

**Press release: ECRE's Annual General Conference**

16 October 2015

## **With winter approaching ECRE urgently calls on Europe to act**

In recent months, European citizens have demonstrated compassion towards the unprecedented number of people fleeing war and persecution who are forced to undertake dangerous, life-threatening journeys in hope of finding safety.

ECRE – an alliance of 90 organisations protecting refugee rights across Europe – urges European leaders to actively tackle the largest displacement crisis since World War II, in full compliance with international human rights standards. ECRE's Annual General Conference on 16 October 2015 reminds the EU Member States that Europe needs to act responsibly and show solidarity, not only within the EU but towards those neighbouring countries that have hosted the vast majority of refugees.

With the winter season approaching, European countries must ensure adequate reception conditions and treat people in need of protection with dignity and respect. The current focus on increasing border controls may have the opposite effect and deny these children, women and men fleeing war and persecution from accessing the international protection they need.

**Therefore, ECRE calls on the EU to open safe and legal channels for people who seek refuge in the EU by committing to robust resettlement schemes, issuing humanitarian visas, and providing swift family reunification.**

**Morten Kjærum, ECRE Board Chair:**

“Europe should not focus on fences and razor wire, but rather work together with its neighbours to offer humane solutions for people in need of protection. Finding these durable solutions requires the active involvement of civil society, the private sector, cities and governments. During our General Conference in The Hague, I was inspired by the numerous initiatives of ECRE members to protect refugees' rights and ensure protection, including integration.”

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ECRE is a pan-European alliance of 90 NGOs protecting and advancing the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

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