

Final Statement of the 8th European Catholic China Colloquium

At the end of the 8th European Catholic China Colloquium from September 16–19, 2010 in Freising near Munich, Germany on the topic “Chinese in Europe – Trends and Catholic Perspectives” the participants made proposals for a final statement on the particular situation and various problems of Chinese migrants in Europe and a possible improvement of their situation. The final version of this statement under the title “‘I was a stranger and you made me welcome.’ Chinese in Europe – a Christian Answer” was drawn up in the China-Zentrum after consultation with all conference participants.

“I was a stranger and you made me welcome” Chinese in Europe – a Christian Answer

More and more Chinese are living in Europe, permanently or temporarily. While in some European countries Chinese immigration has a long history, in other countries it is a more recent phenomenon. Russia and Eastern Europe are major destinations for the new migrants. Another new destination is Southern Europe where there can be tens of thousands in some Chinese communities. In several European countries, Chinese students are the largest single ethnic group amongst the students from abroad attending local universities.

One hundred representatives of Catholic initiatives and organizations in Europe cooperating with Chinese partners, together with Chinese lay Catholics, priests, and sisters living or studying in Europe as well as several representatives of the Protestant and Russian Orthodox Churches met from 16–19 September 2010 at the 8th European Catholic China Colloquium in Freising (Germany) to discuss the topic “Chinese in Europe – Trends and Catholic Perspectives.” The participants of this meeting see the following needs and make the following appeal:

1. Chinese living in Europe should be perceived in their diversity and heterogeneity. They should be welcomed as individuals with their specific personal and social background.
2. Genuine concern and caring for the basic human needs of Chinese migrants are important. Crucial for the immigrants is the acquirement of communication skills, including knowledge of the local language, culture, customs and regulations, to support their integration into the local context. Local Christian communities could provide training and help on these and other important issues. Lobbying on behalf of the Chi-

nese migrants, especially the victims of human trafficking and labour abuse, is necessary.

3. Migration has a spiritual and cultural potential, and provides opportunities for human enrichment for both the migrants and the receiving countries. Real intercultural encounters and sharing on both sides need to be encouraged. We hope that the local churches can play a more integrative role, especially among the young Chinese and the university students from China. Local Christians are encouraged to learn Chinese. We invite individual bishops and bishops conferences of Europe to consider this statement, to intensify their support for the Chinese community where this is already in vogue, and to start new initiatives where necessary. At the same time, we encourage religious congregations to recognise their responsibility to serve as a bridge between the Chinese in Europe and the local Church.
4. There is a special mission with the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe to extend their pastoral care towards Catholic Chinese and to introduce Christianity to non-Christian Chinese. However, the basic approach is the caring love for the people, especially those in need, regardless of whether they are Catholic or not, trying to lead from a thoroughly human care and concern to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Dialogue and cooperation between the Church in China and the Church in Europe concerning the Chinese migrants in Europe is necessary. This includes the question of Chinese priests caring for Chinese migrants in Europe. Cooperation between the Chinese communities and the local parishes should be encouraged. Stronger efforts in terms of ecumenical cooperation in this apostolate would be appreciated.

A better networking and coordination of efforts among Chinese Catholic communities on a European level is needed. More interaction and exchange of ideas should be fostered. To start with, it would be helpful to establish a databank of all Chinese Catholic communities and local communities involved with Chinese in Europe and their activities.

The Participants of the 8th European Catholic China Colloquium

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