



cec

conference of european churches



ccme

churches' commission for migrants in europe

The following is a joint press release from the Conference of European Churches, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, and the World Council of Churches.

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Churches mourn loss of life on Mediterranean, call for preventative action

Together the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the Conference of European Churches, and the World Council of Churches grieve the drowning of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean. As many as 700 people are feared dead following the capsizing of their vessel just outside Libyan waters. Rescue efforts are underway and so far 28 survivors have been found.

We remember in prayer those who have died and express our deepest sympathies to their families. "We deplore this loss of life," remarked CEC General Secretary Rev. Dr Guy Liagre, "and are deeply saddened by this tragedy on Europe's doorstep." We pray also for those involved in the demanding rescue and recovery mission.

This catastrophe reminds us of near daily instances across the Mediterranean in which Italian, Maltese, and Greek coast guards are largely left alone in rescue efforts. Reacting to this latest tragedy, and following so many others, WCC General Secretary Olav Fykse Tveit called for "renewed solidarity and action, and for a resumption and strengthening of a collective European response." We ask for meaningful European search and rescue efforts and call on EU Member States to contribute substantially and speedily to such efforts in order to prevent future loss of life among people driven to this desperate crossing.

Tveit added "These tragedies are strong calls for strengthening the efforts to address the root causes for poverty, social insecurity and conflicts in the countries from where the migrants are coming."

"Only legal and safe pathways into Europe would help to prevent these tragedies from happening. This includes increased refugee resettlement and lifting of visa requirements for people arriving from countries in conflict, like Syria and Eritrea. We need safe passages," said Doris Peschke General Secretary CCME.

Conference of European Churches - Conférence des Églises européennes - Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
General Secretariat (Geneva) - P.O. Box 2100 - 150 route de Ferney - CH-1211 Geneva 2 - Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 791 61 11 - Fax: +41 22 791 62 27 - E-mail: cec@cec-kek.org - www.ceceurope.org

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe - Commission des Églises auprès des Migrants en Europe - Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa
Rue Joseph II 174 - BE-1000 Brussels - Belgium
Tel. +32 2 234 68 00 - Fax +32 2 231 14 13 - E-mail: info@ccme.be - www.ccme.be

For more information, please contact:

Erin Green
Communication Coordinator
Conference of European Churches

Rue Joseph II, 174 B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 234 68 42
Fax +32 2 231 14 13
E-mail: eeg@cec-kek.be
Website: www.ceceurope.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ceceurope
Twitter: [@ceceurope](https://twitter.com/ceceurope)

The [Conference of European Churches](#) (CEC) is a fellowship of some 114 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 national council of churches and organisations in partnership. CEC was founded in 1959. It has offices in Brussels and Strasbourg.

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 in presently 18 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.

The [World Council of Churches](#) promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, by the end of 2013 the WCC had 345 member churches representing more than 500 million Christians from Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other traditions in over 140 countries. The WCC works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

Media contact: +41 79 507 6363; <http://www.oikoumene.org/press>
Visiting address: 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
