

This Christmas, European church leaders unite for refugees and migrants



The CCME and CEC representatives presented the Christmas statement to First Vice-President of the European Parliament Mairead McGuinness in Brussels. Photo: CEC/Naveen Qayyum

Press Release No: 18/37 – issued jointly by CEC and CCME
4 December 2018
Brussels

In the spirit of Christmas, European church leaders are affirming the values of dignity, respect and compassion for refugees and migrants. Today a strong Christmas statement signed by church leaders from Europe and beyond was jointly issued by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and was presented to Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament in Brussels.

More than thirty signatories of the statement come from diverse church traditions across Europe, including Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and African-Instituted, among others. At

the same time, regional and international Christian organisations, chapters of Christian world communions and ecumenical organisations have endorsed the statement.

Speaking after the handover ceremony, Vice President McGuinness commented, “This statement is timely, challenging and is really worth reading. It calls upon all of us who have strong shoulders to bear greater weight than those who have less strong shoulders. It reminds us that everyone has a responsibility and that we need to care and if we don’t care at Christmas time than what is the best time to care for those less fortunate.”

“We commit to more fervently articulating and working towards our vision of an inclusive and participatory society – for newly arrived and all inhabitants,” reads the statement.

Offering theological reflection on the story of Christmas and displacement the statement subthemes read: “Jesus became human, Jesus the refugee, Jesus the stranger”. The statement features a Christian approach to action and policy in church and society arguing for safe passage to protection and realistic labour migration policies in Europe. The church leaders also stress the need for solidarity as a guiding principle for governing migration and refugee reception.

“While drafting the statement and collecting signatures we recognised how broad the consensus is on this topic among churches. This, I see as sign of hope, just before Christmas, in the normally very bitter and controversial debate on this topic,” said CCME General Secretary Torsten Moritz.

“This declaration signed by many Christian authorities in Europe points out the plight of those currently on the roads of exile and knocking at Europe’s doors,” said CEC President Rev. Christian Krieger. “We address this call to peoples and nations in Europe, to political leaders and the churches,” he added.

The Christmas statement is available in English, French, German and Russian.

For more information or an interview, please contact:

Naveen Qayyum
Communication Assistant
Conference of European Churches
Rue Joseph II, 174 B-1000 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 234 68 37
Fax +32 2 231 14 13
E-mail: naveen@cec-kek.be
Website: www.ceceurope.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ceceurope
Twitter: @ceceurope