



Governing Board, Online – 5 June 2020
Agenda Item: 9
Document Name:
1GB2020_DOC23 CCME GS REPORT TO CEC
Purpose: For information

Summary of the oral report by the General Secretary of CCME

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

Recent months even busier than normal, partly because of COVID
Thanks to CEC colleagues for the cooperation on many levels;
Overjoyed to welcome Jorgen. We have learnt together since his start in January: as last CEC GB/CCME ExCom had already shown, working closely together and coming together in times of change needs dedication and precise planning, otherwise things will grow apart
Current organisational difficulties: 3 year GA planned for next week rescheduled- seeing what can be the best next step.

EUROPEAN ADVOCACY

- Solidarity with Greece, Cyprus, Malta as particularly affected by movement of refugees and migrants: appeal for EU wide evacuation of the islands, specific advocacy in many churches for children
- Events at Turkish-Greek borders in March show that the EU-Turkey agreement is not a solid basis of cooperation with a trustworthy partner
- In contact with EU institutions on access to EU territory (e.g. Italian harbours closed for search and rescue) and asylum procedures
- EU pact on asylum and migration expected soon (concern it might be very much focussed on closing borders and removing people) – different political actors expressed hope that CCME and others can provide space for discussions and input across political spectrum
- Current advocacy very difficult as no informal interaction (like meeting a Commission official over a coffee) possible
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JOINT LETTER CEC CCME ON DAY OF COMMEMORATING THOSE DIED AT THE BORDERS COVID AND REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE

- How do you stay at home if you don't have one, how do you keep distance if you are locked up with 6 in a small room? (not to mention hygiene)



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- Refugees, migrants and minority ethnic people overrepresented among infected and deaths (working in frontline jobs, no real opportunity to stay at home, discrimination in access to health) and often first hit by unemployment
- Groups on one hand affected by “lock them up logic” , with limited and confined space increasing health risks and risks of exploitation. On the other hand, cases of forced testing or out on the street due to closed reception facilities
- Some positive impact e.g. regularisation of migrants, release from detention, access to health and other social services irrespective of status
- Assistance of churches and others to these groups very difficult in view of health risks but also as e.g. reception centres in full quarantine

ALL CHURCHES BECOMING “DIASPORA” OR “MIGRANT” CHURCHES

- Simple reality of not having your own church now experienced by almost all churches
- Trend towards Christian communities meeting virtually and across borders accelerated also in “mainstream” churches -> What consequences for ecumenical family
- Financial reality: hit by lack of meetings, but also economic hardship of members

RACISM – AN ISSUE FOR EUROPE AND ITS CHURCHES

- Incidents in USA strongly perceived in churches refugee/migrants/minority ethnic groups and allies/supporters
- Experiences in Europe often not different from USA – open racism as once again shown during COVID but also institutional/structural
- Black Christians, other Christians of colour in Europe and allies strongly express that legacy of colonialism and slavery is hardly ever addressed in church and society
- Public witness, hospitality and most of all true fellowship in equality in churches must be part of the answer
- (see article of Rev Arlington Trotman, former CCME moderator, on CCME website)
- News on conference Justice for Sinti and Roma: you tube channel of co-host Reformed Church Hungary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F5bTMN6TEM>
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Issues are probably most indicative of general issues highlighted by COVID.....hope we contribute our bit to making sure that the answer is not SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, but WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER – EQUAL AND IN SOLIDARITY !



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

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RESOURCES:

CCME´s Facebook account (nothing spectacular, but regular sharing of interesting news and resources): <https://www.facebook.com/CCME-Churches-Commission-for-Migrants-in-Europe-354517817908638/?ref=bookmarks>

Regular updates on EU migration policy by EPIM (network of foundations):
<https://www.epim.info/publications/>; May edition (COVID info):
<https://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EPIM-Policy-Update-May-2020.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2VfmbSNqEsEzuU8-ku-atG16pdMK3jLfxMt1n5gV3C-qrZdpRrBHeewGA>

News from the European Parliament LIBE committee (responsible for among other asylum and migration): <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/206820/LIBE%20Newsletter%20-%20April%202020.pdf>

CURRENT:

Council of Europe on Malta keeping migrants on boats off its coast due to COVID:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/immediate-action-needed-to-disembark-migrants-held-on-ships-off-malta-s-coast>

Council of Europe HR commissioner in General: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner>

IOM (UN migration agency) on COVID and mobility: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/institutional_statement_covid19_28052020.pdf

UNHCR: Practical Recommendations and Good Practice to Address Protection Concerns in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/75453?fbclid=IwAR18LAg0t457swEtCTfUnYEAk sqGTgw9HQgoyv5sF8oCzkBi5uZwp4UJ91Q>