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Press Release No. 0416/e

28 April 2004

## **Churches and Police – together against trafficking in Human Beings**

*International conference in Neuss (Germany) to boost cooperation in fight against trafficking in Europe*

Some 70 representatives of Churches, governments, police and NGOs from 13 European countries will meet for a public international conference in Neuss/Germany on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004 to discuss how they can through effective cooperation better combat trafficking in Human Beings. The conference, which is hosted by the Police training Institute of the state of North Rhine Westphalia, is part of the activities of the European network, "Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women" (CAT).

During their conference, the participants will examine the cooperation model in place in North Rhine Westphalia – a model which combines the legal recognition and financial support of assistance organisations by the state with the development concrete operational cooperation between assistance organisation, public prosecutor and police. The conference will also underline how Churches of the Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic tradition and their diaconal institutions are in ecumenical cooperation across Europe active in the fight against trafficking.

The conference next Friday will be opened with words of greetings from the CAT partners from the different sectors: the Secretary of state of Interior of North Rhine Westphalia, representatives of the police of North Rhine Westphalia and the sponsoring organisation, the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and Caritas Europa will address participants. Representatives of the Diakonie of the Protestant Church of Westphalia and the Caritas in the diocese of Essen will welcome the international audience, also in the name of two hosting assistance organisations the "Dortmunder Mitternachtsmission" and "Nachtfalter" (Essen), which are linked the Protestant and Roman Catholic Church respectively.

An Input from the state office for the recognition of refugees will explore the general migration situation in contemporary Europe. The public prosecutors office of the city of Dortmund and representatives the state office of general investigation will outline the efforts of law enforcement to combat trafficking. A panel discussion between representatives of Churches, police, NGOs and public prosecutors will focus on chances and challenges of cooperation between partners from the public, non-governmental and church side. Participants from Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, Romania, the UK, and Ukraine will share their experience on cooperation against trafficking and during a workshop following the conference further develop how the cooperation methods of the German partners can be helpful for their anti-trafficking work.

The conference is the occasion for a reception in the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> April, which will be hosted by the Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese of Essen and also addressed by the head of the department of Ecumenical relations of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland.

Torsten Moritz, coordinator of the CAT project explained: "Churches and police in the state of North Rhine Westphalia are among those who already for a long time cooperate against the human rights violation of trafficking. Similar cooperation is gaining ground across Europe. This high-profile conference is a good occasion to underline and broaden the success of this important cooperation."

*For further information, please contact CCME, T.+32 486 57 55 08*

Visit: [www.coatnet.org](http://www.coatnet.org)



The CAT (Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women) Project is coordinated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

It is funded by the European Commission AGIS Programme and (since Dec. 2003) the World Council of Churches' Diakonia and Solidarity Team .

The views expressed and information provided by the project and the partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the European Commission or the World Council of Churches and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission or the World Council of Churches.

