



Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

CCME Press Release

10 October 2008

CCME, the Churches Commission on Migrants in Europe, supports the demands of Austrian NGOs that migrants and refugees receive the right to residence after five years

The General Assembly of CCME, taking place from 8-11 October 2008 in Paralimni, Cyprus, endorses the demands of Austrian non governmental organisations and Church organisations on the national Right of Residence Day on the 10th October 2008 and demand:

- That legal provisions for regularisation in Austria be based on human rights legislation.

The European Convention on Human Rights guarantees respect of private and family life. Currently decisions on a person's right to remain on humanitarian grounds can only be taken by the Austrian Minister of the Interior. This "clemency" has no place in a society based on legal rights. In June 2008 the Austrian Constitutional High Court asked for a rights based procedure. We demand a fair and human rights based regularisation procedure, to which all having the right to apply.

- That those who have been in Austria for five years should be allowed to stay.

Unjust asylum decisions by the ministry of interior lead to lengthy asylum procedures. Applicants have to wait for years – with the result that hundreds of them begin to put down roots, despite their future remaining insecure. Those who have been in Austria for more than five years, should have the right to stay on legally.

- A change in migration policy.

For too long the legal provisions for asylum and the right to residence in Austria have been dominated by election interests. Political parties too often prefer simple slogans to solutions based on the facts. This leads to suffering for people who have come to Austria. The deficits of Austrian immigration laws have been criticised several times by the Austrian High Courts. The stringent and tortuous the legal migration provisions of 2005 must be abolished. We ask for human and reasonable policies, which respect the rule of law and human rights, and promote integration instead of preventing it.

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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.