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CCME Press Release

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Refugee resettlement to the EU: European churches call for 20.000 places by 2020

CCME Executive Committee calls on "EU member states to agree on more ambitious targets"

CCME moderator Prof Dr Victoria Kamondji said that "the recent adoption of the EU resettlement scheme after such long negotiations is an encouraging sign. The EU member must now use the momentum to increase their efforts in this exercise of global responsibility sharing. Churches and other civil society organisation would stand ready to make their contribution to this."

While the Executive Committee of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) welcomes recent decisions of the EU Parliament and Council, CCME calls on EU member states to increase the volume and impact of refugee resettlement to the EU. In a policy paper adopted at its meeting in Hannover (Germany) 29-31 March 2012, the CCME Executive Committee, argues that "the EU and its member states can and must do more to offer protection to the most vulnerable refugees". The policy papers notes that only a small percentage of the world's refugees are hosted in Europe and that EU member states so far only offer around 4.-5.000 places per year for refugee resettlement. It highlights that the adoption of a common resettlement scheme by EU Council and European Parliament in March should lead to a "debate how a more meaningful and ambitious contribution by EU member states to international refugee protection could be achieved until the end of this decade and how coordination by the EU could maximise impact."

In its policy recommendations, the CCME Executive Committee puts forward the target of **20.000 resettlement places** to be made available annually by the then 28 (or more) EU member states by the year **2020**. An overview table illustrates which ranges of resettlement places per member state would allow the EU to offer 20.000 resettlement places by the end of the decade. The CCME Executive Committee underlines that "the figures for 20.000 places within 8 years is entirely realistic, however, steps for attaining the figures need to start now". The policy paper argues for stronger coordination of resettlement efforts of EU member states with external policies of the EU and calls for strong cooperation between governments, UNHCR and civil society in planning, implementing and evaluating refugee resettlement to the EU.

The full text of the policy paper can be found at: http://www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/20_Areas_of_Work/01_Refugee_Protection/2012-03-30-20_00_places_policy_final.pdf. Further information: Torsten Moritz, CCME Executive Secretary, Tel. +32 2 234 68 00 e-mail: torsten.moritz@ccme.be

Note to editors:

Refugee resettlement is the process by which refugees who have fled their home country and found temporary, but insufficient protection in another country are settled onwards ("resettled") to a third country where they are offered permanent protection. Resettlement is one of the three "durable solutions" for refugee protection promoted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. While an increasing number of EU member states is active in refugee resettlement, the total number of places offered for resettlement by EU member states has remained limited: between 4.000 and 5.000 places were offered annually in recent years, compared to the some 50.000-80.000 places offered annually by the three traditional resettlement countries Australia, Canada and the USA.