



cec

conference of european churches



ccme

churches' commission for migrants in europe

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Churches on EU-Turkey border: Show solidarity, respect rights and human dignity



The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) have expressed deep concern on rising tensions at the EU-Turkey border. Speaking from Brussels, general secretaries of both European ecumenical organisations voiced alarm over reports of violence against persons trying to cross border between Turkey and EU countries, and those who are assisting them.

“We urge solidarity and respect for human rights and dignity. We are all created in the image of God – a fundamental Christian principal,” said Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen, CEC general secretary. “No human being, no migrant or refugee should have to be a tool in a political game.”

He went on to say that “countries at the EU external border, such as Greece or Cyprus, but also Turkey have been confronted with enormous challenges due to migratory moves for years. Amidst these challenges, we express thanks to the churches, civil society actors and states, who have been responding to the situation.”

“In this difficult time, we need to find operational responses entailing respect for human dignity and right to asylum as laid down in Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the existing EU asylum law,” said Dr Torsten Moritz, CCME general secretary. “We invite the EU and its Member States to finally extend solidarity to countries and people at the EU external border. Safe access to protection, dignified reception and relocation must be ensured.”

“We are concerned but we are hopeful that EU can resolve this situation. We ask churches and their members across Europe to pray and act for a swift solution,” he added.

Member churches and partners of CEC and CCME are continuing to provide reception and legal advice to migrants, including shelter for unaccompanied minors in Greece. A number of churches are pledging reception places along with local government authorities in other EU countries, distributing food and providing support at the Greek Turkish border.

Churches have often expressed concern over violence and dehumanising conditions around the border, criticising consequences of the EU-Turkey agreement. Together with humanitarian organisations, NGOs and their governments, they are continuing to develop affective humanitarian responses, reception and support.

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