



# CLC In Europe Bulletin

Issue No. 45      September, 2007  
[www.clc-europe.org](http://www.clc-europe.org)

Dear European friends,

We hope that you all had a nice summer, peaceful and joyful. And now, are you ready for our **Eurolink meeting?**

**It takes place from:**

**Thursday, 18 October 2007, 6pm, to Sunday, 21 October 2007, 1 pm in Rome (Italy), Monastery Ancelle del Sacro Cuore di Gesù, via XX Settembre 65/B**

**The main topic will be:**

**CLC and changing structures & befriending with the poor**

**So we invite you to read the inputs of the different countries in this bulletin and throw back about them. And please, send this bulletin to your leaders and to those people who are working in this area.**

Leo, together with the Italian host community will organize this encounter.

We will also have news from the holy...days in Palermo (Sicily) in August 22 – 31, 2007; 32 young professionals from 10 countries came together. In a few weeks news and photos on our website.

Guy Maginzi and Chris Micallef from the ExCo will give us some information about the next World Assembly in Fatima (Portugal) August 12 – 21, 2008.

CLC Spain will send us Manolo Enciso who is member of the Spanish Apostolic Team dealing with migration and member of the CLC workgroup about refugees and migrants at the UN in Geneva.

Thank you all for your help, best wishes

Agnes, Martina, Leo, Andrej, Monika

## In this Bulletin...

1. News from the Euroteam
2. News from the National Communities

## News from Euroteam

### ET and ecumenism:

#### Together for Europe – Christian communities and movements

##### Meeting in Stuttgart (Germany) 10 – 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

More than 240 movements and communities were involved (there were about 180 in 2004 for the first meeting). The committee members came from Germany, Italy and France (but much more countries were present), members from the catholic, protestant, Anglican and orthodox as well as free churches. Two reasons link all the movements and communities together: the will to live their lives according to the Holy Scriptures as well as according to the word of Jesus “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13, 34).

The committee wanted to make clear how the movements and communities influence the surrounding society and this was specially concentrated in five areas: Family, Work and Economy, Poor and Underprivileged, Peace and Justice, the City. This means: short, personal experiences to show how we contribute in those areas to the construction of Europe, able to confront the challenges that lie ahead. *The charismas, free gifts of God, place us on the road to fraternity and common living, indicating it as Europe’s deep vocation,* says the final message.

The meeting was very well organised with many highlights, coming for example from Cardinal Kasper or Romano Prodi. Forums were organised (for example about the ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania, in September), so it was possible to meet and to speak in small groups for a more personal time. The Christian Life Community of Germany gave an input about Spiritual Exercises, very well done and very appreciated. Leonardo Becchetti from Euroteam spoke about Fair Trade and Micro Economy.

For us, Euroteam, it was a great moment; the German CLC members welcomed us warmly and we had time enough to know each other better.

An important point remains, how can we, as CLCers on grassroots’ level live this spirit of unity? And secondly, could it be a common mission for our national CLCs in Europe, according to the historical grown diversity of in each of our countries, to work for greater unity?

The next step will be the participation of Evelyne Maloret, Agnès Rausch, Monika Sander in Sibiu (Romania) to the THIRD ECUMENICAL EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY (EEA3 – [www.eea3.org](http://www.eea3.org)) in September 2007, organized by the European Bishops Conference.

## Social Justice in CLC

### CLC Austria

As a national community we had our so called “Nairobi Process” over a period of 6 or 7 months. As a result of this we sent young people – from our Youth-CLC and their friends - to Ecuador on 3 occasions to take part in house-building campaigns in the slums of Gayaquil. This was of course a powerful experience for those who took part. The evaluation of this project led to the insight that it was now time for a change in strategy. The next step was a most successful money raising campaign run by the Y-CLC together with a parish youth group of St. Steven’s in Vienna, the see of our archbishop. Selling brightly painted miniature models of the Guayaquil houses they raised some 10.000 Euros so far.

Other activities are either on group level or on individual level. Austrian development workers in different Latin American countries are being supported financially and with prayers by various groups. We have an Argentine-born CLC member who is involved with various projects in her home country such as raising funds for the education of under privileged youth.

On an individual target level CLC has sheltered, supported, and helped a Russian refugee family over many years and countries until they could finally settle in Australia. Similarly we sheltered a Lebanese woman for some time. In both cases we also had Jesuit support. And there is the individual coaching of school children "with a migration background" as it is called. Or helping people to find a job.

Getrud Zeller

### **CLC Belgium fr**

In Belgium for most members the community is seen as a place where one can reflect on one's mission, but seldom as a place from which one is sent for a common mission. This is also true for the subject of "work for justice"

I guess that one can find CLCers as individuals in almost every mission field for justice, each member answering the calls he discerns in his life. As a Community the only mission field in which the CLC was visible was the one of "Forced Migrants" created as a consequence of the discernment process started at the Celje European meeting. Due to some changes in the member, this "Forced Migrants" group is currently in stand-by, its future is unclear.

Once again the involvement of persons is mainly individual: depending on their life status, profession, available time, CLC members live this friendship differently : some of them professionally, others via activities with organisation of poor and marginalized people (like ATD 4<sup>th</sup> world, "L'Arche" community), etc.

There is currently no reflection of the community on this topic.

Charles Bokor

### **CLC Croatia**

Awareness of need to work for justice, to fight for justice, integrity, equivalence and love is deeply rooted in us.

The fields of work for justice in which CLC'ers have shown off are these: In their work place they try to exercise justice towards everyone, with their work and donations take care of poor and rejected. We try to stand up for justice, to live friendship with poor, people on margins or persons who have fewer opportunities. We do it in this way:

1. The fields of work where we work together as community: we organise concert to raise money to buy wheelchair for girl who is suffering from multiple sclerosis, gathering money to help sick priest candidate and to visit him; we visit priests in Home for elderly priests in Kaptol, we raise money for missions in Africa
2. Work of single members: distributing lunch to poor people in public kitchen with Missionaries of love, gathering money for poor and abandoned children, collecting clothes for Caritas, giving free instructions to school children from several subjects, active work in community Faith and light, visiting mental patients in hospital „Vrapče“;

The process of discerning the fields of work went mainly spontaneously, according to the needs which were seen by the member of CLC!

The need is shown that we as a Community have more such projects, in which we fight for justice, help poor and people on margins because in that way we are testifying Christ's love, we are of use to others, we are working for others and we are strengthening our communion.

Dunja Villi

### **CLC France**

CLC France is very engaged in two spiritual houses: near Lille and near Grenoble with many proposals regarding social questions and problems. We are present with the diocese, Jesuits and ignatian sisters in a house for foreign students in Saint-Denis, near Paris (CISED): Our help concerns language problems, writing reports, psychological problems and even help for lodging. The same structure is just opening in Lyon.

A new workshop was created for 'foreigners': specially migration. The workshop will meet the first time in August in our spiritual centre near Grenoble (Biviers) with all the other workshops of the French CLC. For this summer, the workshop for environment engaged CLC in a proposal: life summer otherwise.

### **CLC Germany**

CLC in Germany mainly supports social justice through the commitment of individuals, which is more or less explicitly supported by their groups. This commitment is mainly related to the individual's biographical, regional or work situation. Examples are the support of an Iranian couple through a regional CLC group or voluntary work of one CLC member in telephone pastoral care.

However, this did not seem sufficient to the German CLC. Over time, networks developed between CLC members who had the same professional background. These networks have grown quite strong over the last 5 years and allowed the members to position themselves clearer in their work situation. Examples are the improved communication between doctors and nurses in a hospital (how do we cope with the situation of patients not being treated well because their treatment might be too expensive etc.), mutual support between self-employed people (how do I cope with competition on the economical market etc.) or exchange of teachers regarding the social differences in pupils.

Beyond that there is a more global dimension where we try to encourage CLC members to be more sensitive to social, economical and political injustice and to support those who act as multipliers. Examples are weekends on world economy, also organised for youth CLC, retreats on the streets, cooperation with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

We publish information on these topics regularly in our newsletter and various other CLC and Jesuit publications.

We review regularly the question whether we do enough in multiplying, giving ideas and trying to change awareness, and where we can also support initiatives regarding climate change, care of disabled people or support for migrants. Up to now we think – after spiritual discernment – that our resources are more or less well applied. Nevertheless we never get the feeling that we have done enough!

Inge Hoepfl

### **CLC Luxembourg**

On the national level, we have a working team called "Migration forcée" ("Forced Migration"), which receives its mandate from the national ExCo after our National Assembly in February each year. The aims of this group are outlined in the answers to the following questions.

The main focus of our working team "Forced Migration" have been and still are the forced migrants, which used to come primarily from former Yugoslavia, and, more recently from Africa. The support of the team covered areas such as housing, children's homework, integration into Luxembourg's society and culture, employment, but also personal accompaniment of asylum seekers.

Besides this very practical help, the working team regularly organises thematic evenings or discussions on issues related to the field of social justice, either for members of CLC, or for a larger public. One of their aims is to keep the issue of forced migration in the public's attention and to spread correct information.

For some time, the group has offered spiritual "replenishment" meetings open to all those who are engaged in social work and who wish to exchange ideas and experiences and to deepen the spiritual aspect of their work.

Alongside this group, many of our members are active as individuals in various associations fighting for social justice, NGOs, on parish level, in schools, in town councils etc.

Two of our members, one of them a Jesuit, are now full-time prison chaplains; they also accompany asylum seekers who are kept in custody in our detention centre, which is unfortunately located on the precincts of the prison. Another CLC'er is a member of the association of prison visitors.

CLC, as founding member of the university chaplaincy, is also involved in promoting social justice by helping students from the southern hemisphere, encouraging social activities among the student population and by proposing alternative, respectful tourism to students. The contribution of CLC is financial and administrative, but more importantly, the university chaplain is a member of CLC.

The World Assembly of Ithaci (1998) had singled out forced migration as one of the priorities CLCers should be attentive to. At the same time, CLCers in Luxembourg were preoccupied by the plight of the refugees from former Yugoslavia that were arriving in Luxembourg during and after the war in the Balkans. Some CLCers instantly recognised that the priorities established at Ithaci matched a reality they faced every day and saw identified ways to implement this priority.

Agnès Rausch was undoubtedly the major driving force behind this concern, yet CLCers who were confronted with the issue of migration through their job or through voluntary work felt called to coordinate their care and efforts in a working team. One of their aims was to keep interest in the fate of refugees alive and to promote their interests inside CLC as well as outside the community.

There is a variety of ways in which individual members express their solidarity with the poor. Some members donate a fixed proportion of their income to social purposes, others share their houses with refugees or provide accommodation for refugees or people in difficulties at low cost. Still others support friends, priests or organisations in “developing” countries. Others encourage their teenage children to take part in “social work” holidays (with organisations such as the scouts and guides, SIGVOL,...). Many of our members consciously and openly promote the cause of the poor in their daily jobs, in their office, their school, their practice ....

CLC has been fairly reticent about advocating structural changes publicly. Nevertheless, two actions have to be mentioned.

- CLC Luxembourg published an extensive article in the major newspaper of the country, pleading in favour of a European Constitution just before Luxembourg was to vote in its referendum on such a constitution.
- Before the last national elections, CLC in Luxembourg wrote a letter to all the parties, asking them to state their positions concerning the issue of forced migration, which hardly figured as a topic in the electoral campaigns. The reactions to this letter were communicated to all CLC members.

There is the work of various individual members of CLC involved in NGOs advocating, among others, structural changes or participating in reflection groups on structural issues. Furthermore, two Jesuits active in CLC have specific tasks involving the structural dimension:

Our ecclesiastical assistant, was the representative of JRS on the Luxembourg’s board for refugees (“Flüchtlingsroot”). The “Flüchtlingsroot” was very active on a political level, constantly bringing the desolate conditions of refugees, notably of asylum seekers, to the attention of the public, but also getting into contact with representatives of the government. Unfortunately, this person has resigned from this post and no substitute has been found yet; the Society are not able to send another Jesuit so they have asked CLC to look for a representative. Talks with various potential candidates are still going on.

The second Jesuit, group guide in CLC, is chaplain to the prison; he has campaigned strongly for the improvement of the conditions in the detention centre (medical care, availability of legal advice, shortening of the period of detention etc.). He has regular contact with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Tessy Geimer-Biver

### **CLC Poland**

In our community in Poland the members of Basic communities stay in unity with the poor as well as marginalized people and people whose development possibilities in the society are limited.

The members of our communities are organized in the following fields:

1. They provide spiritual and material help to prisoners kept in the arrest. Some structural changes are needed here – long lasting help for people who leave prison, entering jobs provided by the City Council, financial help received for the Community Main Council which take care of prisoners. There are too few people who regularly visit prisoners.
2. They work in the special places for the children from dysfunctional families having weekly courses as well as weekend courses. They also organize summer camps and winter camps. They take care of dysfunctional families. They organize street actions (street pedagogic) among groups of demoralized children. They cooperate with social inspector, social workers and schools.

Structural changes are necessary here:

- ameliorate the cooperation of various institutions which help family



- obeying to resolutions of law
- increasing the number of substitute families and children houses
- increasing the amount of financial help from City Council
- improving the cooperation with the social inspectors

There are too few responsible and involved volunteers.

3. They provide Christmas presents to children for poor families as well as to children in hospitals.
4. They organize retreat with some elements of entertainment for the ill (involving SM)
5. They organize holidays for children from children Houses
6. They help to the alcohol edict
7. They take part in MAITRI movement ( work for mission), in CARITAS, in the phone line” Anonymous Friend “, in hospital places ( working with people suffering from terminal diseases and people in the terminal stages of illnesses )
8. They take care of old and ill people
9. They have a www site where one can get some help and receive prayer

As for as the discerning process as well as sending, support and revision (evaluation) are concerned the best results/ effects are obtained in the first field – the discerning process. Is the sending process? The results are worse – there aren’t so lone forms of sending by the community. The support is obtained only one speaks about their needs in the community and ask for help. In such cases the community provides spiritual, financial and material support. The revision (evaluation) is not done regularly.

Unfortunately, the issues presented above do not refer to the whole National Assembly because not all the basic communities have taken part in questionnaire.

Sosinska Malgorzata

## PORTUGAL

I have to say that the answers to these questions are based on a small amount of feedbacks that I got from our communities because at this time of the year almost everybody is on holidays.

- *Having this in mind, could you ask your national/ regional/ local communities how they implement these principles as a community?*

In Portugal, communities are trying to assimilate these principles, as groups and each member individually. No particular work is therefore developed in terms of social justice as a national community, but we are increasingly aware of the need to introduce these and other values wherever we are – work, family, relationships. Despite all this, some groups have missions in social fields, especially in Lisbon, where some groups (together or in a person of some members) help in slums.

- *Which are the main mission fields for justice in which your CLCers are active?*

Some of our members have worked for a small period of time doing volunteer work in hospitals, supporting sick children, and in parishes, teaching and aiding youngsters.

- *Can you say something about the process through which your community has gone to discern these fields?*

The “discern, send, support and evaluate in community” idea is being introduced in our community, and we therefore have very little experience with this. Our latest National Assembly was based on this theme and we are implementing this idea in the national community.

- *How do your CLC members live friendship with the poor, marginalized or persons with fewer opportunities?*

See point 1.

- *And how do you address the need for structural changes?*

Providing formation (on this and other areas of CLC) to our members is very important, since it allows us to realize the importance of working towards the “dignity of all people”. Once this is achieved, structural changes can best be addressed by working with other CLCers as a true community, strengthening each others capacities and skills.

Some regional teams are trying to implement a kind of “stock market of needs” as an instrument for publicizing the social needs of the community and to show to all community what some CLCers do.

Filipe Figueiredo

### CLC Slovenia

In the Slovenian CLC there are some members that are interested in politics, some are even politically active (MP of the Slovenian Parliament and MP of the European Parliament). They form a group that meet to discuss political-social life of CLC members and their friends. They support and help CLC members to discerns and evaluate political decisions and that what is happening in political life.

The main missions fields for justice in which Slovenian CLC'ers are active are:

- active members in the association of Catholic pedagogues
- community and politically committed CLC members (MP of the Slovenian Parliament and MP of the European Parliament)
- personal commitment in the field of sociology, education and elsewhere

It is also important sensibility for social justice in the working place and concrete response to them that the Slovenian CLC'ers have.

Like all of CLC the too some time (years) ago we went through a process of a collective discernment about our mission in all CLC groups, but we didn't find or define any common mission. So we decided to support individual CLC members in there attempt to do there individual mission(s) in the sense of common discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating and began a process to form an "apostolic community".

There is more good will than real opportunity and actions. Never the less some groups and members are more active in helping the poor, marginalized or persons with fewer opportunities. There are CLC groups who financially help families with many children and consider this as their mission. Another project is financial and prayer support of a CLC member who lives and works in a community helping street children in Peru. They raise financial funds for her social assurance during her stay in Peru.

There is a suggestion of a CLC member to develop intermediary structure between the state as apparatus and an individual to promote more active participation in the governing of the state and more active role of individuals in groups as also a suggestion for establishing of communitarianism. It is a process that discussed some politically active CLC members in the group mentioned above.

Tomaz Smid

### CLC Spain

We are walking from a community of apostles (where the mission and the commitment for global justice are lived individually) to an apostolic community (where there exists a common mission). Most of our local communities (40 CLCs) are communities of apostles, but some of them, by they own initiative, are progressing to an apostolic community. The Apostolic Commission (created as a working group by the Spanish ExCo) has prepared some pedagogical documents to introduce the DEAE issue. These documents will be presented next July in the National President Forum. The idea behind this documentation is to provide the local groups a way to put the DEAE into practice. Thus, this way of proceed will be raised to the local communities.

- *Main missions fields for justice:*

At the individual dimension, we work in several environments: hospitals, prisons, homeless centers, youth and marginalities, suburbs and exclusion, childhood in dangerous situation, drugs, AIDS, social attention, human rights, cooperation NGOs, 4th world, etc. At the national level, we have two working groups devoted to migrants and young people.

Migrants-CLC: CLC members are collaborating with several NGOs (Cáritas, Acoge, CEAR and some Jesuits Organizations). The poor reality in Spain are very close to the migrant environment.

Since Migrant-CLC was born, some years ago with the migrant working team foundation, we have focused on the public dimension with some activities toward the civil society. Recently, we are concentrated in the fortification of a national network as a tool to form a real apostolic body. In this sense, we are now motivating the "sent" of local links.

Young-CLC: The work in this field is mainly related with the scholar stage and pastoral issues. This second task is developed in the Jesuits centers or directly within CLC communities.

· *Can you say something about the process through which your community has gone to discern these fields?*  
Nevertheless, as we have mention above, in most of the communities the mission belong to the individual dimension which inform to the community or, in the best case, it belong to the local community.

· *How do your CLC members live friendship with the poor, marginalized or persons with fewer opportunities?*  
There exists a great knowledge and interest to lead this goal. It is necessary to improve the way to go deeper in this issue. In the Spanish ExCo we thing that the creation of national networks could be a very useful tool to do that.

· *And how do you address the need for structural changes?*  
Most of the organisation we collaborate with carry out several task, resources and activities to get structural changes (concerning both, Migrants and Young People). The migrant work has a significant incidence because the migrant phenomenon is a hot question in the mass media and the politic activities.

Some of our members have some collaboration with newspapers and they introduce the need for justice and charity with the migrant people. Besides that, CLC have joined (as a laical association) to some campaigns for human and civil rights.

We also used the migrant national network to provide in the local organization where we are collaborating the information of this organisation in all the directions, serving as an alternative channel of communication of their activities and campaigns.

Aurora Camps

### **CLC Switzerland**

We don't have a common mission field for social justice. Until now we nearly don't practice the steps of discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating in our communities. In the decision time about the twinning with the CLC in Congo (in 2004) we tried to live this discernment with the 4 steps of Nairobi.

Our local groups are often put together of people from different cities so that a common mission on one place is difficult.

Several members of CLC in Switzerland are involved in public campaigns against injustice and poverty, writing letters, distributing signing lists etc.

Before the vote about a new law for persons seeking political asylum in our country we treated this theme in a national meeting: we looked a documentary film showing the difficult and unworthy situation of refugees in Switzerland. It was an important becoming aware of these people among us.

A simple life style: this also means for us an ecological lifestyle. A lot of members of CLC don't drive by car, but travel with the public transports, they buy biological food and try to economize energy.

One little but also important contribution for worldwide justice is buying products from fair trade (coffee, tea, chocolate, orange juice, clothes, rice...). Among our members there is a great willingness to practice this in daily life.

Dorothee Fischer