

EBF Commission on Migration

Established with a decision of the EBF Council in September 2020

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The EBF Council in 2015 addressed the growing refugee crisis in Europe and the Middle East by a Resolution committing the EBF to responding positively to the situation of refugees and migrants, and to further this, the Council appointed a Refugee Ministry Working Group.

The Group has worked diligently since then, leading the response of the EBF and its member Unions as we have addressed a rapidly changing situation regarding refugees and migrants.

Its work has included:

- Mapping the situation across the EBF;
- Networking with EBF Mission and Aid partners, and other agencies working with refugees and migrants;
- Organising conferences, webinars and training sessions to reflect on the situation biblically and theologically, highlight needs, share experiences and best practice;
- Acting as a co-ordinating group for aid to refugees and migrants, through our EBF Unions, and mission and aid partners.

What has become clear is that there is a long-term need to stay involved with refugees and migrants, both in acute phases of need, and in longer-term issues of integration. Migration into and across our EBF region, as in the whole world, has become a 'new normal'. There is an obvious need to consolidate and strengthen our co-ordinated response as EBF. Hence the Proposal to move beyond a 'working group' and draw this work more clearly into our EBF structures by means of a standing Commission.

2. Context and values that inform the work of the Commission

- The biblical mandate – love of God, love of neighbour and love of strangers;
- Understanding and accepting the challenge of the different contexts where people find themselves refugees;
- The ministry to refugees and migrants seen as an important part of an integral understanding of sharing in God's mission to the world, that includes evangelism, caring for those in need, and establishing God's justice;
- Our historic Baptist commitment to religious freedom for all and the defence of basic human rights;
- The 'grassroots' nature of the EBF as a network of local communities and national Unions that covenant to co-operate together;

- Reciprocity and mutuality, hearing the voices of the refugees, sharing and learning from each other, receiving the ‘blessing’ that refugees and migrants will bring to us.

3. The Commission’s Place in the EBF structures

- A permanent Commission alongside the other 3 Commissions, responsible to the ExCo and Council, the Chair also serving as a member of the EBF Executive Committee;
- Annual financial support from the EBF budget (currently €2500) to organise the work of the commission;
- Commission’s work is led by a Core Group;
- Close co-operation with EBF mission and aid partners;
- Strong cooperation and networking with other Commissions and groups within the EBF because the issue crosses boundaries.

4. Priorities for 2020-2025

- Network within and beyond EBF, e.g. Refugee Highway Partnership Roundtable;
- Assist EBF member bodies in their efforts to respond to different situations: immediate crisis, relief, integration, etc.;
- Coordinate the events of shared learning and exchange of experience – conferences, webinars, etc.;
- Explore the possibility, with the support of one or more of our Mission Partners, of a part-time Co-ordinator for this work, who might also act as Chair of the Commission;
- Engage in Biblical and theological reflection;
- Develop resources;
- Channel aid.

5. Partnerships

The Commission will seek to establish partnerships that add value and capacity to the work it will do. At present these already include

- BMS World Mission,
- Baptist Forum for Aid and Development (BFAD),
- Other mission and aid partners,
- The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR),
- Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

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