

European bishops and church leaders call for refugees' safe passage

A hopeful refugee, having crossed the border into Greece. © WCC/Marianne Ejdersten

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A group of 35 bishops and church leaders from 20 countries have gathered in Munich, Germany to discuss refugees and the role of the churches in Europe with a recommendation for safe passage to those seeking refuge.



"As Christians we share the belief that we see in the other, the image of Christ himself (Matthew 25), and that all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1. 26-27)," they said in a message after their one-day meeting on 29 October.

Those present in Munich represented Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions in the most affected regions from most of the church families in Europe.

There were also representatives from ecumenical organizations and from church-based humanitarian and refugee organizations.

"The experience of migration and crossing of borders is known to the Church of Christ. The Holy Family were refugees; the very incarnation of Our Lord is a crossing of the border between the Human and Divine," the bishops and church leaders said.

In their message they warned, "Today there is evidence of a renationalization of politics".

"However, the Church is both local as well as universal, and in the life of Churches we resist tendencies to work in isolation, and we affirm our deep commitment to a universal and ecumenical horizon."

The bishops and church leaders recommended "investing in safe passage" and assisting regions receiving the majority of refugees, "such as Greece, Italy, and other countries of transit".

Read the full communiqué
CCME project: Safe passage

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 345 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 550 million Christians in over 120 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

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