



ccme

churches' commission for migrants in europe

beyond borders

since 1964

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Public Statement

Europe is enriched and shaped as it is today because of historical patterns of movement and settlement of people; migration has always been part of human existence. However, more people than ever are currently on the move as a result of conflicts, environmental degradation, lack of future for themselves and their families. While most refugees are internally displaced persons or find temporary shelter in neighbouring countries, many lose their lives trying to cross borders. Meanwhile European countries are constantly increasing barriers of security measures for those in need of protection, becoming a "gated community". Its responses can be described as incoherent, divided, selfish and inhumane.

25 years after the Berlin Wall came down we see many new walls built. Even more internal borders have been set up within Europe preventing people from free movement and social inclusion. This applies particularly to minority groups. Some of these borders are visible, some are invisible. Fears have been fuelled and exploited in order to justify the reinforcement of borders. This has led to even higher walls and more repressive measures, such as the systematic use of detention as well as the inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees.

As churches and church related agencies we therefore call for a change of attitudes regarding migration in accordance with common European values. This also implies a truly human approach to refugee protection in line with the relevant European and international conventions. This includes legal and secure access to Europe for those in need of protection.

We advocate for a Common European Asylum System including decent reception conditions as well as a Common European Resettlement Scheme that puts the human being and his/her dignity at the centre of the processes. Therefore, we call upon the European governments to embark upon policies that aim to address the main causes for forced migration.

We urge the European governments to take responsibility in particular for the situation of minors, the most vulnerable group, who are often deprived of basic stability, a full family life and education.

As members of CCME we commit ourselves to continue to go beyond borders and to pull down walls of separation. In the same perspective we call on churches in Europe to value diversity, to promote inclusive communities within their own structures and in the wider society.

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