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european churches responding to migration 2010

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european churches responding to migration 2010**

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*Invitation
to participate
and cooperate*

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“Migration is at the heart of the churches’ agenda in Europe”

[Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, President of CEC]

Migration is an overall reality in society today – migration is posing challenges to societies, political institutions and churches. At the same time, migration offers perspectives for living in diversity, enrichment for personal life as well as for Churches’ life. As Christians we are obliged and invited to “welcome the stranger”.

This brochure wants to introduce the year of „European Churches responding to Migration 2010“. It provides information about key aims, steps towards them and your possibility to join in. In 2010 we want to share experiences from existing church programmes for and with migrants, as well as stimulate new programmes to improve the visibility of churches’ engagement for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority people. Through exchange and encouragement we want to foster meaning and public recognition of church programmes with and for migrants.

A calendar of „european churches responding to migration 2010“ with focus-themes for each month, as well as with international days around migration, and religious and intercultural festive days wants to inspire and invite churches to identify major issues around migration in their region, to organize own activities related to the calendar and to share their activities with each other.

This brochure shall stimulate the discussion, what churches can do to enhance the visibility of their work with and for migrants and to promote more inclusive communities and societies and an inclusive policy on European and national level.

**together we will make a difference
get on board**

Invitation to participate and cooperate

We would like to invite you to join in and to make the year of “european churches responding to migration 2010” a success.

What can be done?

- Contribute to theological reflections on migration.
- Plan worships and prayers on migrant and refugee issues.
- Collect and elaborate worship material, prayers, hymns, etc. relating to the issues of migration.
- Identify the major issues around migration in your church, country or region and organize activities accordingly.
- What and how does your church want to highlight in 2010 and communicate to other churches?
- Suggest themes for regional consultations.
- Study the legal situation of migrants: do they have access to a permanent residence title after five years of stay? What would be necessary to achieve a permanent status? How could your church contribute to achieving a permanent residence status?
- Plan collections to raise funds for the churches’ work with and for migrants.
- Contribute with a grant or donation to the planning and implementation of the year „european churches responding to migration 2010“. A detailed budget is available on request.
- Identify a contact person of your church/organisation for activities in the year of „european churches responding to migration 2010“.

Please send your contributions to CCME.

We look forward to cooperating with you in preparation as well as undertaking the year of “european churches responding to migration 2010”.

- political level:

right to a **long term residence status** after five years of legal stay, irrespective of the reasons of stay

through:

- strengthening the rights of migrants
- effective programmes welcoming migrants and refugees
- enhance encounter and participation
- combating exclusion and unemployment
- monitoring and improvement of detention conditions
- refugee protection
- studying and researching national rules for legal rights of migrants
- advocating for the rights as contained in the International Convention on the Rights of all Migrant workers and the members of their families

Ven. Colin Williams, General Secretary of CEC writes:

“One of the real grounds for rejoicing as we look forward will be the long hoped-for integration between CEC and the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). [...] it will enable CEC [to] have a more effective voice into issues such as migration, racial justice, trafficking, which are issues which in many ways define the nature of the continent which together we seek to serve.

[...] Together, we are promoting 2010 as a year when issues around migration will be at the centre of their [churches of Europe] thinking. Together, we are promoting 2010 as a year of European churches responding to migration.

In 2010 we plan together to encourage churches to discover ways of strengthening and enhancing their work with migrants, refugees and those belonging to ethnic minorities. We intend that thereby the churches’ joint advocacy for more inclusive communities and societies will be underlined.

We intend that each church should have a greater awareness of these issues and how they can engage with them.

All CEC member churches have been invited already to begin to reflect on how they will make use of this opportunity to participate in this initiative. Above all, we would be glad to hear from member churches with their suggestions as to how this opportunity for reflection and action on this important theme can be developed in their own country and region.”



Some churches already decided to join in:

Eglise Autocéphale Orthodoxe de Pologne:

"... l'Eglise Autocéphale Orthodoxe de Pologne declare prête à collaborer à la réalisation de ce programme. [...] Nous représentons une minorité significative, bien que dans notre Eglise se réunissent diverses nationalités, [...] Cette diversité a pour conséquence que les citoyens [...] retrouvent dans l'Eglise Orthodoxe polonaise leur identité et leur religion. La spécialité de notre Eglise est [...] la diversité linguistique."

[Sawa Metropolitane de Varsovie et tout la Pologne]

Armenian Apostolic Church Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin:

"... the Armenian Apostolic Church congratulate you and welcome the initiative of the CCME to join the CEC. This move will certainly benefit the commission in its goal of meeting the challenges [...] in the light of migration. [...] I would like to inform you that by the blessing of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the Rev. [...] will be [...] working with your commission on the issue of migration."

[Archbishop Yeznik Petrossyan, General Secretary for Inter-Church Relations]

The Moravian Church – European Continental Province:

"The Moravian Church is not only a migrant Church by history, but also at present: The majority of our members in Europe are originated in Surinam; they live in the Netherlands. [...] although our human and financial resources are very limited, we have decided to participate in the year of European Churches responding to Migration 2010."

[Rev. Christoph Reichel]

European churches responding to migration 2010 aims for:

- visibility of the churches' commitment to strangers responding to the message of the Bible
- promotion of an **inclusive policy** at European and national level for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority groups

our key aims are:

- church level:

visibility of churches' engagement for inclusive communities and societies and **work for and with migrants**

through:

- Being Church together - uniting in diversity
- welcoming strangers in our communities and churches
- diaconical assistance and support for migrants and refugees
- enhance participation of migrants in communities
- exchange with and support for migrant churches in the local area

⇒ **Mt 25,38** *"Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, [...] when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?"*

The issues around migration might pose challenges to societies, political institutions and churches. Much injustice and suffering is often connected with migration, particularly with forced migration. But also voluntary migration faces various problems in new situations and societies.

Yet migration belongs to humankind from the beginning. Migration brings humankind together as God's family.

⇒ **Mt 25,35-49** *"I was a stranger and you welcomed me, [...]"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."*



People celebrating

And then there is God's promise, and it is a description of what is, there is no "would", "could", "should", "will be". It is clearly said in what we can trust and rely our hopes on:

⇒ **Eph 2,19** *"So then you ARE no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God"*

For more Theological reflection see CCME Reader (website: http://ccme.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/ccme/01_WHO_WE_ARE/2008_CCME_Reader-Theological_Reflections_on_Migration.pdf)

Theological reflections on migration

All humankind is created in the image of God; he inaugurates a healthful relation to humankind and to every single person. From this creation in God's image and the inseparable relation which lies there within, every person receives his or her human dignity.

⇒ **Gen 1,26-28.31** *"God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [...] God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."*

The Bible is full of stories of people migrating. They leave their homes to seek a better living, because they are forced due to natural disaster, economic crisis, war, or they want to find work in another place. Some are trafficked for labour exploitation, have to flee from persecution or God tells them to leave their home to fulfil his blessing.

⇒ *Abraham, Joseph, Israel, Ruth, David, Jesus, the Apostles.*

"You shall love your neighbour." But who is my neighbour? It is not only the person of the same origin as myself, not only those who live in my town for generations. Sometimes my neighbour just comes around. It will sometimes just happen to me, that a person is becoming my neighbour. And the Bible helps us to have a clear eye and to identify who my neighbour is and how to address him.

⇒ **Lk 10,36f** *"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"*

Very clear about what to do is James 2: faith and works, believing in God and acting with mercy, are inseparable. Works cannot earn salvation like a growing bank account. But faith, founded in the love of God will not remain inactive facing injustice and suffering.

⇒ **James 2,14-17** *"If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."*

Sometimes people are not even aware of doing the right thing. They do what has to be done to welcome the stranger, to support the neighbour, to feed the hungry. Doing the right thing, recognizing the human being around and his needs, just comes out of their faith in the love of God.



migration 2010 – the focus-themes

month	focus – theme
January	UNITING IN DIVERSITY – Being Church together with black, migrant and ethnic minority churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 18 – 25 January – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
February	RECOGNIZING MIGRANTS IN IRREGULAR SITUATIONS
March	FIGHTING ALL FORMS OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 21 March – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April	BEING A CITIZEN OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 April – EASTER (in Western and Orthodox churches at the same date)
May	CELEBRATING DIVERSITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 21 May – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development ○ 23/24 May – PENTECOST
June	PROTECTING REFUGEES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20 June – World Refugee Day
July	HOLIDAY SEASON – migration as theme for summer camps, time for encounter, festivities and summer activities
August	HOLIDAY SEASON – migration as theme for summer camps, time for encounter, festivities and summer activities
September	ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLACEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 September – Creation Day (Charta Oecumenica) – climate change, water saving. Migration as an ecumenical matter
October	COUNTERING CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY, IN PARTICULAR TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 18 October – EU Anti-Trafficking Day – official activities around combating trafficking in Human Beings
November	WELCOMING THE STRANGER – MIGRATION IN A GLOBALISED WORLD
December	RESPECTING MIGRANTS' RIGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 18 December – International Migrants Day – main focus on Migrant workers rights convention