



Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

CCME ACTIVITY REPORT 2009

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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 minority ethnic 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 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.



*Rev Roswitha Golder, Switzerland,
Budapest, launch migration 2010*

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

European asylum and migration policy 1999-2009

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, and by the end of 2006 the adopted directives should have been transposed into national legislation by EU Member States. In 2007-8 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, which continued throughout 2009.

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. Several aspects of this programme were still outstanding in 2009.

2009: follow up...

The year 2009 was on the one hand characterised by – moderate – activities by the European Commission to enforce compliance of EU member states in the transposition process. On the other hand there were attempts to propose new legislation: the European Commission started to initiate a revision and proposed recasts of almost all of the asylum related directives, often inviting contributions from civil society.

....and transition

While not all areas of the “Hague Programme” have been implemented yet, the year 2009 was characterised by transition. Debates on the priorities in the area of asylum and immigration beyond 2009 were continued. The so-called “Future group”, launched in 2007 by the joint troika of the Portuguese, German and Slovene Presidency, with participation of the 2008-2009 troika as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament had presented its report in 2008. Towards the end of 2008, France had aimed at leaving a legacy by having the “European pact on migration” adopted by Council.

Both the report of the future group and the “pact” hugely influenced the process towards the “Stockholm Programme” for the years 2010-2014.

Even more importantly, 2009 was marked by the change in the legal basis of the European Union and the re-election of two of its main institutions. The Lisbon Treaty finally entered into force on 1st December 2009. For the first time this EU Treaty clearly defines asylum and migration policy as a shared competence between the EU and member states. With very few

exceptions, asylum and migration issues will now be decided by a qualified majority and with the Council and the European Parliament acting as equal co-legislators.



EP election campaign

The European Parliament itself was elected by citizens of the 27 EU member states between 4th and 7th June 2009.

While national issues dominated the election campaigns, the issue of a common EU policy on asylum and migration was raised in the campaign by parties from different sides of the political spectrum. The results of the elections were interpreted by many observers as an expression of xenophobic sentiment in many European countries.

Shortly after the election of the new European Parliament, discussions on the composition of the new European Commission began, which were only completed in early February 2010. The lack of certainty concerning both the persons in charge of migration issues and the organisational setup (e.g. how the portfolios of the new Commission would be split) led to a period of a “lame duck” commission in the second half of 2009.

Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty also stipulated 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 age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion or belief. However, this directive is debated controversially in the Council

and agreement on this directive is not imminent.

The EU legislation on migration and asylum 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. 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”, the so-called “mobility partnerships” with third countries and “Regional Protection Programmes for refugees. EU decisions are increasingly influencing all EU neighbours in the East and South.

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”; At the end of 2009, Eurodiaconia joined this group) and secular NGO partners.

EP elections

In the run-up to the European Parliament elections CCME joined forces with other ecumenical organisations (APRODEV, CEC’s Church and Society Commission, Eurodiaconia) in raising a number of important issues in the upcoming elections from a Christian point of view through a leaflet outlining these issues and central concerns.



Leaflet published in view of the European Parliament Elections

The leaflet, which was also suggesting possible activities of churches around the elections, received wide recognition among churches, but also the EU institutions and was translated into seven languages. The website www.ecumenicalvoices2009.eu was widely used.

The Stockholm Programme

Already in 2008 CCME had begun its advocacy on the new multiannual programme in the area of justice, freedom and security, in particular in partnership with the Swedish churches, which had agreed on migration as one of the priorities during their country’s EU Presidency. The meeting of the CCME ExCom in Stockholm 27-28 April 2009 provided for an excellent opportunity to exchange with CCME’s Swedish members and prepare for the Presidency and the discussions of the “Stockholm Programme”.

During the discussions on the programme, CCME was in ongoing contact with both the Swedish Presidency and the European Commission and as of September, also

with the newly elected European Parliament.

In July 2009, CCME together with the other members of the "Christian group" issued a number of recommendations for the Stockholm programme.

Refugee Resettlement

An area of particularly intensive advocacy activities for CCME was the setting up of an EU resettlement scheme, both in its own right and as part of the Stockholm Programme.

Preparations for the resettlement proposal were closely followed by CCME, which met with the responsible desk officers in the European Commission as well as with responsible staff of the Swedish Presidency. In June 2009 CCME published "Twelve Arguments and Seven Proposals for the EU Refugee Resettlement Scheme", which received wide attention in the specialist circles as well as in a broader public. The paper was also an extremely useful tool in the advocacy with the European Parliament, which started to work on its own report in late 2009.

The multi-stakeholder conference in Sigtuna/Sweden in August 2009 organised in the context of CCME's ASPIRE project, supported with a grant by the European Refugee Fund, was a highly visible event to promote CCME's proposal, not least as the Swedish Migration Minister addressed the meeting.

Return monitoring

CCME had been one of the principal non-state actors in the negotiations on the EU return directive, which was finally adopted by the EU Council and Parliament in June 2008.

Based on this engagement, CCME undertook continued efforts to highlight some of the more positive aspects of the generally disappointing directive throughout 2009. Particular attention was in this context devoted to the provisions of the directive, which call for

effective monitoring of removal operations. The European Commission organised meetings of a "Contact Committee" of member states, which looks at implementation of the directive. In addition to the closed meetings, workshops with NGOs were organised, and in 2009 these focussed on monitoring of removals by non state actors as well as on the return of unaccompanied minors. In this context CCME was able to highlight the existing best practice on independent monitoring of removals, which CCME members and partners are undertaking.

More and more EU charters are used for deportations, and also the EU border agency FRONTEX is given an increasing role in deportation from EU member states. How to implement the monitoring requirement for these EU operations is one of the areas of discussion and advocacy.



A European Workshop on Monitoring of forced returns, (reflecting Article 8.6 of the Return Directive) was organised by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in cooperation with CCME and ECRE on 4th December 2009. This workshop provided sharing of information with non-governmental organisations particularly from Central European countries.

Combating trafficking in human beings

CCME continued its long-standing involvement against trafficking in human beings and for the human rights of trafficked persons.

The advocacy work on the one hand focused on follow-up to the Council of Europe Anti-trafficking Convention. This included once again mobilisation of churches to advocate ratification in those countries, which had not yet ratified the

Convention. As the Council of Europe monitoring mechanism GRETA has now been established, its work has become an additional focus of work. So far this area of work included encouragement of churches to get active in informing the expert members of GRETA.

In its work with the EU, CCME has been actively involved in the discussions on a recast of the EU Council framework decision to combat trafficking in human beings. In cooperation with the group of Christian organisations, comments on the European Commission proposal were issued in May 2009.

To a considerable extent the lobbying of CCME and other organizations for an approach centered around victims' rights has positively influenced the Commission proposal for a recast. In a coalition with other European networks and the EU expert group on trafficking, CCME is involved in lobbying EU member states to uphold and potentially strengthen the elements of victims' rights in the negotiations of the Council. CCME was equally active in meetings with the Czech EU Presidency, the incoming Swedish and future Belgian Presidency on their work priorities on trafficking.

A thematic hearing for new MEPs on human rights and trafficking was organized on 6th October 2009 and has proved to be a useful tool for relations with those MEPs, who will determine the EU legislation on trafficking as co-legislators, which will - under the Lisbon Treaty - take the form of a directive.

Addressing the broader context of trafficking and migration policy was at the heart of CCME's engagement with the OSCE and in particular the Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. CCME gave input at an expert meeting on return policies and the protection of trafficked persons in Warsaw 24-25 June and opened the session on trafficking in human beings at the OSCE's Human Dimension Implementation meeting of 1st October.

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 Asylum Procedures directive as well as the "Qualification" directive determining the status and rights of refugees and persons otherwise in need of protection, and the respective recasts put forward by the European Commission in 2009.



Migration to the EU: in construction, or closed doors?

The assessment of transposition on the ground, which some CCME members had undertaken, as well as experiences from the field were brought to the attention of the EU institutions.

An issue of particular concern was the conditions under which migrants and potential refugees would be given a possibility to reach the territory of EU member states. Several EU member states had been found, or suspected to organise so-called "push-backs", violating fundamental human rights, among them the principle of non-refoulement. CCME joined informal efforts to motivate the EU institutions to hold respective EU member states accountable for correct implementation of EU and international refugee law. In this regard, information on very difficult situation in Greece provided by the Greek CCME members was shared widely, and

the situation of new legislation in Italy was addressed by a public statement of the CEC Central Committee in December 2009.

Migration and development

CCME and Christian partner organisations have been actively involved in the discussions on migration and development. CCME had initiated a small task force relating questions of migration and development, which is now a formal working group of the network of development agencies APRODEV.

CCME was again involved in the process around the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which this year was hosted by the Greek government in Athens in November 2009. CCME's General Secretary had been appointed a member of the International Advisory Committee for the civil society days and was among the small delegation of the civil society organisations, which gave input to the governmental meeting.



*Global Forum Migration and development Athens 2009
Doris Pesche, presenting at the Government GFMD
Plenary as Rapporteur for Roundtable 3
of the Civil Society Days*

A joint statement was issued with global ecumenical, as well as development agencies and Roman Catholic partners which highlighted the potential and expertise of Christian organisations in the area – as Christian organisations are active both in issues of development and migration.

Refugee protection

CCME continues to represent CEC in the European Council of Refugees and Exiles ECRE and participated in the annual

general meeting in October 2009 in Madrid as well as in the new “directors’ meetings”. Advocacy on refugee protection was particularly active around implementation of EU law and new EU legislation (see above).

Networking

CCME cooperates with other European NGOs in the context of the NGO platform on asylum and migration. CCME continues to be one of the conveners of the platform. In 2009, members of the platform of NGOs continued to organise briefings for members of the European Parliament in view of their activities, e.g. on asylum issues, removals and detention conditions, but also migration questions in a broader perspective. Members also met with staff of the European Commission for background meetings and briefings.

CCME continuously facilitated efforts of the platform to engage in a more systematic way with the European Commission, particularly around the drafting of the so-called Stockholm Programme (see above). CCME also managed to intensify the contact with the European Parliament’s LIBE committee.

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 2009 convened by CCME. CCME currently holds the chair of the European coordination of ENAR and thus is also a member of the board of ENAR. There was a rather controversial discussion among NGOs around the “Durban follow up” conference, which met in April 2009 to discuss follow up to the 2001 UN World Conference on Racism. The discussions revealed that also among NGOs anti-semitic trends can be observed and require more attention.

CCME continued actively to share information through the internet newlist on Roma issues. In March 2009, the

steering group on Roma met in Helsinki, Finland. The steering group met with the vice-president of the European Roma and Travellers' Forum and discussed a possible project for further work in this field. The discussions and conclusions, as well as previous statements and activities were also shared with a working group initiated by Eurodiaconia in October 2009. In addition, consultations with the "Healing of Memories" project started to identify possibilities for cooperation.

CCME maintains regular exchange and cooperation with the offices of the Church and Society Commission of CEC, APRODEV, Eurodiaconia, 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 for European Affairs continued to have a high degree of visibility. The group was joined by Eurodiaconia end of 2009.

Discussions with Eurodiaconia, which had expressed a wish to be more proactive in the area of migration, on the most appropriate division of tasks and use of respective resources are ongoing.

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 Organisation 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 and was in particular represented

at the meetings of the Migration Committee CDMG as well as at the conference of the Parliamentary Assembly Migration Committee held in Antalya, Turkey on the Global Economic Crisis and Migration. Unfortunately, the expert group on vulnerability of migrants and refugees was not convened in 2009, in which CCME had expressed the interest of members. Participation in further expert groups, on the recognition of qualifications acquired in other countries, and the situation of ageing migrants in European societies, was unfortunately not possible in 2009 as CCME did not have the capacity.

CCME has been involved to start a possible complaint under the Social Charter of the Council of Europe by the Dutch members and the Church and Society Commission of CEC as the Dutch government denies access to housing for asylum applicants after a negative first instance decision.

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/ agencies and civil society at large.

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. In 2009, the visits of Czech and Swedish groups, facilitated by the Church and Society Commission, were of particular importance in view of the EU Presidency of the respective countries.

Often CCME is invited to present the work of Churches in Europe on migration and related questions. In 2009, groups and representatives of Churches and civil society organisations from across Europe visited CCME. In addition CCME

contributes to several dozens of academic researches and in addition to sharing its own information regularly briefed journalists.

In 2009, CCME representatives gave presentations in Armenia, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK, often in connection with project events.

CCME has been part of the preparatory group for the three day programme on globalisation at the Protestant Kirchentag in Bremen May 2009, one day focussing on migration, and is part of the preparatory group for the migration panel at the 2nd Ecumenical Kirchentag held in Munich in May 2010.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES 2009

Migration Year 2010

Throughout 2009, CCME sought to prepare the initiatives for the "Migration Year 2010 - European churches responding to migration 2010", which had been decided by the CCME General Assembly and CEC Central Committee in October 2008.

An ad hoc group was convened in March in order to plan the activities in more detail. A letter by the General Secretaries of CCME and CEC to the respective members in January 2009 introduced the aims of the year and invited participation.

While responses of churches across Europe were positive and many ideas were presented for further consideration, it turned out to be difficult to mobilise the minimum amount of resources, which would have been needed for a fully fledged campaign as it had been envisaged.



migration 2010

european churches responding to migration 2010

Nevertheless, CCME launched various initiatives, which could be realised with limited means: a more detailed "invitation to participate" distributed in German e.g. at the Kirchentag in Bremen and in English at other occasions, promotional material such as scarves and bags, a common logo and the thematic calendar for 2010. The initiative has been taken up in various ways by churches across Europe, which progressively began to take up the migration year in national or regional events.

The migration year was itself launched with an international conference in Budapest 25-27 November 2009.



Opening of the Migration Year 2010

The three day event, which brought together some 70 participants, discussed churches' activities on migration in respect to the unity dimension, the witness/diakonia and the advocacy dimension.

Work against contemporary forms of slavery /trafficking in human beings

CCME used the year 2009 to continue its work as competence centre for churches in Europe on trafficking on the one hand and on the other hand broadened its work on trafficking to include forms of exploitation outside sexual exploitation.

Activities have focused on accompanying churches in their work through providing input and expertise. CCME provided continuous advice on the issue of trafficking to partners in Czech Churches during the Czech EU Presidency. Similar contacts were maintained with the Church of Sweden and the Christian Council of Sweden, which actually selected trafficking and migration as priorities during the Swedish EU Presidency.

CCME continued to be member of the steering group of the Coatnet (Christian organisations against trafficking network), which while being ecumenically open, mainly consists of Roman Catholic organisations (partly as it is under legal responsibility of Caritas). The network contains an extranet, a webpage, and an annual users meeting, which convenes once a year. CCME, while keeping a low-profile involvement in the steering group meetings, encouraged wider participation from CCME/CEC partners. CCME was instrumental in planning and implementation of a high-profile conference on trafficking in the Patriarchate of the Romanian Orthodox Church on 7th October on the occasion of the annual user meeting of COATNET, which was attended by civil society, government and church partners from Romania and across Europe.



COATNET meeting in the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate

CCME continued its advice for the network of partners in the CIS region, which was established in 2007. The annual European Regional Partnership group (ERPG) meeting in Yerevan, Armenia 11-15 October provided a good

forum for continued exchange, in particular for an in-depth exchange with the partners in Armenia. A fruitful new contact was established with the European Evangelical Alliance, which wants to engage more intensely with the issue of trafficking. An interesting debate on a rights-based and non-judgmental approach has developed out of this contact.

Funding for a project, in which expertise against trafficking for other forms of exploitation is built, was granted by the EU. – The “GOING BEYOND” project will be carried out in 2009-2011. Partners met in March 2009 to set out a common agenda for research and project planning. National research into the extent of the problem, patterns, official responses as well as reactions of civil society was undertaken and meetings with regional partners organized. The results of these national and regional researches are currently being shared. A first exchange has further confirmed the need to research this area of contemporary slavery and offer support to persons who have become victim. There is an ongoing exchange with other projects and networks working on the issue, e.g. within the trade unions or the network of Anti Slavery International, with the aim of creating synergy between different projects and enabling more and better coordinated advocacy.

The activities of the projects were connected with ongoing information activities and European advocacy activities (see above).

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 through out 2009 with the project ASPIRE “Assessing

and strengthening participation in Refugee Resettlement to Europe”.



Swedish migration minister Billström opening CCME's European Resettlement conference

The project is supported by the European Refugee Fund of the European Commission with a grant and will continue until mid-March 2010. Throughout the duration of the project six national debate-events were organized by CCME and its project partners in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal and Romania. The debates took stock of the particular national context and they provided a space for reflection on ways to mobilize political will for countries that had not yet established resettlement programmes and evaluation and experience sharing for countries that were just beginning to engage in resettlement. Participants included governmental officials and representatives of municipal authorities, as well UNHCR and NGO representatives.

In addition an Expert Seminar in the Baltic States was organized together with UNHCR. An EU-wide conference on Resettlement was organized together with the Church of Sweden and the Swedish Council of Churches. The first

event prepared the ground for a future involvement of all 3 Baltic States in resettlement. The conference in Stockholm-Sigtuna at the beginning of the Swedish EU Presidency helped to provide input on the development of the EU “Stockholm Programme”, which in its adopted version makes clear reference to resettlement and asks for progress reports on it. Moreover, it offered the opportunity to various stakeholders to discuss the current developments regarding resettlement in Europe and deliberated on the details around an emerging European Resettlement Scheme.

The “Resettlement Fact Sheets” which had in 2007 been produced and printed in English, German and French (with Czech, Dutch, Italian and Spanish translations being available as pdf-file) continued to be a good basis for advocacy work. A number of churches are increasingly engaged in advocacy for more resettlement, particularly for vulnerable group. CCME in this context put forward recommendations and proposals for an EU resettlement scheme.

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.

Uniting in diversity – the MIRACLE project

The work on migration as an opportunity and challenge for the unity of the church was taken forward in 2009 in the context of the “MIRACLE” project (Models of Integration through Religion, Activation Cultural Learning and Exchange). The project is supported by the European Commission with a grant of the INTI fund and runs until June 2010.

MIRACLE focused on migrants’ participation and activation in European Churches and societies. A particular methodology (WinAct – Winning Migrants as Active Citizens), which had initially been developed for trade unions and

political parties, was used in the MIRACLE project for understanding migrants' active participation and for sharing best practices of integration. This existing methodology has now been adapted to the context of churches and congregations. In addition, the Intercultural Mediation method has been used in trainings. A draft version of the new MIRACLE-WinAct method was distributed to the six partners of the project (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden) and it was used in national workshops and one regional meeting, which took place during 2009 after an initial conference held in Brussels in March 2009.

In addition to the workshops, a study was undertaken collecting interviews of migrants active in or participating in historical and migrants-led churches. After an interviewers' training the interviewers have carried out and submitted their interviews in autumn. Results of the project will be presented in 2010.

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) of the WCC

The Global Ecumenical Network of the WCC met in Budapest in connection with the launch of the migration year 2010, hosted by CCME and the Reformed Church in Hungary.



GEM participation at the migration year launch

The third meeting of the global network after it had been re-named Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) was characterised by the intention to develop a common format of action -

CCME's year of churches responding to migration offered a template for the activities of regional ecumenical organisations in other world regions.

CCME in particular gave input to the African consultation process through participation at the GEM regional meeting in Nairobi in August 2009.

40th anniversary of the Ecumenical Programme to Combat Racism

WCC in cooperation with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and the Council of Churches in the Netherlands organised a meeting on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Programme to Combat Racism in June 2009. CCME participated actively in this conference which concluded with a statement: **Break Down the Walls - End Racism and Racial Discrimination.**

CEC-CCME INTEGRATION AND CEC ASSEMBLY JULY 2009

Based on the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (2007), and the decisions on the final steps of integration (2008) adopted by the CCME Assembly and CEC Central Committee integration was pursued.

The CEC-CCME Memorandum of Understanding had clarified changes and requirements for both organisations to facilitate the integration taking effect. The CCME Assembly adopted revised statutes and the CEC Central Committee adopted the structural changes needed, incorporated CCME staff in its staffing plans and clarified the process for other pending decisions.

The senior management team of CEC, in which the CCME General Secretary fully participates, was developed further in 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 present CEC staff and CCME staff generally helped to move forward to better cooperation between staff at all levels of CEC. Planning for the CEC Assembly in Lyon in July 2009 was undertaken on the assumption that the assembly would signal the final step of the integration process. Plans for a joint corporate design of CEC and its three commissions to reflect a common identity of CEC were finalized.



Dr Victoria Kamondji giving testimony at opening service of CEC General Assembly

Migration issues played a clear and visible role in the proceedings of the assembly – be it in the debates in plenary, in workshops or in the work of the committees.

A public issues statement “Called to value migrant people” was adopted by the assembly.

The participation of a visible delegation of migrant churches’ representatives had been facilitated by CCME upon request of the CEC.

While the assembly in these respects was a visible and encouraging sign of European churches’ commitment to migration issues, the structural decisions of the assembly were more problematic. Discussion and decisions of the assembly signalled a strong need for CEC to review its own structures and to discuss, among other issues, whether it wanted to continue to work through commissions. As the CEC-CCME integration process had always been based on the assumption that CCCME would become a commission of CEC, the decision for the review

process by the CEC assembly factually meant putting the integration process on hold as it had been indicated by delegates during the debate. The CCME ExCom clarified after the CEC Assembly that it shares aims of the review, as e.g. also the agreement between CEC and CCME had foreseen a revision of the CEC Constitution to facilitate participation of migrant churches in the future, and hopes that the results will facilitate the integration of CEC and CCME. Consequently, CCME agreed to continuing to work with CEC as if it was already a Commission of CEC and to the Central Committee appointing a provisional CCME in December 2009. The situation remains slightly complicated for all sides, but the ExCom of CCME has expressed its hope to continue the common work with the churches in Europe on migration and integration, refugees and asylum and against racism and discrimination.

CCME internal

The ExCom of CCME met three times in 2009: in Brussels in January and October as well as in April in Stockholm (Sweden). Parts of the ExCom met on the fringes of the CEC Assembly and during the launch of the migration year.



The CCME ExCom in session April 2009, Stockholm

The financial situation for 2009 has been stable with regard to membership fees and some funding by WCC project grants and continued support from church related agencies. Due to substantial European Commission funding for 3 projects the total operational budget was 528.559,10 EUR and thus considerably

higher than in previous years. The result of the year is a slight deficit of 2.533,92 EUR for the operations. However, the balance sheet shows an overall surplus of 4.812,60 EUR for 2009. (see Financial Report 2009 for details).

The secretariat is still comprised of three permanent staff: General Secretary Doris Peschke, Executive Secretary Torsten Moritz and Office Manager Emmanuel Kabalisa. During 2009, the team was temporarily strengthened by two project staff, Olivia Bertelli and Lilian Tsourdi as well as a seconded officer from the Protestant Church of Hesse-Nassau Thomas Stephan. The team is once per week assisted by an accountant Charlotte Vander Borght.



CCME Team 2009

COMMUNICATION

Communication activities were enhanced with the regular update of the website <http://www.ccme.be>, which despite the problematic format of the site remained an important tool of communications. Preparations had been undertaken throughout the year for the new CCME site as part of the new CEC site which was launched towards the end of 2009. In addition, the migration 2010 website has been developed by CCME and this is operational as of end of 2009 <http://www.migration2010.eu>. There is continued cooperation with CEC on communications. CCME regularly contributed to CEC publications such as the CEC MONITOR or the newsletter of CEC's Church and Society Commission. Press releases on CCME events have led to widespread coverage of these activities in church media across Europe.

CCME issued thematically oriented publications such as the booklet on civil society efforts to combat trafficking for

forced labour or the resettlement factsheets and the calendar for the year of European Churches Responding to Migration 2010. 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 in South Eastern Europe 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 and Asia Minor 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 every summer. While the EU policies based on deterrence and migration control are increasingly challenged, the EU and member states' policy focus has been put on border management. CCME has sought to address the misperceptions associated with the pictures, 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" is becoming more visible - exemplified by the fact that the directive for entry and residence of highly qualified persons (Blue Card) has been adopted in 2009 as the second "immigration" directive after the one on entry and residence for the purpose of study, training and volunteering.

The year 2009 has brought about significant changes in the political setup in which CCME operates, with a newly elected European Parliament and a newly appointed European Commission having started their work. A new legal

basis in the Lisbon Treaty changed the political context even more.

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 churches and societies in Europe.

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

The year of European Churches responding to migration in 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.

Churches in Europe are called to develop a coherent organisational framework of addressing migration issues.

CCME enters a crucial year in 2010 and relies on the continued support, cooperation, expertise and prayer of its members, partners and friends.



Visit www.migration2010.eu



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)