



europäische allianz katholischer frauenverbände
european alliance of catholic women's organisations
alliance européenne d'organisations féminines catholiques

Statement of Andante (European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations)

Issued 17th April 2016, after General Assembly.

"The current migration crisis is of unprecedented proportions. Myriads of people are left with no alternative other than to flee the war, poverty and destruction that has overtaken their countries. A large number of these are women, often alone with children.

Andante strongly appeals to all who have responsibility for setting and implementing laws and international agreements, to advocate and support a unified European strategy towards managing migration.

Our common Christian heritage of shared values prioritises the solidarity and hospitality that the current migration crisis clearly requires. Andante member organisations resolve to promote compassion, understanding and inclusion in order to challenge attitudes of fear and hatred.

Andante, as an alliance of Catholic women's organisations in 14 of the member countries of the Council of Europe, has particular concern for the needs of all women who are affected by the current and ongoing crises.

Female translators should be provided for refugee women, especially during the hearings related to asylum claims.

The vulnerability of women requires that consideration is given to provision of separate, safe accommodation, and sanitary facilities.

Counselling should be provided for refugees who have been victims of sexual violence and rape.

Family reunification is central to the wellbeing of migrant women and for the successful integration chances of their families into local communities.

Education in the language of the country of asylum should be provided specifically and separately, for women, and should offered in a variety of suitable settings and not be exclusively linked to religious institutions.

Practical training should also be available, especially in the use of domestic electrical equipment and in household budgeting.

Media and decision-makers appear to ignore the realities refugee women are now facing.

Women and girls fleeing conflicts and war face various forms of violence in their journey to a hosting country, including pressures for early marriage. They also face multiple discriminations due to widespread prejudices about refugees and asylum-seekers.'

Initiatives of Andante and its member organisations on the issue of refugees.

Andante is an alliance of 23 Catholic women's organisations, linking over 1.2 million women in 14 countries of Europe.

At its recent General Assembly, April 2016, the issue of refugees has been identified as one of the top three priorities for action over the next three years.

Member organisations are already engaged in working in this area, and examples of some initiatives are listed here.

Austria

Katholische Frauenbewegung Österreichs kfbö

This organisation has issued a call for a pan-european solidarity strategy and for organisations to dedicate themselves against the stirring-up of hatred and fear amongst the people of Europe.

Germany

Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund KDFB

The General Assembly of this organisation issued a statement in October 2015, calling for;-

- Female translators for the asylum application hearings of women migrants.
- Separate, safe accommodation, including sanitary facilities, for women refugees.
- Counselling for those traumatised by sexual violence.
- Specific training in the use of domestic electrical equipment for women with families.

Their website www.frauenbund.de records many activities of local groups in the care of refugees.

In Munich, the Bavarian KDFB organisation has refurbished a house, which it rents to an organisation (Katholische Jugendfuersorge) which provides support for unaccompanied minors who are refugees.

Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands kfd

Their website www.kfd-bundesverband.de also lists activities for refugees carried out by its regional and local branches.

They have made the statement that; 'It is not a refugee crisis, it is a political crisis'

Switzerland

Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund SKF

This organisation has made 2016 the 'Year of Refugees' with this as the main topic for an organisation of 120,000 Catholic women in Switzerland. Many local branches are caring for refugees in their communities.

United Kingdom

NBCW (National Board of Catholic Women)

This organisation is lobbying and producing campaign material advocating the rights of refugees.

Andante Member Organisations

Albania	Mary Ward Loreto
Austria	Katholische Frauenbewegung Österreichs KAV- Fraueninitiative
Czech Republic	Unie Katolických žen
Finland	Teresa Ry
France	Action catholique des femmes
Germany	Katholische Deutscher Frauenbund Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands
Hungary	Kersztesy Noi Felnttkepzési Egyesület
Latvia	Latvijas Katolu sieviesu apvienība
Luxembourg	Action Catholique des Femmes du Luxembourg
Netherlands	Katholiek Vrouwen Dispuut Konferentie Nederlandse Religieuzen Unie Nederlandse Katholieke Vrouwenbeweging ZijActief Nederland
Slovakia	Katholiek hnutie žien Slovenska
Switzerland	Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund Vie et Foi – Action catholique générale de la Suisse Romande
Romania	Asociația Crestina Andragosica a Femeilor
United Kingdom	National Board of Catholic Women Newman Association
Europe-wide	Renate (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and exploitation) Society of the Holy Child Jesus