

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8,36)

CCME's commitment against trafficking in human beings

Foundations of our engagement

1. CCME's commitment against trafficking in human beings is rooted in the conviction that it is unacceptable that human beings, who are created in the image of God, are sold and treated like a mere commodity.
2. CCME sees its commitment against trafficking in the tradition of the Christian commitment against slavery, which led to the declaration of the abolition of the transatlantic slave-trade some 200 years ago.
3. CCME in its work against trafficking seeks to address all forms of trafficking. Due to the specific mandate of CCME, particular attention is given to the trafficking of migrants and ways to overcome it. CCME's work against trafficking is based on the analysis that trafficking is in many areas an expression of unequal gender relations; and that attempts to overcome trafficking also need to overcome gender inequalities.
4. CCME work on trafficking is informed by the definition of the Palermo Protocol. While recognizing that certain areas of work may be characterized as being exploitative per se (e.g. domestic work, prostitution) and in the awareness that trafficking is often related to migratory phenomena such as smuggling, CCME's work on trafficking is focused on situations characterised by the purpose defined in the Palermo Protocol. This means that CCME's work addresses exploitation of human beings, be it in prostitution, forced labour or other processes similar to slavery in combination with the means defined by the protocol (abuse of power, situations of vulnerability or the use of deceit, threat, coercion or force or the giving or receiving of payments or benefit to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person).

Awareness building within the churches, engaging churches in anti-trafficking work

5. CCME sees the continued raising of awareness within the churches as an essential part of its commitment. Ongoing communications on the challenge of trafficking as well as the ongoing efforts of churches in the area are essential. CCME seeks to encourage reflection on the particular calling of the church to address trafficking. CCME will continue to provide a space for churches in Europe to engage in work to combat trafficking in human beings and seek to assist and encourage them to undertake work in the following areas:

An integrated, rights-based approach to combating trafficking

6. CCME advocates an integrated approach on the issue of trafficking. This combines lobby, advocacy and research on the one hand with prevention and direct assistance in support of trafficked persons and the process of recovery on the other hand, thus maximising the effects of each intervention. CCME seeks to mobilise churches, church-related agencies and partners to the effect of an integrated approach.
7. CCME's approach to combating trafficking in human beings is centred around the rights of those trafficked or potentially affected by trafficking. CCME works towards strategies in combating trafficking of women that concentrate on the empowerment and self-determination of those affected. This includes policies which enable trafficked persons to take autonomous decisions about their future lives and measures for the compensation for the material and immaterial damages experienced.
8. CCME programmes against trafficking therefore are not limited to immediate social intervention, but also ask which structures of power nurture trafficking, where responsibility for creating a "market" for trafficked persons lies, how policies empower or disempower those affected by trafficking and how political decisions help to hold perpetrators accountable.

9. CCME programme work seeks to identify how social and political actors are accountable for preventing trafficking from happening. It is in this context that CCME works together with actors of development (e.g. Christian development agencies) for development opportunities, good and democratic governance and inclusive policies for marginalised groups in countries of origin.

Advocacy

10. Even with better chances for development and improved governance in countries of origin, for the socially marginalized migration will remain one of the few perceived chances for social advancement in the foreseeable future. Current migration policies are one important factor in creating a situation of vulnerability, which nurture trafficking. They create a fear of many migrants towards state authorities, thus discouraging trafficked persons to disclose their situation of exploitation towards state authorities. CCME sees its engagement for policies facilitating regular, legal migration for persons with different levels of qualification as an essential element of the CCME commitment against trafficking.

11. In the commitment to re-establishing the right of trafficked persons, CCME is aiming at establishing conditions which are enabling the person (potentially) affected by trafficking to take an un-pressurised, well-informed and independent decision about how s/he would like to continue his/her future life. CCME therefore advocates for policies which put the trafficked person at the centre and create the legal basis for a choice on his/her future, which is independent of his/her willingness to testify in court. These policies would include a choice of the place of residence¹. Adoption and transposition of binding norms for the rights of trafficked persons and protection of their family are therefore at the heart of CCME's advocacy work.

Best practice on assistance, prevention, reintegration and compensation

12. Advocacy of churches against trafficking goes hand in hand with practical intervention. In the last decade Churches across Europe have been mobilized for prevention of trafficking, support to trafficked person and for reintegration of trafficked persons. CCME's advocacy work towards European institutions is informed by this work on the ground.

13. CCME seeks to make the existing good practice of churches in Europe visible and to offer the chance to improve existing practice through networking among Christian organizations and building of partnerships beyond Christian organisations. While Christian organizations are at the core of CCME activities, partners of these Christian organizations (governmental and non-governmental) from other sectors of society are invited to become part of common programmes.

14. CCME seeks to promote best practice in anti-trafficking, i.e. programmes which are of high quality, take an integrated and non-judgemental approach to those affected by trafficking and assure accountability of those providing assistance towards those receiving assistance. CCME programmes are open to all organisations active or wanting to become active in combating trafficking, which are willing to enter into a process of self-critical reflection and learning with others.

15. CCME seeks to cooperate with like-minded organisations and networks wherever possible, in particular in joint advocacy.

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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.

1) The Italian article 18 could serve as a best practice example on residence permits for trafficked persons (cf. <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/testi/98286dl.htm>, summary translation on: <http://victimsoftrafficking.esclavagemoderne.org/UK/italie.html>)