

HDIM.NGO/60/06
3 October 2006

PRESS RELEASE of 21st July 2004

Churches welcome Pan-European instrument against trafficking in human beings

Statement towards Council of Europe recommends granting long-term residence titles to victims

Three European Christian organisations actively involved in the fight against trafficking in human beings in a joint statement welcomed the draft Convention of the Council of Europe against trafficking in human beings.

In their statement released in Brussels, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, the Conference of European Churches and Caritas Europa generally supported the draft text of the Convention. They expressed their appreciation that the ad-hoc committee established by the Council of Europe had drafted a Convention text, which attempts to strike a balance between law enforcement and the rights of victims of trafficking.

In their reaction, the three organisations underlined that trafficking in human beings is related to a lack of legal migration opportunities, gender inequalities as well as social and democratic inequalities. They therefore argue for a comprehensive set of solutions to the problem of trafficking. At the same time they questioned the usefulness of purely technical measures such as enforced border control.

In their detailed reaction to the current draft of the Convention, the three organisations argue that the best interest of the trafficked person should be the guiding principle of the Convention. This would among others include legal provisions ensuring that adequate information and assistance is provided to victims and the right for victims to obtain long-term residence titles. Based on their experience of networking with Christian organisations active in the fight against trafficking in currently more than 20 European countries, the three organisations also recommend a strong focus on cooperation between public/governmental as well as non-governmental actors.

The joint statement also underlines the need for adequate resourcing of initiatives against trafficking – in the area of law enforcement, prevention and assistance to victims of trafficking.

For more information, please contact: Torsten Moritz, CCME, T.+32 2 2346808, torsten.moritz@ccme.be

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.

CCME- 174 Rue Joseph II – B-1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 234.68.00 Fax: +32 2 231.14.13, e-mail: info@ccme.be

CEC Church and Society Commission – 174 Rue Joseph II – B-1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 230.17.32 – Fax: +32 2 231.14.13 – e-mail: csc.bru@cec-kek.be

Caritas Europa – 4 Rue de Pascale – B-1040 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 235.03.96 – Fax: +32 2 230 16 58 – e-mail: pverhaeghe@caritas-europa.org

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of some 125 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 associated organisations. CEC was founded in 1959. It has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg.

Caritas Europa was created in 1971 and brings together 48 organisations that are working in 44 European countries. Caritas Europa focuses its activities on issues relating to poverty and social inequality, and issues of migration and asylum, both within the European Union and in all other European countries.

CCME and Caritas, together with member organizations and partners, cooperate in the project CAT ("Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women") and the network COATNET ("Christian Organisations against Trafficking in Women").