

Resolution on refugee protection in Europe

Resolution of the 10th Synod of the Protestant Church in Germany at its 6th meeting
on

Refugee Protection in Europe:

1. The Synod follows the development at the external Southern sea borders of the European Union in the Mediterranean with huge concern. Many persons fleeing persecution or economic crisis drown during their attempt to reach European soil. This dramatic situation requires common action of all European Union member states and may not be put on the Mediterranean neighbouring states alone.
2. The Synod underlines the obligation under international maritime law to rescue shipwrecked persons. Criminal smuggling of human beings has to be pursued according to criminal law. Humanitarian motivated rescue measures may not be penalised as facilitation of smuggling or of illegal entry.
3. The Synod holds the view that a response by the European Union to this migration cannot exclusively be based on fighting illegal immigration through expanding border security with technical devices and police measures. It has to be ensured at the same time that persons seeking asylum in European territorial waters are granted entry and safe residence in an EU member state for the purpose of the examination of their request. Saved persons need to be guaranteed a fair asylum procedure. In doing this, a just burden sharing among EU states ought to be ensured. Fighting root causes of flight in countries of origin is of the same importance as effective refugee protection.
4. The Synod supports resettlement programmes undertaken by some European Union member states for refugees, who cannot not find sufficient protection in countries of first asylum, and recommends expanding these programmes. Such resettlement programmes open up new perspectives for the lives of refugees and are an expression of solidarity with the countries of first asylum.
5. The Synod requests the Council of the EKD to continue to insist on sustainable and humane refugee and migration policies vis-à-vis the Federal Government and the EU institutions. The Synod explicitly supports the close co-operation existing in this field with ecumenical institutions, like the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), and with partner churches in the countries concerned.

Translated from German original