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European Union Anti-Trafficking Day : Christian Network calls for stronger Coherence of EU Policies

Joint input of anti-trafficking networks encourages rights-based approach in EU policies

Christian organisations active in the fight against trafficking in human beings have today called for greater coherence in EU policies in order to combat trafficking. The call was issued as the EU institutions prepare for the EU anti-trafficking day this Thursday, which will be celebrated for the first time this year. In a joint statement with other leading anti-trafficking networks, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) "welcomes the initiative for a European day against Trafficking in Human Beings". At the same time, the joint statement "Time for Action" calls for "a rights-based, holistic approach that includes EU policies on development cooperation, human rights...anti-discrimination, migration...and asylum".

The statement, which was co-signed by specialised networks such as La Strada International argues for an approach to trafficking in human beings, which would touch upon different areas of EU policy. It argues for a stronger coordination of EU policies in the area of trafficking in human beings and outlines the need to combat the root causes of trafficking through EU policies. The joint statement also calls on the EU and its member states to "sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families."

CCME had in recent years, together with Caritas Europe and other Christian partner organisations, argued for a stronger focus on anti-trafficking issues in the EU's migration policy. Recent examples of this call for coherence were the comments of Christian organisations in the discussions on EU policies on return of irregular migrants. At the same time, CCME and Caritas Europe had also encouraged church institutions to develop comprehensive and holistic approaches to combating trafficking. Torsten Moritz, who coordinates CCME's work on contemporary slavery and trafficking in human beings, explained: "Too often combating trafficking in human beings is seen as an isolated issue. While we need specialised programmes against trafficking, lasting impact can only be achieved by coordinated, cross-sectoral approaches. The call for coherence, which Christian organisations and civil society partners make to the EU today, also needs to be understood as a commitment for our own work as churches: to continue to strive for holistic solutions."

NOTE TO EDITORS: 18th October has been named as EU anti-trafficking day. The day will be commemorated by events in Brussels and EU member states. (see http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/events/anti_trafficking_day_07/programme_en.pdf)

CCME is since 2002 coordinating the network "Christian Action and Networking against trafficking in Human Beings". The network is a platform to exchange operational expertise on trafficking and to review policies. It has since its creation involved churches, NGOs and governmental institutions from more than 30 countries in Europe.

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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 across Europe. CCME formally cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.