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European Churches initiate review of "first steps" against forced labour trafficking

Some 70 representatives of EU institutions, churches, NGOs, EU member states and trade unions will, from 12th to 14th October, meet in Brussels for a European workshop to discuss progress in the combat against trafficking for forced labour in Europe. The workshop "Combating Trafficking for forced labour in Europe – the first steps", which will be opened by the European Parliament rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, Ms Edit Bauer (SK, EPP), is convened by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). It takes place in the week prior to the EU's 4th annual anti-trafficking day and is part of the project "Combating trafficking in human beings – GOING BEYOND", which CCME has been implementing since 2008.

The three-day workshop, for which CCME has joined forces with Anti-Slavery International, the International Trade Union Confederation and the Belgian Samilia Foundation, will be opened with a public hearing. With the hearing, CCME aims to take stock of various efforts undertaken across Europe in recent years. Speakers from the European Parliament, the Belgian EU presidency and the European Commission will outline current and future EU agenda on combating trafficking for forced labour. Representatives of national and local governments will share insights on cooperation between state and civil society institutions while churches, trade unions and NGOs will highlight how improved identification can help to protect persons who were trafficked into forced labour. Police and public prosecutors will report about their efforts.

In a more internal part of the workshop CCME and its partners will review the operational progress made in identification of persons trafficked for forced labour and the cooperation with state institutions. Partners from a similar project undertaken by Anti Slavery International and the International Trade Union Confederation will share their insights and joint future activities will be discussed.

Speaking on the upcoming event, CCME Executive Secretary Torsten Moritz explained: "this workshop signals a strong determination of civil society actors to join forces against trafficking for forced labour. At the same time, there is a growing impatience of civil society about the lack of initiatives which should be taken by member states and the EU – our event will hopefully help to put the issue on the EU agenda."

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The Project "Combating trafficking in human beings –going beyond" is coordinated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

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Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe – Commission des Églises auprès des Migrants en Europe – Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa