



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

CCME PRESS RELEASE OF 31st March 2008

Romanian Orthodox Patriarch calls for integrated approach to combating all forms of modern slavery

Meeting of European Christian anti-trafficking network strengthens cooperation with trade unions

Some 80 representatives of churches, governments, trade unions, police and NGOs from 15 European countries met for an international conference and workshop on trafficking in human beings in Bucharest from 27th to 30th March 2008. The workshop "Christian action against trafficking – going beyond", which was co-organised by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Romanian ecumenical association of churches AIDRom, looked at the particular challenges of trafficking for forced labour. The workshop is the first of a series of CCME activities aimed at mapping and sharing best practice against trafficking for forced labour.

During the official opening conference on March 28th, 2008 which was hosted by His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Patriarchate Palace, the importance of continued cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors was underlined. His Beatitude underlined that trafficking in persons is a major concern to churches as "no one has the right to turn humans into the objects of profit". Representatives of the Romanian Prime Minister as well as the Romanian Senate welcomed the continued collaboration of the churches in Romania with state institutions combating trafficking.



The conference opening

During the three-day workshop following the opening conference, participants discussed challenges in the fight against trafficking for forced labour. Dr Dumitru Lisandru, President of the National Agency against trafficking in persons illustrated the need to address trafficking for forced labour, as forced labour had in Romania since 2006 become the most important area of exploitation through trafficking in persons. Case studies from other countries, such as the Czech Republic or Ireland, underlined how dramatic trafficking for forced labour had become in recent years.

The workshop acknowledged existing competence and best practice in combating trafficking for forced labour. Representatives of the International Trade Union Confederation as well as the Romanian trade union movement underlined how the trade union movement was increasingly active in the struggle against trafficking. The potential of future cooperation between churches, trade unions, state institution and non governmental actors was underlined.

Doris Peschke, General Secretary of CCME, underlined the importance of this cooperation: "It is becoming clear that trafficking for forced labour is as worrying as trafficking for sexual exploitation. Trade Unions are a natural partner in combating trafficking for forced labour. This workshop and the emerging cooperation is therefore an encouraging step forward" she commented in Bucharest after the closing of the workshop.

For further information, please contact CCME, T +32 2 234 68 08

The project "Christian action against trafficking - going beyond" is coordinated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

It is financially supported by the Church of Sweden, FinnChurchAid and Norwegian Church Aid. The views expressed and information provided do not necessarily reflect the position of these partners and do in no way fall under their responsibility.