

On the current refugee situation

A Statement by Church Leaders from the Protestant Regional Churches in Germany

“How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings!” (Psalm 36:7)

- 1** God loves all God’s creatures and wants to give them food, a livelihood and a dwelling-place on this earth. We see with concern that millions of people are deprived of these good gifts of God. They are oppressed by hunger, persecution and violence. Many of them have fled their homes. They also stand outside the gates of Europe and Germany. It is imperative in human terms, and for us it is our Christian responsibility, to welcome them and allow them to enjoy what God intends for all human beings.
- 2** The human person is at the heart of all efforts. Many people are fleeing worldwide. The great challenge is to do justice to each and every individual. In their emergency situations, refugees place their lives at risk. It is our humanitarian duty to do everything to save people from distress at sea and from other dangers. Inhuman smuggler gangs and mafia structures within and outside Europe must be tackled by law enforcement agencies. The most effective action to reduce the dangers arising for refugees on the move is finding legal ways of access to Europe. We therefore call for legal corridors for those seeking protection and we welcome discussions about a German immigration law that would open new opportunities for immigrating to people seeking work and a better life.
- 3** Our society faces a great challenge but also has great capacities. We are grateful for the general readiness to assist in so many ways! Our heartfelt thanks goes to all those individuals - staff or volunteers, from churches, civil society, public and political life – who contribute to creating a culture of welcome and with their unprecedented and untiring efforts help to ensure that refugees are received and accommodated humanely and without delay. We firmly oppose all forms of xenophobia, hatred or racism and all factors motivating inhumane approaches or making such attitudes socially acceptable. People’s concerns and anxiety about the overwhelming nature of the task of receiving so many refugees must be addressed seriously but they must not be misused to create a disrespectful or hostile atmosphere.
- 4** As churches we help to shape life in German society. Hence we stand up for a vibrant culture of welcome and integration; this should become a central issue and activity for our congregations and church organisations.
- 5** With concern we note the underlying causes of the refugee movements: climate change, wars, persecution, failing states, extreme poverty. Our society is often profoundly involved in these reasons for fleeing through global trade relations, weapon deliveries and particularly through a lifestyle that is using up the earth’s resources. It is time to repent and turn away from these unjust practices.
- 6** Through our own history, we in Germany are particularly aware of the gift of receiving assistance in distress and finding open doors. Without the assistance that was shown us in the past we would not today be able to help others with the resources now available to us. As church leaders we want to support Europe in acting together and meeting its humanitarian obligations on a community basis.

Aware that humankind finds refuge under God’s wings, we bring the needs of all people before God and pray for strength to meet the challenges that lie before us.

Signed by the bishops of the 20 Protestant churches constituting the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).




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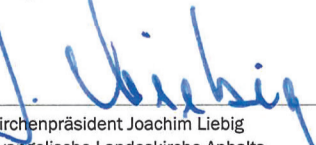
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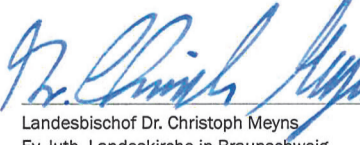
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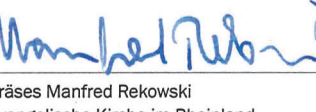
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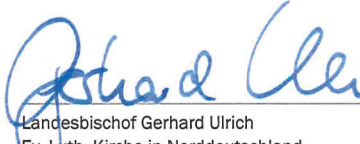
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