCom of CCME met twice in 2008, at the end of April in Mechelen (B) and prior to the CCME General Assembly in Protaras/Cyprus.



*The new CCME ExCom is session  
January 2009, Brussels*

At the General Assembly a new ExCom was elected, which had a short session immediately after the assembly.

The CCME secretariat in 2008 had three full time staff persons. Alessia Passarelli, who had been working with CCME since July 2005, decided to continue her academic training with a PhD in Dublin and therefore left Brussels and CCME in summer 2008. She will however remain involved with the work of CCME on a freelance basis.

Wiebke Weinbrenner temporarily joined the CCME staff for a three-month-

internship from April to June 2008 and Thomas W. Stephan has been seconded by the church of Hesse Nassau as liaison officer since June 2008 for the duration of a year.

The financial situation for 2008 has been stable, with substantial project funding by WCC project grants, some European Commission funding and continued support from church related agencies (see Financial Report 2008 for details).

### *COMMUNICATION*

Communication activities were enhanced with the regular update of the website <http://www.ccme.be>, which despite the problematic format of the site remains an important tool of communication. There is continued cooperation with CEC on publications. CCME regularly contributed to CEC publications such as the CEC MONITOR or the newsletter of CEC's Church and Society Commission and is active in the design of a new joint CEC website. Press releases on CCME events have lead to widespread coverage of these activities in church media across Europe.

CCME issued thematically oriented publications such as the migration study or the resettlement factsheets. Internal and external communication remains an issue to be improved. The ExCom of CCME has identified the need to improve communications with members on a more regular basis; however, staff capacity remains a constraint in this field.

### *CONCLUDING REMARKS*

Since the beginning of 2007, the EU has 27 member states, with further enlargement on the horizon after 2010, and of course, Europe is wider than the EU. The focus of the attention regarding migration continues to be on the movement from Africa to the Southern borders of Europe, disregarding the fact that in terms of numbers internal European migration or migration across other borders outnumbers this phenomenon. Sadly, the death toll

among migrants seeking access to Europe continues to rise while the EU policies based on deterrence and migration control continue ever more to focus on border management. CCME has sought to address the misperceptions associated with the pictures in the media, and will continue to do so. At the same time a shift of paradigm away from policies of "zero migration" to policies of "selected/chosen migration" can be observed. CCME seeks to develop adequate responses to an emerging reality of new migration patterns.

The year 2009 will bring about significant changes in the political setup in which CCME operates, with a newly elected European Parliament and a newly appointed European Commission starting their work in summer 2009 and autumn 2009 respectively. A new legal basis in the Lisbon treaty, if finally ratified across the EU, will even more change the political context.

These political changes are paralleled by a new tendency of Christian thinking on migration in Europe: one which does no longer see migration as an un-normal phenomenon, which requires a charitable, diaconal and advocacy approach, but rather as a given fact of life and an enormous opportunity for the life of God's churches in Europe.

To address issues relating to migration will in this context require more ecumenical and more international thinking, acting and cooperating.

The European year of Churches responding to migration 2010 offers an excellent opportunity in this respect - it will however require a pooling of resources - material and non-material - if it is to be meaningful.

CCME enters a crucial year in 2009 and relies on the continued support, expertise and prayer of its members, partners and friends.





**Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

“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)