



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

Outcomes General Assembly

Central of the General Assembly (April 16–17th 2016, at High Leigh – Hoddesdon, UK) was the work on and acceptance of the strategic plan. The 50 delegates from 19 of the 23 member organizations and the CoCoA took also several other decisions.

Poverty, bioethics and trafficking were the priorities of 2013–2016. For the years 2016–2019 are the new/old **priorities** :

- trafficking / modern slavery
- women in church
- refugees/migration.

There are already plans for a summer school on trafficking – more news will follow.

* **Membership fees** remain unchanged overall, but a lower rate was accepted for small organisations. Organisations with 100 members or less will pay €50 per year from 2017.

* **Sybille Bader Biland** will succeed Marie–Louise van Wijk–van de Ven as the delegate of Andante at the [Council of Europe](#). Both Marie–Louise and Sybille will be attending the Council of Europe meeting in June.



The strategy plan in the center

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Women of Andante at High Leigh

Thanks

Because of the jubilee of Andante (10 years!) there was a big party on Saturday evening where the [Jubilee Brochure](#) was launched. The new CoCoA wants to express thanks to all women who have given their time and energy to Andante in the past years, especially the CoCoA members who left: Mette Bruusgaard, Traudl Deckelmann, Maria Demeterova and Zsuzsa Laczkóné Huszka. Thanks also to Claire Renggli and Marie–Louise van Wijk–van de Ven, the authors of the brochure. Marie–Louise has until this General Assembly also worked as representative at the Council of Europe and there she has done an important job for Andante.

Finally the CoCoA is very grateful to those involved in the local organization of this meeting: women from National Board of Catholic Women and Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

A record about the study days will follow as well as the definitive strategic plan.

Statement on refugees

At the General Assembly delegates were informed of the recent request from the Chair of the Conference of International NGOs at the Council of Europe, that all INGOs with participatory status (that includes Andante) send their official statements on the question of 'international policy related to refugees'. There was a short deadline for this, as the Standing Committee meeting was due to be on April 25th.

We asked all delegates for their comments and suggestions, and for examples of work being done by their organisations in this area. After the delegates left on Sunday 17th, the new CoCoo worked with all these ideas and produced the statement and it was sent directly to the appropriate department at the Council of Europe.

Statement of Andante

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.'

The full text of the statement can be seen [here](#).

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

Austria

Katholische Frauenbewegung Osterreich 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 their organisations.

They have made the statement: 'It is not a refugee crisis, it is a political crisis.'

Switzerland

Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund SKF

This organisation has made 2017 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

National Board of Catholic Women

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

CoCoA

In the new CoCoA are elected Mary McHugh (United Kingdom), Vroni Peterhans-Suter (Switzerland), Inese Augskalne (Latvia), Gisela Hoeve (Netherlands) and the candidates nominated Joanne Seldenrath (Netherlands) and Sabine Slawik (Germany).

After the election the CoCoA choose the chair of Andante from their midst. They decided to make this two part time jobs – as a real feminine way to deal with leadership. Mary McHugh will be the chair for external affairs, Vroni Peterhans will be the chair for internal affairs.



The new CoCoA

Lectures

The lectures of Julie Clague and Simone Curau will soon be available on the website.



Julie Clague



Simone Curau



Spring in High Leigh

New organisations

The new member organisations of Andante are

1 [RENATE](#)



2 [Mary Ward Loreto](#) (Albania)



3 [Asociatia Crestina Andragosica a Femeilor](#) (Romania)

News from member organisations

Catholic Women Speak

Christina Mottram was present part of the Conference in High Leigh and she wrote:

I can recommend the Catholic Women Speak page on facebook (members only), <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Catholicwomenspeak/> founded by Prof Tina Beattie at Roehampton University. There are members from all around the world – please join.

This network created the *Catholic Women Speak* book, which I showed some of you, with 40 articles by different women about issues/experiences being discussed by the Synod on the Family. It was the opportunity to let women's voices be heard – a copy was given to every Bishop at the Synod.

The book is available via Amazon, Alban books, or via my local parish bookshop Watermead Apostolate <http://www.watermead-shop.co.uk/> Join the discussion– there are plans for more books!

Pelgrimage May 2nd – July 2nd

We are setting off on our pilgrimage – 5 women and one man. We will be walking a distance of 1,000 kilometres on foot.

For a church with women.

For equality among men and women in faith and action.

Do you want to participate in our efforts to 'know, think, walk, act together'?

*Join us in thought and prayer,
be a pilgrim for part of the way,
take part in the Pilgrimage Day in Rome.*

Kirche mit* den Frauen

We are looking forward to your participation. Please, inform us about your plans.

Claire Renggli Mariette Mumenthaler

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In Rome: the 2nd of July we will convey our demands to Pope Francis – hopefully together with a large number of women and men.

www.kirche-mit.ch



Marie-Louise van Wijk (l) and Claire Renggli (r) being interviewed by Françoise le Galliot

Photos by Inara Uzolina and Sabine Slawik