

Message from the LWF European Regions' Conference held in Rome, Italy 27 – 29 October 2014

At The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) European Regions' Conference in Rome, Italy 27 – 29, October 2014 the members were informed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (ELCI) about the situation of refugees and migrants coming from the Near East or from Africa to Italy. Together with other Protestant churches as for example the Waldensian Church in Italy the ELCI has set up some programs and projects to support the refugees arriving in Italy.

It is our deep concern that we help these children of God who have undertaken the dangerous and often deathly trip to Europe. There must be established a culture of welcome to these affected people. We want to help them regardless their religion, their confession, their gender, their origin. These people need help! as mentioned already in the statement, "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders," adopted by the LWF in June 2013. The enormous activities of all departments of the LWF in the issue of migrants and refugees was also mentioned.

Therefore we deeply appreciate the projects of the ELCI, finding places for these people in need. Looking for the possibility of integration, finding work for them. It is encouraging to look at the commitment in advocacy and diaconal action with immigrants and refugees and the strong ecumenical efforts to accompany the vulnerable neighbor. ELCI reminds us of the need to bridge the gap between ecumenical dialogue and practical diaconal work.

In addition to the action by the churches, we ask the European Union to give new attention to the law of incoming refugees as written down in the protocol of Dublin III. In its current form it is an impediment to the equal sharing of the challenges caused by the ongoing refugee crisis. There should be the possibility to have a more balanced and just division of responsibility between the European countries in receiving migrants and refugees.

In these days, when more and more refugees come to our continent we want to be open for them, we want to welcome them and we want to support them in any way.

From its very foundation, the LWF was and remains strongly committed to assisting refugees and other displaced people.