



CCME-Caritas Europa Press Release of 10th April 2003

Christian Networks join forces against Trafficking in Women

Some 40 participants from Churches and Church-related organisations met for three networking events in Brno and Prague in the Czech Republic from 2nd to 8th April 2003. They used the chance to connect the different Christian networks in order to join forces against Trafficking in Women. The different meetings brought together participants from 17 countries from all over Europe.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) from 2nd to 5th April held an event in Brno to sensitise Churches from Central Europe for the issue of Trafficking (see Press Release Conference of European Churches 03-27e).

From 5th to 8th April, Churches and church-related organisations working in the field, met in Prague for the workshops of the "Coatnet" and the "CAT" project. "CAT" stands for –"Christian Action and Networking against in Trafficking in Women" – a project initiated by CCME (Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe). "Coatnet" was so far "Catholic Organisations against Trafficking in Women" - a communication platform initiated by Caritas Europa. In the future, both networks will jointly use the ecumenical communication platform Coatnet as their main tool of internal communication (Extranet) and dissemination of expertise on trafficking (www.coatnet.org). The Coatnet was re-launched under the name "Christian Organisations against Trafficking in Women". Martina Liebsch, coordinator of Coatnet, expressed her satisfaction: „If I remember our start and the difficulties we went through implementing these tools, we can be really satisfied that we are now strongly cooperating as an ecumenical group.“ The participants were trained how to use the Coatnet tools in the best way and developed the design of the website further. Participants felt that this network is a source for empowerment for the daily work

During the workshop of the CAT project, Francesco Carchedi from the PARSEC – association in Rome presented an analytical model which allows to better analyse and carry out the social intervention in favour of trafficked women.

Participants introduced the situation concerning trafficking in their countries and presented their assistance practice. This session of the CAT workshop took place under the supervision of Bärbel Uhl from OSCE/ODHIR office in Warsaw. Uhl was impressed by the expertise presented. She encouraged participants to cherish the Christian approach as an important element of the network. She also shared information about the publication of a manual by OSCE/ODHIR on national referral

mechanisms, in which countries are asked to implement a cross-sectoral mechanism to combat Trafficking.

In four sub-groups of the workshop, participants worked on transferable practices and identified main problems in the areas of “standards for assistance to trafficked women”, “prevention”, “work within churches” and “cooperation with authorities”.

Rev. Vogel-Mfato from the CEC shared the results of the consultation in Brno with the group. In a response, the group underlined that churches should be both target and agent of awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking. Participants also affirmed the role of the Church as bringing healing of memories to those affected by trafficking. They called the churches to launch a day of “Churches in solidarity with trafficked women”. This day should serve as an annual focal point for awareness-raising, lobbying and social intervention.

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