

How to get engaged in advocacy - Pedagogical Guide

We are happy to propose several advocacy actions that can easily be done by your church. We have included different levels of ideas, depending on how comfortable you feel about doing advocacy.

DEFINITION

Advocacy or lobbying is the activity of influencing public policies and debates. This can take place before during or after a specific political decision is taken. Advocacy is also concerned with legislation implementation, which could be at local, national or international level. The right level for you depends on your knowledge of the people, institutions and processes.

1) Private/Community sponsorship

We first suggest a document on **private sponsorship schemes** and how to advocate for this in your own context. This is based on the example of Church Response for refugees in the United-Kingdom. Why not discuss this idea of sponsoring a refugee family with your church during a Bible study?

2) Thunderclap

We will organise a **Thunderclap for the 19th of June**. Thunderclap is a “crowd speaking” platform connecting with social media accounts, that helps voices to be heard. It allows a single message to be mass-shared, flash mob-style, so it rises above the noise of your social networks by boosting the signal at the same time. (It’s perfectly safe and doesn’t risk everyone getting spam. All you need to do is to register and then thunderclap will ensure that the campaign message appears on your social media accounts, coordinated with everyone else.).

Why on June 19th? Because that is one day before the World Refugee Day (on the 20th) and there is a meeting of all European Union’s Foreign Affairs Ministers in Brussels, who will discuss migrations on this specific day, so we hope to get their attention with this social media action. Details to come very soon here:

www.eearefugees.org/world-refugee-sunday

3) Postcards to the European Commission

Would you be willing to send **postcards to the European Commission** to oppose the current EU policy of reducing migrations at all cost, despite the human rights issues. This is a simple action you can take **during the Sunday service**. Just ask your church members to sign a postcard at the end of the service. This could happen while or after the closing song and prayer are played following a moment of silence and reflective prayer (see the Order of service). We would really like this action to be done as a personal commitment of the participants.

Here is the wording of the card:

"As a concerned EU citizen, I, strongly call on you, the European Commission, to show moral leadership on Europe's refugee crisis. It is not good enough to aim to reduce migration numbers at any cost. I especially oppose the philosophy of the Compacts with third countries, which are focused on lowering refugee numbers in Europe, no matter the human rights costs, nor international asylum law. I ask you to keep your promises to protect, welcome and relocate refugees within the European Union."

People would need to sign with their name, country and signature. (These are requirements for petitions going to the European Union. N.B. Signatures are individual and only people above 18 can sign.) You will find a pdf document in this pack with four postcards on a A4 paper sheet. Please print the postcards out on a thick paper if possible, you can then cut up the different cards and distribute them to church members. Don't forget to collect the postcards as people leave the church in a special basket or so.

The postcards should be sent as soon as possible to the European Evangelical Alliance's office in Brussels: Alliance Evangélique Européenne/European Evangelical Alliance, 205 rue Belliard, 1040 Bruxelles, BELGIQUE

ATTENTION

The postcards will be delivered altogether to the European Commission by the European Evangelical Alliance team in Brussels during a meeting with officials in the second week of July. We will be your voice to the European institutions and express your views regarding migration policies. So please, send the postcards immediately after the Refugee Sunday service to make sure we receive them on time for this very important meeting. We hope to get some media attention as well. We will of course keep you informed of the developments and follow-ups.

If you need assistance or have any questions on this action, please contact Coralie Diebold, coralie@europeanea.org. We can help you find alternatives to channel the postcards to us if needed.

4) Advocacy letter to politicians

For the more experienced, you can send a letter to your head of State or government, Foreign Affairs Minister, political parties or your own Members of Parliament/Members of the European Parliament, depending on your context. The letter can be sent as a church or as an individual.

The letter aims to oppose the EU Compacts and readmission agreements., These are groups of large-scale agreements with third countries (outside of EU) linking migration and development policies with economic, cultural, educational measures. The purpose of these agreements is to increase the number of asylum seekers returned to their country of origin and prevent refugees coming to Europe. We are especially concerned that the huge majority of the priority third countries highlighted by the European Commission, are ranked in the top 10 countries with extreme persecution of Christians according to the Open Doors Persecution Index. And they have generally poor records concerning human rights and freedoms protection. We know many asylum seekers and refugees have converted to Christianity while in Europe so sending them back could put them in extreme

risk of harm. The Compacts are a potential infringement of human rights and religious freedom. (See the briefing note on EU Compacts included in this pack.)

A draft of the letter is included in the pack. You should write your complete details in the appropriate spaces (to receive the answer). And choose between the different options highlighted in yellow for the recipients, and depending on the date of sending (before or after June 19th). **We advise you to send the letter before the end of May if possible**, as all the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the European Union will meet in Brussels on the 19th of June and discuss the question of migration.

You could also give your MP or MEP the **draft parliamentary questions** included in the materials. Parliamentary questions enable MPs/MEPs to ask oral or written questions to and get an answer from the government or to the European Commission and Council.

REMARKS:

Remember that the most important thing to do is to pray. Pray about the issue, pray for the politician you are contacting. Whether you like the politician you are writing to is irrelevant. Pray God's blessing upon them, and that their eyes will be opened to this important issue.

Use our template for any letter you send. But, if you are going to write or say your own thing, in a letter, email or social media, and meet with politicians, remember these top tips:

- Be positive. This is a serious and difficult topic. But a positive social media post might be "Come on government, let's do something we can be proud of by rejecting compacts with dangerous countries". Never be rude or judgemental.
- Be brief. Politicians won't read more than a page or listen for more than 5 minutes. Someone on social media wants you to get to the point in just a few words.
- Be clear. This topic is complicated but the essentials are simple. While the numbers of asylum seekers in Europe may be causing some stress, it is never right to return people to danger. We want your government to say no to signing any EU compact with a country whose human rights record is clearly bad.
- Keep praying.

If you need help, don't hesitate to contact Coralie Diebold, coralie@europeanea.org.

5) Create your own advocacy campaign

You can also **create your own advocacy campaign**. A document is provided in this pack to help you ask the right questions and plan ahead. If you need guidance, you can contact us at coralie@europeanea.org.