

The world of philanthropy urged to join forces to support refugees and migrants

Brussels, 30 May 2016 - Almost 700 representatives from the world of philanthropy, gathered at the European Foundation Centre's Annual Conference on 26-28 May in Amsterdam, issued the following call to action on the 28th, the final day of the conference:

"We call upon our peers to join forces to tackle forced migration, one of today's greatest challenges. We call for a united response to addressing the human tragedy and challenges presented by the millions of people being forced to leave their homes and countries, due to violence, persecution, war, the effects of climate change and economic inequality.

Our Conference, entitled "Imagining and Investing in our Future", reflects that philanthropic institutions are well-positioned to take a long-term and strategic approach to the ongoing and evolving situation of displaced people and to shift the paradigm on how we deal with migration globally. In this respect, philanthropic institutions can both address the integration of refugees and migrants in European countries and/or improve conditions and circumstances in the countries or regions of origin and transit. Philanthropic institutions have a critical role to play in shifting public opinion and attitudes on migration by addressing language of hate and fear, and unlocking the potential and power of displaced people. Philanthropic institutions can also harness the enormous outpouring of goodwill and solidarity by citizens.

Given the severity, complexity and ongoing nature of the issue, philanthropic institutions are urged to work together and build on existing initiatives, stretch our mandates, look for innovative responses to the ongoing situation, and work in partnership with committed stakeholders, including government, corporations and NGOs. Europe is strong enough to manage the migration challenges and philanthropic institutions have a vital role to play. However we can only do so if political leaders act now, act responsibly and use the resources at their disposal, including support for civil society working in this area.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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About the EFC

The EFC is the platform for and champion of institutional philanthropy – with a focus on Europe, but also with an eye to the global philanthropic landscape.

We support our members, both individually and collectively, in their work to foster positive social change in Europe and beyond. Our European and global perspective on institutional philanthropy and the landscape it inhabits gives us a “helicopter view” that presents a unique opportunity for us as an organisation, hand in hand with our members, to reflect on, understand, engage with and together strengthen the environment for philanthropy.

Established in 1989 by 7 foundations, the EFC now represents more than 200 philanthropic organisations, including foundations and corporate funders. www.efc.be