



**World
Communion
of Reformed
Churches**

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind. “

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In these days we are experiencing great uncertainty. The fight against the spread of the Coronavirus requires measures which have great affects on our daily life. The public life of many European countries is standing still. Experts want us to avoid our social contacts and we are all affected by the consequences of the Coronavirus.

As the Steering Committee of WCRC Europe, we call you to pray for those who are suffering from the situation especially the sick persons and their families. Let us also pray for those whose health puts them at higher risk and for those who are facing major changes in their lives.

In this crisis it is important to remember that we are not alone, and with Christ we have the power to stay strong:

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind.”

With this confidence we are able to accept the challenge of our current situation and search for ways to help those who are extremely affected. As we see already in some European countries, we can build a community without direct contact and we can look for a common spirit of hope and practical ideas of creativity to overcome this crisis.

Even as the Coronavirus crisis is escalating, we must not forget about the refugees in Europe, especially those who are in Greece. A few weeks ago, the President of the European region of WCRC, Martina Wasserloos, the Treasurer, Kerstin Koch and the Vice President, Dimitris Boukis visited Athens and the Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios seeing people suffering from the current situation. On the islands, children, women and men live in terrible conditions. Often, they don't have water or electricity, and the eminent danger of the coming epidemic is extremely high. The refugees are waiting for a solution for their situation. All the while the citizens of the Greek islands are overwhelmed with the current situation and are expecting assistance from the European Union, including a political solution. We saw a Europe full of selfishness and violence in its politics and not the Europe of peace, we are committed to.

In Athens, we visited “Faros”, the center for the accommodation and education of unaccompanied refugee teenagers, which WCRC Europe had supported with educational funds. We experienced both the passion of their personnel and their hopeful anticipation for the positive impact this experience had on the more than 60 beneficiaries so far. We realized that there was an imminent need for more similar centers and learning projects for the “unseen generation” of the unaccompanied refugee teens.

During our time visiting these centers we truly saw that God was beside those who were suffering. In Athens, Lesbos and Chios we could recognize in the face of the refugees the image of our living God. He comes from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries.

As Christians, we have to raise our voices for the people who are suffering and those who are forgotten behind our own challenges. We have to raise our voices as well for those who become victims of political machinations. Please do not forget those who are suffering.

Therefore we call you — even in times of uncertainty — to urge your governments to search for a solution for the refugees in Greece.

We encourage European churches to take up their calling as ambassadors of Christ, to raise their voices in unity, friendship and solidarity to those in need and never resting in our pursuit towards a peaceful humanity.

As we trust in God, the creator of all humanity, in Jesus Christ, who redeemed us, and the Holy Spirit, who broadens our horizons.

17 March 2020

The Steering Committee of WCRC Europe