

## **RCH Statement Regarding the Refugee Situation**

The Ministerial President of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), Bishop István Szabó held a professional consultation with the representatives of RCH on 3 September 2015. The meeting was attended by the heads of the Refugee Ministry, of the Reformed Mission Centre, the Mission Department, the Ecumenical Office and the Communication Department, as well as the legal adviser of the Synod and the General Secretary.

Following the discussion of professional aspects and other information, István Szabó asked the attendees to enlarge the scope of activity of the Refugee Mission as the refugee situation has posed a challenge never seen before, necessitating a particularly harmonized and efficient effort.

The Ministerial President of the Synod said that in this serious situation the most important task besides ensuring the most basic rights is to provide sufficient and precise information both to the citizens of Hungary and to the refugees. However, we are sorry to witness that the refugee situation is being used for domestic political debate. We ask and caution everyone to maintain peace and we thank Hungarian citizens for acting with patience and understanding towards their fellow human beings in a difficult situation. We also thank the Hungarian authorities for fulfilling their duties at the highest possible standard despite contradictory EU directives.

Helping refugees is not a new activity for the Reformed Church as its Refugee Ministry has been working for almost 10 years (since 2006) with funding from the RCH's own resources, support provided by American and European partner churches and from grants. In this serious situation the RCH is laying an even greater emphasis on the mission among refugees and encourages everyone to participate in wide-ranging cooperation.

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid is also sharing in the work. Since August it has been offering medical help and holding afternoon child care programmes at the Debrecen Reception Centre of the Office of Immigration and Nationality. It provides general medical service, gynaecological care and basic medication for the residents of the camp on a weekly basis. Twice a week volunteers bring creative toys, sports equipment and board games to the children living in the camps. Volunteers and colleagues of Hungarian Reformed Church Aid distributed drinking water, hygiene products (diapers, baby wipes, etc.) and food among the people waiting at Keleti Railway Station on 2 September.

Budapest, 3 September 2015

Communication Department