

INVITATION

Summer School on Human Rights

“Rights under threat – stand up for refugees’ and migrants’ rights”

Palermo 2-6 July 2017

The Conference of European Churches in partnership with the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe is organizing the IV Summer School on Human Rights devoted to the issue of Migration, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Trafficking in Human Beings from 2-6 July 2017, Palermo, Italy at Centre La Noce.

Migration and refugee protection are among the most debated issues of our times. What is often overlooked is that both refugees’ and migrants’ rights are a central part of the International and European Human Rights Framework developed after WW II. Both the right to asylum and the right to leave and return to one’s own country is central to the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Refugees’ rights are enshrined in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention while rights of migrant workers and their families are contained in various conventions as well as the – poorly ratified – 1990 Migrants Rights Convention and several ILO Conventions.

At the same time, violations of human rights and the movement of refugees and migrants very often go together. People, who are at danger in their homes and communities, become refugees who are forced to flee from their home countries to seek a safer life abroad. Ethnic and political tensions, wars, abuse of human rights, violence against people are often the causes for the movement of people who are looking for international protection in another country.

Migration in its entity is more comprehensive than the movement of refugees. People also move for economic, family, personal or other reasons. While they do not experience the persecution felt by refugees, their trajectories into their destination countries are often as dangerous and characterised by hardship as those of refugees. What is common to both groups is that they often receive a cold, sometimes hostile welcome by the resident population and an uncertain future. In many cases, their rights are directly or indirectly undermined and violated.

Nevertheless, there is an increasing fear among policy makers that the population in Europe is against a human-rights oriented policy towards migrants and refugees. This is increased by the rise of xenophobe parties and movements in many European countries.

National governments and European legislator have in recent months/years increasingly resorted to measures which directly or indirectly undermine the human rights to asylum and the rights of migrants.

It is against this background that the Summer School will explore the fundamentals of migrants’/refugees’ rights, examine the current political situation regarding human rights of refugees/migrants and investigate the role of churches in defending these rights. It will also touch upon the related issues of statelessness and trafficking in human beings.

The Summer School will:

- a) explore international legislation on the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees as well as legal frameworks on statelessness and trafficking
- b) take stock of the current challenges to the human rights of refugees/migrants, stateless as well as trafficked persons
- c) discuss what churches can do to do better advocacy on migration, asylum seeking/refugees, statelessness and trafficking in human beings

Representatives of CEC or CCME members with an interest in these issues are kindly invited to the Summer School from 2 - 6 July 2017 in Palermo/Italy.

Subsidies

For churches and church organisations wishing to be represented at the meeting but not able to meet the costs, there is a possibility to apply for a subsidy for travel costs and/or for board and lodgings.

The subsidy fund is quite limited, however, and participants applying for subsidies are required to pay at least a minimal contribution. If participants need to apply for financial support, they should do so as early as possible and contact the secretariat (cbelot@cec-kek.be) before booking their travel tickets. Please be aware that CEC will not be able to bear any costs caused by the late cancellation of registration(s).

Fee

The fee, which includes board and lodgings, for the duration of the Summer School is 250€.

Practical information

Please see registration form.

To confirm your participation, please complete the attached form and e-mail it to cbelot@cec-kek.be at your earliest convenience, but no later than 1 MAY 2017.

CO² Compensation

A few years ago, CEC launched the implementation of the CO² compensation scheme for travel related to all activities. Participants attending events organised by CEC are, in accordance with this decision, invited to contribute an amount of €15 which will be added to the CEC CO² compensation fund.

If your church / organisation does not have its own compensation fund, this voluntary contribution can be added to your bank transfer when paying your participation fee. Thank you for your endowment of this worthy cause.

We look forward to welcoming you on 2 July in Palermo

Dr Elizabeta Kitanović
CEC Executive Secretary for Human Rights

Dr Torsten Moritz
CCME Executive Secretary

