

## Statement

The arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Europe since the summer of 2015 has created a situation that confronts the Churches across Europe. We see women and children, men and elderly fleeing from war, poverty and persecution. Every day people put their lives at stake as they seek life, peace and justice in Europe. The daily news of people drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, women and children being trafficked, terror attacks in Europe, fearful rhetoric used for political gain and pictures of war crimes and devastation in Syria seem to have become part of our accepted reality.

As Reformed Churches proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a vision of life in fullness for all (John 10,10) we cannot and will not accept this as a reality. The people seeking refuge are not merely an ethical or political challenge confronting the Church. They challenge our Churches in their innermost theological identity and mission. In faithful accordance with the biblical witness, its calling and mission the Reformed Church has a long standing tradition of being committed to the life, dignity and well being of refugees.

*»For whilst we are human beings, we must see our own face reflected, as by a mirror, in the faces of the poor and the despised, who can go no further and are trembling under their burdens, even if they are people who are most alien to us. If a Moor or a Barbarian comes to us, because he is a man, he is a mirror in which we see reflected the fact that he is our brother and our neighbour.«  
(Calvin's Sermon on Gal 6:9-11)*

The Task Group "Migration and Refugee" met in Budapest, Hungary (1-3 June), and Katerini, Greece (10-13 October), for solidarity visits and theological reflection. We saw congregations seeking justice for the victimized and most vulnerable people. We heard from the Waldensian Church how they are creating safe passages for thousands of asylum seekers to cross the Mediterranean. In the face of its own economic crisis, the Evangelical Church of Greece embraced, sheltered and advocated for migrants in their midst. We experienced churches trusting in Christ's word "do not fear" (John 14), practicing solidarity on the way to a new community with people of different cultures and faiths. We have witnessed how people have found their calling helping those in need and how the Spirit has revitalized congregations across Europe.

We call upon the member Churches of WCRC Europe to take a stance against all kinds of xenophobia and marginalization of refugees. Justified by Christ we are freed and called to see the image of Christ (Matthew 25) in the face of the stranger and seek justice.

*At its first meeting the task force has committed itself to support member churches in deepening theological reflection on migration, engaging in Christian-Muslim relations, partnering with Middle East churches, sharing best practices, and showing solidarity with member churches.*

*As part of WCRC global, in view to the upcoming General Council we seek to learn from Middle East member churches about their perspectives on migration, and its causes, and how we can support one another. We will also work to improve our understanding of Islam and advance new paradigms for Christian-Muslim encounter in Europe, and provide resources for member churches.*

*In each local and national context, we urge churches and congregations to continue to engage faithfully and act creatively with our neighbors and to advocate for just political actions that protect the rights and dignity of all.*

*To advance our shared mission, we invite member churches to share with the Task Force their theological reflections on migration.*

*In order to better serve and advocate for the just treatment of migrants and refugees, we encourage member churches to share best practices with the Task Force about the work being done in their individual contexts.*

WCRC Europe, Task Force on Migration and Refugee, 31 October 2016