

# **IMPACT**

## **IN THE PUBLIC ARENA**

**EEA's Socio-Political Team, working together with EEA's members.**

### **Pride**

I have just returned from a week in Hungary where the Evangelical Alliance arranged many speaking opportunities for me. Their aim was to strengthen Hungarian Christians' desire to pray and work together, sharing ideas, working, fundraising and campaigning together and thus being more effective in holistic witness. I was especially pleased to meet so many different people representing NGOs and churches that reach out to the poor and disadvantaged. Evangelicals in Hungary care. They are praying, giving financially and getting involved practically in simple and sophisticated ways. They are now seriously considering adding a political dimension to their work, by speaking up for the poor through the Micah Challenge. I confess to feeling proud as I considered all the other Evangelical Christians across Europe doing similar things.

As a resident of Hull, I also confess to being proud of a citizen of my city, William Wilberforce, an Evangelical who was the public face of the campaign to end of the British slave trade and the eventual freeing of slaves.

March 2007 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official abolition of the trade. The campaign was successful because a coalition of Christians of different denominations prayed and worked together for decades. They persevered despite widespread ridicule and eventually persuaded public and finally political opinion to support their cause. So I am proud of Wilberforce but I am also challenged. Would I have had the courage and conviction to persevere as long as the abolitionists did?

For a short period, the British media and politicians are acknowledging the political work of Evangelicals two centuries ago. Very often, we are told to stay out of politics. Sometimes we even tell ourselves to do so because politics can be so dirty. My prayer is that the example of Wilberforce and Comenius and Kuyper and Hauge and Fry and many other Christians of the past will help us to ignore those negative voices and instead, speak up for God's values as well as demonstrate them practically.

If "Amazing Grace" (see [www.amazinggraceresource.com](http://www.amazinggraceresource.com)), the film about Wilberforce, is made available in your country, do consider using it as an opportunity to encourage and envision your members. A brief moment of pride is surely acceptable. However, there were 11 million slaves in 1807. According to the International Labour Organisation, there are 12.5 million forced labourers today. Add the many more millions enslaved by acute poverty and other evils and we are challenged to get back to work. In Hungary and across Europe, Evangelical Alliances are encouraging strategic networks which enable Evangelicals to spur each other on towards love and good deeds (Hebrews 10 v24). Be encouraged by remembering the coalition that made Wilberforce successful.

### **Reaching out to the Roma community**

Hungarian Evangelicals are sharing God's love by serving the Roma peoples in amazing ways. They have formed a network to share experiences and to enable cooperation, including joint funding bids. They would love to network with similar ministries abroad with the goal of mutual encouragement and strength. If you can help them find suitable projects, please get in touch.

*With best wishes, Julia Doxat-Purser  
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## News from Brussels

Christel Ngnambi & Tove Videbaek

### February 8th was a great day in Brussels!

In the November 2006 issue of Impact I wrote that "Religious Liberty is a key EEA priority. To respond effectively to the many violations of religious liberty and to have more impact at a European level, the EEA, with Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Open Doors, has established this Platform (EPRID)."

February 8 we had an event in the European Parliament to focus on Religious Liberty. **Dr. Michael Weninger**, who is the policy advisor on religious (intercultural) affairs to European Commission President Baroso, spoke on what the Commission does to fight discrimination and religious intolerance.

**Dr. Dennis de Jong** from the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands, informed about how his country works for human rights and freedom of religion in and together with several countries in Europe. The last speaker was **Mrs. Nicole Reckinger**, who works with human rights and religious liberty in the European Council. All the speeches were highly interesting, and the participants, coming from a broad spectrum of European Religious organisations (Buddhists, Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Evangelical Free Churches etc.), appreciated the meeting very much.

Together with CSW and Open Doors we decided afterwards that the next EPRID event will take place during October 2007, to do what we can to have impact on the European level concerning religious liberty.

### Prayers

We still ask you to pray for the applications on a "**European Student**

**Forum"** for 65 young European students in Brussels for a week Sept-Oct. 2007 and also for the "**Active European Citizenship**" application.

**For more information** about all that the EEA is doing in Brussels, please contact us on [tove.videbaek@europeanea.org](mailto:tove.videbaek@europeanea.org).

### Brussels Priorities

The time for filling out applications has now passed, so we can now take a big breath and plunge ourselves in one of our main tasks: monitoring legislation for advocacy. The Brussels Office is regaining a fresh vigour as we have prayerfully fixed monitoring priorities, and started scrutinising ongoing affairs in the European Institutions. We have set, as issues of concern, a series of themes which we believe are of a great importance to us as European Evangelical Alliance, which all come under the banners of (1) Justice and Human Rights, (2) Social Concerns and Development, (3) Environment and Energy Policy, (4) Bioethics and Life Issues, and (5) the Media and Television. I will personally focus most on issues related to *development* and to *migration policy*, which are two of our top priorities.

We started off these first weeks of "real job" with excitement, as well as a sign of divine confirmation, as we see quite clearly, and in several ways, that the top priorities which we have chosen are issues of strategic priority both on the agenda of the European Commission (which gives most inputs on legislation in terms of analysis and proposal), as well as on that of the European Parliament. Our excitement is even grater as we can see avenues toward very concrete and stimulating opportunities for advocacy and promoting the EEA's vision in various areas of legislation, including great openness to, and/or opportunities for, faith organisations, showed by these two Institutions. And this will require the involvement and prayers of EEA members—that is, you. So, stay alert and be ready to impact Europe with us!

Christel Ngnambi