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Public Statement of the General Assembly of CCME, Bucharest 16-19 June 2011

The 18th General Assembly of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) was held in Bucharest, Romania, from 16-19 June 2011. Romania is one of the countries grappling with the recent economic crisis and related migration issues.

On the eve of International Refugees' Day on June 20th, the CCME General Assembly commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Refugee Convention. The political changes in North Africa are the most recent examples causing movements of people who risk their life to reach Europe. To avoid further loss of life European churches regard the Geneva Refugee Convention and other International and European Conventions an important basis which need to be fully applied. Churches demand from European governments an enforcement of international refugee protection according to these conventions.

In this context, the General Assembly stresses the need for a real responsibility sharing among European countries ensuring human rights and dignity of all migrants and refugees. This includes also a responsible use of language and images which avoid terms such as "invasion", "migrant flows" or even "human tsunamis". From a Christian point of view every human being is created in the image of God. Therefore, human rights and dignity are non-negotiable regardless of the legal status a persons.

Furthermore, it is an ongoing task of societies as well as of churches to defend the common space of freedom and justice against efforts to implement security measures which undermine the core values of Europe. It needs to live in solidarity within and beyond its borders.

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and Councils of Churches as well as church-related agencies across Europe. CCME formally cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.