

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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“Where Are the Frontiers for Solidarity in Europe?”

Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions

The *Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions* (Justice and Peace Europe) of the Catholic Church held its General Assembly and International Workshop on the theme: “Where are the frontiers for solidarity in Europe?” in Seville, Spain.

The theme of solidarity takes on particular significance in the context of our increasingly globalized world. In Seville, the delegates had the opportunity to examine the challenges to solidarity – political, social, cultural and economic – on both a national and international level. The experiences shared gave a renewed sense of the responsibilities – as individuals, as Europeans, and as a Church – to take action to address the challenges and take down the barriers blocking solidarity.

Among these challenges are receiving migrants, finding work and dignified conditions of work for the unemployed – not least the young, and opening up societies for everyone. This implies fighting social exclusion and the construction of walls to keep our fellow man in need as far away from us as possible.

Visits to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast and several NGOs working in Seville showed how the problems are manifold and complex, requiring solutions in both the short-term for those in our society who are experiencing poverty, unemployment and exclusion at the moment, and long-term aimed at addressing the structural causes. This includes recognition that we cannot distance ourselves from the political, social and economic problems of the African and Asian countries. Through this experience delegates were also able to broaden their understanding of effective and real solidarity, including its ethical and spiritual dimensions and the need for personal commitment on the part of all those involved. Hence, solidarity will enable us to reshape barriers into meeting places where we can meet as brothers and sisters.

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