



**“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together”  
(1 Corinthians 12:26)**

***Solidarity – with refugees & migrants, between countries, between churches !***

## **CCME WORK PROGRAMME 2021-23**

**Adopted by the CCME extraordinary General Assembly on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

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## CCME work programme 2021-23

**“CCME is an ecumenical organisation that serves the churches in their commitment to promote the vision of an inclusive community through advocating for an adequate policy for migrants, refugees and minority groups at European and national level. In the fulfilment of this mandate it is responding to the message of the Bible which insists on the dignity of every human being and to the understanding of unity as devoid of any distinction between strangers and natives.”**

**(CCME Mission Statement)**

Looking back at a proud history of 56 years serving the churches, committing to migrants and minority ethnic people as well as offering analysis, challenge, encouragement and hope, CCME in Autumn 2021 is formulating this work programme for the next 3 years. It does so at a moment of great uncertainty in church and society, in a period filled with both fear and optimism. This work programme therefore is part of an ongoing process.

## Background: Asylum, migration and anti-discrimination after COVID 19 – at a crossroads?

The COVID 19 crisis of 2020-21 has shaken assumptions about the “normality” of the way social and political interactions have been organised until now. Central issues in which this normality is questioned relate to international migration, such as globalisation, climate change, multilateralism, and the rule of law – to name only a few.

More significantly for an organisation like CCME, COVID and its consequences have affected refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people in many direct and indirect ways. Refugees and asylum seekers were the first to be affected by borders and harbours being closed, while labour migrants experienced not being welcome in their host countries and their countries of origin. The devastating social and hygienic conditions experienced by many among the different categories of migrants and minority ethnic people meant a dramatically increased vulnerability. In many countries anti-immigrant activists tried to demonise people on the move and minority ethnic people, scapegoating them for the health crisis.

Yet, in many countries, efforts underlining the solidarity between different parts of society have also included refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people. In the process of recognising the crucial importance of certain institutions and professions, many migrant workers finally were recognised for the important contribution they make, be it as doctors, nurses, harvest workers, cleaners or truck drivers. In some places, regularisations were achieved and have, in response to COVID, led to faster access to the labour market for asylum seekers. The social movement of Black Lives Matter has in many countries inspired discussions and actions on the issue of racial equality and inclusion in church and society.

Patterns of interacting have changed due to COVID and its consequences, with virtual meetings, webinars and other formats offering new possibilities while at the same time showing the limits of such interaction.

It is therefore difficult to forecast the context in which CCME will operate in the next two years and also difficult to predict where and how the limited resources of CCME will have the most impact in serving the churches in their effort to improve the situation of refugees, migrants and minority ethnic persons.

## Background: common biblical convictions – diversity of expressions

The work of CCME is founded on the Christian conviction that all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis, 1. 26 ff), on the tradition of the biblical narrative of people experiencing migration and on the message of hospitality to the stranger. This message, as laid out in many biblical passages like Leviticus 19.34, clearly links the fair treatment and love of the stranger to the love of God and faithfulness to God. The work of CCME derives from this, that Christians' love for God needs to be underpinned by a respect and love for the stranger.

At the same time, the witness of European churches is underpinned by the many biblical stories and experiences of the early Christians in being the church. It is in this sense that 1 Corinthians 12 is inspirational and has given this work programme its title and spirit. The leitmotif of the CCME in its service to the churches in Europe is to be one body in Christ with many members, with a diversity of gifts but sharing the same spirit. It is in this context that CCME underlines the seemingly secular concept of "solidarity", based on the conviction that "solidarity is the fruit of ecumenism".<sup>1</sup>

Guided by these common convictions, the work of CCME is varied: not only is it inspired by different Christian traditions, it is also bearing witness in different contemporary contexts, each shaped by different historical experiences across Europe. Yet in all this, CCME and its members are united in the search for fellowship, unity and meaningful witness in the reality of reconciled diversity (2 Corinthians 5.19).

## Background: the current and future work of CCME<sup>2</sup>, reasons for hope – and concern

CCME and its members are, as the 2017-20 work programme states, motivated by "the hope in which we stand" (inspired by Romans 1, 5). Despite the increasingly harsh realities for migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people in church and society in Europe, CCME has been able to provide hope underpinned by "big messages", theological and political debate, networking and highly qualified advocacy work. Activities in recent years such as the "Christmas statement" 2018 as well as the discussions on hospitality at the CEC GA in Novi Sad have strengthened the conviction of churches and church leaders in Europe that migration is a central issue of church life in Europe

In the wider ecumenical family CCME is recognised for the importance of its work, the potential of its network and membership and not least the quality of the work undertaken. The CCME members' meeting in November 2019 in Berlin confirmed the CCME's strong ownership of asylum/migration/anti-discrimination expertise among the churches in Europe, with most speaking of the "CCME family". This sense of ownership and mutual support has firmly prevailed, through the times of the COVID pandemic and its consequences.

In a number of important issues, CCME has been able to set or drive forward issues in policy and church. For example, the CCME ExCom kicked off the "20.000 by 2020" campaign for more resettlement and related advocacy with a position paper in March 2012. The target seemed ambitious at the time. At the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, the EU pledged 30,000 places for 2020. In an increasingly interconnected world, the fact that CCME is part of a global, interregional network

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<sup>1</sup> WCC worship on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in Uppsala/Sweden, sermon by WCC General Secretary Olof Fyske Tveit.

<sup>2</sup> While the issue discussed here is CCME and its work in particular in 2020-23, it is important to remember that CCME is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Addressing the issue of the success and survival of CCME is done with the understanding that the relevance of CCME lies in its service to churches and the promotion of the vision of an inclusive community... for migrants, refugees and minority group (cf. CCME mission statement).

of churches is a major asset and a strong point in comparison with, for example, with many secular NGOs.

The issue of diaspora and “migrant churches”<sup>3</sup> which was seen as marginal two decades ago but kept on the agenda by CCME, now officially features in the CEC constitution.

New and flexible methods of work, like the members’ meeting, the various virtual meetings or the nomination of members to planning groups of events, have shown the potential of building more systematically on the expertise of the CCME network.

At the same time, and despite continued and even growing interest in the services and work of CCME, the resources contributed to CCME and its activities are likely to remain the same if not decrease in the next years. Civil society and churches have invested more resources into migration work since 2014/15. However, these have rarely been allocated to CCME but rather to bi-lateral local projects or flagship initiatives of individual churches. The commitment to CCME has largely not translated into a stronger commitment of resources. The financial and membership situation of CCME is likely to become more difficult, not better, aside from the possible negative consequences of a post-COVID 19 recession.

While delegates at previous General Assemblies wanted as many issues as possible to be addressed, the feedback from others in their churches has often been that it is not clear enough what CCME stands for. Some churches, which financed CCME work in the past, have signalled mainly through their project/finance departments, their doubts as to whether CCME always fully delivers on what it promises. Some of the CCME events in recent years were one-off events rather than part of a longer term strategy.

In the last decade a number of members have begun to establish their own European networks and relations with EU institutions, very often as the capacity of CCME was completely taken up by the vast array of activities and involvements and members felt left alone with their own developing issues. Some of this trend could be reverted in the coming years, but this would take time and energy.

On the Brussels level, CCME has become less relevant in a number of areas in the last 10 years. CCME is no longer automatically invited to meetings organised by MEPs or the Commission on issues like return or asylum, nor are its positions referenced by the EU institutions. While this is partly to be explained by the increasing number of organisations working on such issues, there are indications that CCME is no longer seen to provide in-depth, up-to-date and high-quality involvement in all the manifold issues it is committed to by the work programme. Recent experiences of advocacy on the asylum and migration pact also indicate that while members find CCME’s advocacy important, at the same time they find it difficult to relate this to their own advocacy on national and EU policy.

As well as managing the overstretched and limited staff resources more responsibly, setting clearer priorities could be an additional benefit (some would suggest the circumstances of the departure of former key CCME staff have highlighted that this is necessary).

On a seemingly more technical level, current non-compliance with Belgian legislation (e.g. articles of association) and the neglect of structural issues (e.g. IT security and bookkeeping) as well as negligence in following up on events in the last decade have left CCME vulnerable. A more ongoing proactive involvement and attention will be needed.

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<sup>3</sup> The issue of terminology shall at this point not be discussed in detail

In order to have a more realistic work plan, CCME needs to more clearly articulate how it will structure its involvement in the different areas of potential interest and to set priorities. Setting priorities will be painful as this will include having to give less or no priority to issues that may be dear and important to certain members or have been traditionally important for CCME. In this context, it is important to emphasise that CCME is not beginning to do less than it used to do but is becoming more honest about what really can be done with the quality and depth needed. It is however important to realise that setting priorities has been the reality in CCME for many years, although this was done outside the General Assembly. This work programme returns many aspects of priority decision making to the General Assembly.

## CCME 2021-23: commitment, compassion, clarity

### A differentiated and prioritised set of issues

As mentioned above, there are many possibilities and high potential for CCME to remain a central point of reference in the service of churches and a source of hope for those experiencing migration across Europe. CCME has a unique chance to be a hope for refugees, migrants and minority ethnic persons themselves, for those working with and for them, and for others encountering them.

However, the concerns and worrying developments outlined above also demonstrate that CCME will be able to remain meaningful only if it changes. The understandable desire to have CCME address a maximum of issues and undertake a maximum of activities with limited or even shrinking resources will sooner rather than later lead to frustration, disappointment and loss of credibility.

It is therefore time to decide to do less but to do better, with higher quality and more impact. This requires the difficult work of differentiating and prioritising. Both reflections at the meetings of the CCME ExCom (Nov. 2019 in Brussels) and CCME members (Nov. 2019 in Berlin) have shown that the exercise of discontinuing or deprioritising work on ANY issue is extremely difficult.

It is also clear that an element of flexibility will be needed, not least as prioritised activities may not be feasible, due to a lack of resources; moreover, new funding opportunities might present new thematic perspectives and new challenges requiring a response (as it was the case in 2015).

A clearer distinction is suggested: that CCME will only highlight ONE area of work as its main focus with one or at most two others additional areas in which it LEADS.

Other areas shall be addressed with a much lower intensity (CCME will in general network and create connections but without being THE expert organisation itself, and will inform members about resources provided outside the CCME), while in yet other areas, CCME will either follow other organisations, or in some cases even completely hand them over to others. At the same time, CCME should explore how the CCME network might be able to address relevant issues without activities exclusively being undertaken by the rather small office. It should also be evident that CCME should only engage on issues where a European response is of clear added value.

## ISSUES THAT CCME WILL ADDRESS IN 2021-23

### I. CCME LEADS

#### Safe passage

In 2014 CCME presented a need for refugees and migrants to access, in a safe way, the EU immigration process. "SAFE PASSAGE" came to refer to this process, a term that has since garnered use in other organisations. In practice "SAFE PASSAGE" is a campaign to promote safe ways of reaching Europe by

- increasing the number of resettlement places and locations for refugees;
- suspending visa requirements for refugees from war torn areas and totalitarian regimes;
- issuing humanitarian visas to refugees from crisis regions, possibly including regions where climate change led to forced displacements;
- providing flexible and generous opportunities for family reunification;
- a legal and accessible labour migration policy, balancing the real market's needs with the rights of migrants;
- establishing and expanding complementary pathways
- establishing a fair sharing of responsibility for refugee reception and relocation
- networking with churches to provide support through sponsorship of refugees and migrants through quality facilities in community programmes.

*Safe Passage*, synonymous today with CCME, complements the existing asylum processes and resettlement programmes. It takes up the existing best practices on an operational level, networks them and promotes them for adaptation by other churches.

In recent years, the link of *Safe Passage* with *Search and Rescue* activities has become increasingly self-evident. The foundation of CCME's work has been its conviction that all human beings are created in the image of God. CCME highlights the link between solidarity with refugees and migrants and the countries that have become places of first reception – through material aid but also relocation and other partnership activities within the EU.

When the traditional ways of access are dangerous CCME insists on the need to protect migrants and refugees as THE main area of activity. Working towards *Safe Passages* is a clear expression of solidarity with refugees and migrants, affirming their God-given dignity and right to life.

#### CCME will

- advocate on a European level to influence EU policy promoting instruments of *Safe Passage*.
- highlight initiatives undertaken by member states and civil society most affected by migration.
- seek further to complement the information and networking activities in this and other advocacy projects with clearer capacity building activities for advocacy of members in national, regional, and EU issues.
- provide a platform of exchange for new and innovative ways *Safe Passage* can be implemented for European Churches and partners, affirming CCME's belief that different initiatives promoted by members of the CCME constituency are complementary rather than in competition with each other.

### Right to family life in migration

Because of the role of the family in Christian teaching and tradition, and its importance to CCME members, CCME has played a crucial role in efforts to uphold and improve migrants' right to family life. Highlights consist of opposition to restrictive EU directives (such as the Dublin Regulation and Family Reunification Directive) and contributions to guidelines on implementing directives and relevant case law.

CCME will

- continue to analyse and comment on other policies on asylum and migration with a specific family-oriented angle.

This approach of mainstreaming family into asylum and migration policy issues will continue to guide CCME.

In the event that specific opportunities for improving European legislation on *migrants' family unity* should arise or new dangers to rights already established in European legislation,

CCME will

- specifically lead advocacy efforts to uphold and improve the rights of migrants and refugees in the area of family unity.

### Uniting in Diversity

The area of discerning how traditional churches and churches or Christian communities that have arisen in the context of migration in and to Europe has been a core work of CCME in recent decades. Probably more than in other areas of CCME's work, in this area the realities, supposed certainties and concepts are constantly evolving, with concepts such as "migrant churches", "reverse mission" or "church planting" being embraced by some and radically criticised by others. In comparison with other ecumenical bodies, CCME has probably reached some inclusivity, although many would contend it doesn't go far enough. Opinions among CCME members are very heterogeneous: while some have optimistic outlooks on the prospect of more fellowship and deeper unity, practitioners from other member churches question if the progress made corresponds to the efforts. Some would go as far as to say that the issue of uniting in diversity is mainly of use to a spectrum outside or on the margins of the ecumenical movement such as evangelical movements or Pentecostal churches. At the same time, it is clear that being or getting serious about diversity and inclusiveness within the churches is a question of credibility in policy advocacy. While working in the area of church unity is a genuine characteristic of a Christian organisation, the work also has massive significance for "secular" debates e.g. on integration, inclusion and anti-discrimination. The third edition of the Mapping Migration study, completed in 2020 and launched in 2021, will provide a good orientation.

CCME will develop strategies and working methods so it can serve as a hub for practitioners, facilitating networks and the sharing of best practices and knowledge. This work will also build bridges between churches and academia on topics of church and integration, thus bringing academics and practitioners together. CCME will be leading network activities such as conferences, webinars etc. to be driven by the involvement of members. Likewise, the work will be coordinated in close cooperation with other ecumenical bodies such as CPCE, CEC and others where relevant so as to avoid duplicating work.



Besides this, CCME will maintain strategic, context-specific advocacy for inclusion and diversity in national and European churches and ecumenical bodies. Churches strengthen and cohesion/integration takes place in and through churches, so that churches can explore and live faith together.

CCME's work is largely divided into the Safe Passage project (focused on asylum, refugee and solidarity) and the Uniting in Diversity project (focused on migrants, church and integration). Theological reflection is cross-cutting but Safe Passage has a more political edge and is directed externally, especially with regard to European institutions, while the Uniting in Diversity work is more internally directed towards the churches. The external and internal advocacy are interconnected. If churches are not inclusive in practice, it is difficult to demand society to be inclusive.

The two projects need to have a balanced allocation of resources, both in budgets and in the use of CCME staff working hours, if members will fund this area (as the chances of secular funding are practically non-existent). Important themes related to the Uniting in Diversity work that CCME will then take up include:

- Migrant youth, next generation and issues of double identities.
- Need for spaces of worship and experiences with ecumenical relations where churches share church buildings.
- The difficulty of terminology related to "migrant/ethnic minority" churches and "established/traditional" churches.
- Models of being an intercultural church (at congregational level) in the balance between the need for fellowship in the "heart language" and meeting across cultural/linguistic differences.
- The imbalance of resources in ecumenical relations between established churches and newer "migrant churches" and experiences of overcoming these structural challenges in ecumenical encounters.
- Need for education and competence development.

## II. CCME SERVES, INFORMS AND NETWORKS

### Asylum policy

Asylum policy has since 1999 been part of CCME's mandate. Advocating on the development of the Common European Asylum System as well as the networking of responses to significant refugee movements, e.g. in 2015, have been central to the life of CCME. Through its members CCME has been able to broaden public debates and to include population groups who would otherwise not have engaged with refugee-supporting NGOs. At the same time, it is clear that analysing and commenting on the many, very detailed legislative proposals, which are in constant change during the legislative process, requires an amount of resources currently not available at CCME. At the same time, CCME is a member of networks and has members and partners whose work focuses exclusively on refugee protection, most of whom have a wider pool of experts available.

CCME should therefore rely on the expertise and resources that it can use as a part of networks or partnerships. CCME will focus on sharing existing expertise and provide a channel for contributing the expertise as well as networks of European churches, their organisations, activities and partners, e.g. in formats like the European Asylum Conference. CCME will continue to advocate for a threefold solidarity in this context – with refugees and migrants, between countries and between churches.

CCME will attentively monitor if its work can indeed be effectively supported by existing networks and partnerships and in this context decide if additional or alternative work of its own work might become necessary.

A specific activity that the CCME will for the time being lead is that of religious conversion in the asylum procedure. CCME will provide a forum for exchanges among experts from churches, legal practitioners and EU institutions. This will preferably be coordinated and carried out in cooperation with ecumenical partners.

### Climate Change

Future developments are always difficult to predict but we can be sure that the consequences of the climate crisis on migration will be huge. In the next decade many rural and urban areas will suffer directly from the changing situation, and in the reports following the IPCC, migration is mentioned as one of the most crucial direct consequences. CCME will explore whether any church agency is working on this issue.

### Return(s)

CCME will equally continue to share existing resources and create channels of information on European legislative developments on return as well as share experiences from the work of its members. Regarding its own specific activities, CCME will examine the feasibility of more networking in the area of monitoring returns (both before and after). The return monitoring by CCME members will be a building block for this inside the EU as will be the work of CCME members with persons returning to European non-EU countries. Another starting block in the area of return monitoring will be CCME's inter-regional partnerships: the initial idea of developing a return monitoring in cooperation with the All Africa Conference of Churches and some of the European Christian development agencies active in Africa shall be further explored and if feasible put into practice.

### Trafficking in persons

CCME has for more than a decade been the leading European ecumenical organisation addressing trafficking in human beings, combining members' activities, Europe-wide networking and specialised advocacy. A solid expertise is the result, evident in publications, position papers etc. A number of networks has been created which are still partly active.

While CCME will not itself lead on new initiatives, it will connect the expertise of its membership and network with the initiatives of other actors. CCME will also continue to make its competence available to churches in Europe.

### Anti-discrimination

While CCME will continue to work on issues of the discrimination of migrants, refugees and minorities, particularly because of racism, a number of tasks could be better addressed by other organisations. The social policy aspects of Roma inclusion, for example, are very competently addressed by Eurodiaconia. In the area of overcoming Roma discrimination through reconciliation and fellowship in the churches, good networks are also in place, but CCME should respond to the wishes expressed at the Roma & Sinti Justice Conference in March 2020: to provide bridges between those networks, which are mainly Protestant-Evangelical-Pentecostal and other denominations beyond their area of Central and South East Europe.

CCME will continue to provide a platform of exchange for initiatives in European churches with the aim of making churches in Europe ethnically inclusive and equal, that is to say "anti-racist" churches.

Similarly, CCME will link the anti-discrimination work of churches to the ongoing networking and advocacy of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), in particular on the new EU anti-racism action plan.

### III. CCME FOLLOWS, SHARES TASKS OR HANDS OVER

In general, CCME will in the next years explore with other Europe-wide Christian organisations if a model of task division between the organisations can progressively be developed. The aim would be to ensure maximum access to qualified information and networking as well as advocacy opportunities for CCME members while avoiding duplication of work. It needs to be carefully considered if CCME members could participate in the activities of other European Christian organisations which have a particular focus that is of importance to certain CCME members but is not a priority for CCME itself. Such arrangements obviously would need to be built on reciprocity and would require a high degree of thematic agreement and mutual trust. The high degree of ownership and fellowship within CCME also will be an important consideration in such explorations as they should not be jeopardised for possible gains in efficiency.

#### Global fellowship

In its service to the churches in Europe CCME stands in the fellowship of the oikoumene – the fellowship of churches and the fellowship of the whole inhabited Earth. This means that CCME's work is Europe-focussed in nature but is also global and interregional. CCME's global relations are informed by the fact that most displacement and migration on the globe happen outside Europe but that several of the causes for displacement are generated in Europe. In that sense CCME's work is regional but its solidarity is global.

CCME's participation in the network of the WCC will remain essential, particularly in 2022 - the year of the first WCC assembly in Europe for 54 years. CCME has offered to the WCC to provide input on the regional reality in Europe, both at the assembly itself and at the European pre-assembly. CCME will continue to encourage a proactive role for the WCC in convening global networks of churches on asylum, migration and antidiscrimination. WCC will, together with ACT Alliance, remain CCME's privileged relay to the UN system.

Interregional cooperation should be complemented by cooperation with churches in other regions, in particular with regional church bodies, such as CWS and PCUSA in the USA or AACC in Africa, which in recent years have extended an ecumenical and proactive outreach to CCME and share common working priorities.

### IV. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

#### The big context: changing the narrative

A constantly recurring issue in discussions on migration is the widely felt need to "change the narrative" on migration and its consequences. This need arises from the conclusion that the space for rights- and values-based policies and practice on migration will remain limited as long as refugees, migrants as well as minority ethnic people are demonised in the public perception and migration is portrayed as the source of many problems.

CCME has been involved in some analysis of the current debates and certainly provides a different outlook in its own messages. Members are often active in campaigns of different sorts, but their experiences so far suggest that a more methodologically refined and targeted approach that could clearly demonstrate impact would be of considerable added value. At the same time, it seems as if

some of the specialist expertise, which would be needed for developing such a targeted and meaningful approach and for measuring its impact, is scarce in the CCME network and beyond.

CCME will therefore seek to obtain funding for expanding this area of work, so that CCME in the future can indeed serve the churches in Europe in changing the narrative. This can be undertaken in partnership with other actors in civil society or academia. Yet, it should look at the specific opportunity and challenges for churches as institutions that include in their midst and through their activities reach both refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people themselves as well as those who oppose their rights – often in locations where no other social actor is present.

In view of the unique role of churches as advocates for a welcoming Europe and as part of the fabric of Europe's society, CCME should in particular look to influence the "middle ground" in the population and the political spectrum – as few other organisations advocating migrant/refugee/minority ethnic groups have connections and credibility in this area, even though here is where future majorities will be built.

## V. METHODS, COMMUNICATION AND OWNERSHIP

### Working methods

CCME's approach to working methods will continue to be needs-driven and reflect a philosophy of working through flexible, light mechanisms. At the moment, there seems to be no clear added value in adopting permanent mechanisms such as standing working groups. On the contrary, the practice of engaging members in a process and with clearly agreed aims through projects, or other time-bound mechanisms – e.g. task forces or one-off events with related planning and a follow-up process – has proven helpful and will be continued. The recently developed practice of short real or virtual meetings for the whole membership will be continued as well as this is considered useful by the membership.

### Communication

CCME has over the years tried to use traditional forms of communication as well as a limited amount of social media. Both had to be selective and were often far from perfect, due to severe resource limitations. Their use also was underpinned by the conviction that certain parts of CCME's communication should be exclusive to its members, who are the ones sustaining CCME. Feedback suggests that members appreciate this approach, while clearly indicating that the public appearance of CCME should still be improved. CCME will therefore continue using elements such as the internal members' letter and email updates as well as the public tools, namely its website and Facebook site. The website and Facebook site will continue to share public news from CCME as well as thematically relevant information from other sources. CCME members increasingly sharing their information via CCME's sites could be a dynamic and important addition to communication coming from the office.

A new communication practice could be developed but will require that either substantial additional amounts of resources are given to CCME or that they are taken from other areas of CCME's work.

### CCME office, ExCom and members....

Previous work programmes have never clearly spelled out who was meant when they declared "CCME will/should". In practice, this has led to the assumption that the office will be responsible for everything. This is somewhat surprising given that CCME has a vast network of members and a qualified ExCom, but only a small office.

Members commit themselves to regularly share information on their relevant activities with CCME, so it can be shared for example via Facebook. If this commitment is successfully implemented, CCME will look for additional communication streams (intranet etc).

The work programme for 2020-23 and the process towards it should in principle have been a start to discuss and outline where members could remain responsible for implementing the work of CCME, or become even more so.

While events like the Nordic meeting or the European Asylum Conference are excellent examples of members partnering with CCME and involving substantial parts of the CCME membership, more could be done in communicating CCME and its work, at least to the churches' leadership. This is a task which ideally happens in people's native tongue and in their respective communication/church/society contexts; it could therefore be an area for greater engagement by members. If members are undertaking self-organised networking activities under the CCME banner, the office could support them organisationally (contact details etc).

While the response from those responsible for asylum, migration, anti-discrimination work among the CCME members underlines how useful CCME is, often little of that is known more broadly in their own churches. The extremely limited resources of these migration/refugee/anti-discrimination experts is an important obstacle, but certain aspects of enhancing the ownership of CCME might be improved if they are more consciously addressed. In order to fulfil its mission to serve the churches in their work for refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people, CCME needs to be owned more by the whole entity of its member churches and organisations. On a European level, the simple sharing of existing information on members' activities via CCME could dramatically improve visibility and, in the long run, fellowship. If every CCME member would every other month share one piece of news about its work for use on the CCME Facebook site, the importance, dynamism and relevance of CCME would immediately become much more visible.

In addition, compared with other organisations, CCME currently is not characterised by a very active role for its ExCom members. The initial experiences of ExCom members leading on certain aspects of work in recent years have been encouraging. Much will depend on what capacity (background, but also time) ExCom members have to be more involved, but it would be useful to ascertain if a more active role could be possible for at least part of the ExCom.

#### [“Putting our money where our mouth is”](#)

With the 2020-23 work programme, CCME is making more transparent that and how it is setting priorities and is trying to put the members in the driving seat. It is therefore also highly desirable that the programme, which was adopted by the members' delegates, is supported by those in the member churches and organisations who will be asked to commit resources, preferably in a systematic manner. The need to find additional resources for around 30% of CCME's annual budget is potentially hazardous and will often make any advance planning impossible.

The ExCom fundraising group has developed a little leaflet to encourage more financial ownership of CCME by its members. This could be one of many activities to put CCME on a more stable financial footing. Members will need to commit to supporting CCME as an ongoing service and networking organisation, as well as to the different elements of this work programme so that the general activities as described can be more fully operationalised. Activities that are self-financed (including costs for staff, infrastructure) and within the remit of CCME will obviously be considered favourably.

## Fellowship – in action

Only a brief mention is made of a number of ongoing but less public activities which are not explicitly mentioned under any of the headings but will remain part of CCME's work. Referring members to one another for practical questions (often individual cases), facilitating and encouraging financial solidarity between members or just sharing thoughts and prayers with members in difficult situations will remain important practical expressions of solidarity, rooted in the conviction of being in different places working on different issues but one in the fellowship of Christ. This conviction shall also lead the approach to non-members: any organisation wanting to address migration on the common biblical basis is welcome.

## VI. DEVELOPING CCME FURTHER – AN ONGOING TASK

The plans for the CCME General Assembly 2020 and the process of developing a work programme with clearer priorities have been massively disturbed by the postponement of the GA due to COVID. What had been envisaged as a months-long process where delegates would exchange views about the programme and budget online and would also involve different actors in the respective member churches/organisations was reduced to a minimum, as the preparatory phase now largely coincided with the summer holiday period. The GA itself had to be considerably limited in size and therefore interaction with the CCME constituency was also more limited than initially desired.

This underlines the need to carry on with the planned organisational and thematic development beyond 2020. The CCME ExCom will examine the best way to take the issue further and has to take on some of the priority-setting process envisaged at the GA 2020. ExCom's work could be complemented by a designated task force and by a process oriented towards the development of the work programme beyond 2023.

The above-mentioned shows that CCME has reasons to be proud and hopeful. It would however be dangerous to be complacent and assume that future success will come by itself. It would be equally dangerous to believe that merely identifying the issues of relevance will be enough. Promising to address too many of them will even undermine the credibility of CCME and its mission. In an increasingly competitive environment, CCME should prioritise strategic issues and try to accentuate its strengths but also be upfront about those issues best addressed by others.

With a reduced set of activities and a clearer profile, CCME has great opportunities to address future challenges, to remain meaningful in those areas it decides to focus on and to help those it aims to serve.