



Conference of European Churches • Conférence des Églises Européennes • Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen • Конференция Европейских Церквей

## **Contribution of the Conference of European Churches<sup>1</sup> to the 2010 Work Programme of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**

As a member of the European Union Fundamental Rights Platform, the Church and Society Commission (CSC) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) welcomes the invitation to offer suggestions for FRA's Work Programme 2010. The proposals in this paper have been developed in close cooperation with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

The churches as part of civil society support the implementation of FRA's mechanism for applying European standards in the area of Fundamental Rights. We are looking forward to the result of the summary report that will be produced by the interim Panel of the Fundamental Rights Platform, which will reflect on FRA's Work Programme 2010.

In this regard, we find very useful the FRA activities concerning analysing data, monitoring the implementation of standards and promoting best practices, as well as revealing new patterns to be pursued.

As you encourage us in your invitation to make proposals for the horizontal activities covering all MAF areas, we suggest the following:

### **Networking and stakeholder cooperation**

One of the proposed FRA activities for 2010 is a meeting with FRA stakeholders as part of a strategic review of its networking activities, its methods and its products. We would suggest that FRA make an overview of the stakeholders' networking activities as well as the methods and the products. It would be very useful for the FRA partners to be informed about new methods, different approaches and variety of outcomes.

We support FRA's initiative to launch its join up governance programme, which aims to develop methods and structures to ensure promotion and protection of fundamental rights at all levels within the states as systematic implementation of human rights.

### **Human Rights Education and Development**

Concerning the fact that the Human Rights Education network will start its effective work in 2009 and continue in 2010, we would be very interested to support the network with the CSC Human Rights Manual for European Churches. We are in the process of creating the churches' human rights library on our website.

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FRA material would be a very significant tool for the human rights training that we will organise in the future for our member churches. We would request you, when producing material, to take into account if possible a regional approach and methodologies related to diverse cultures and traditions as east, west, south and north.

Education and training of journalists on fundamental rights would be a very important activity for further developing and communicating human rights standards. At this stage we would suggest also to include editors and members of media management boards, as the decision-making media bodies should also be aware of fundamental rights standards in today's Europe. We would suggest that church journalists and church editors be included in the training on fundamental rights. These trainings would have an additional value if journalists and editors with a migration background would participate in it.

The Church and Society Commission and Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe would suggest that FRA's information material (general information leaflets, video clips and other audio visual material) be available for dissemination at various events, including the events of big churches. We would also suggest producing short video spots on the violation of fundamental rights.

We would very much appreciate it if you would develop a discussion forum on the topic of the violation of fundamental rights in Europe for the members of the Fundamental Rights Platform, as we find that it would be an appropriate means to exchange best practices and develop mutual support.

## **New on-going projects**

### **Freedoms**

1) Information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data 14

The churches find that the continuation of the FRA project concerning data protection, particularly relating to the third country national and respect for private life in the overall information society to be very important. We would suggest producing a manual on the theoretical and legislative approach to respect for private life and protection of personal data and its dissemination as widely as possible. It would be very important to organise the training courses on Internet security and data protection for civil servants in EU member states. Sharing best practices within EU member states would be smoother if the comprehensive study on the data protection mechanism were produced.

2) Asylum, immigration and integration of migrants

The study of the fundamental rights situation of irregular immigrants focusing particularly on the areas of housing, employment, education and health (woman and children with an irregular migrant background) would be very much appreciated and facilitate the work of churches. It would be important if FRA would start to work on this project in 2010. Churches would be ready to contribute to this project with its expertise in this field.

## Equality

- 1) Discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, region or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and against the persons belonging to minorities and any combination of these backgrounds

Tackling multiple and intersectional discrimination is a very important task of the FRA in today's diverse Europe. We are looking forward to a continuation of this research project as it will help in better understanding the multiple dimensions of this phenomenon and give an overview of what would be an appropriate approach for practice, legislation and policy.

- 2) Participation of the citizens of the Union in the Union's democratic functioning

The relationship between EU Institutions and its citizens is a very important one. We would suggest that FRA make a comparative and qualitative study as to how the different member states, as well as the EU Institutions themselves, keep their citizens informed and enable them to participate in the democratic processes; and to share best practices of engaging the citizens of Europe in these processes.

We would also like to express our gratitude that some of our proposed suggestions for the Working programme 2009 have been taken on board for implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is an ecumenical organisation with 125 Anglican, Orthodox, Old Catholic and Protestant churches with 40 European church-related organisations in membership. It's main objective is to strive for the unity of the churches and to strengthen the common witness of its members in church and society. The Church and Society Commission (CSC) of CEC, with offices in Brussels and in Strasbourg, represents the common voice of CEC's members vis-à-vis the European Institutions. In the field of human rights, present priorities include: anti-discrimination, religious freedom/church-state relations, developing a human rights training manual for churches, human rights and human security. As contact address please use: Church and Society Commission, Ms. Elizabeta Kitanovic, 174 Rue Joseph II, 1000 Brussels; tel. 0032 2 230 1732; email [eki@cec-kek.be](mailto:eki@cec-kek.be).

This contribution to FRA's Work Programme 2010, the section on "asylum, immigration and integration of migrants" was prepared in close cooperation with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). 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 in presently 16 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.