

ACPE DECLARATION

We, migrants and immigrants from the Cordillera who are residing and working in Europe, have gathered as participants to the **Assembly of Cordillera People in Europe (ACPE)** with the theme: **“Strengthening The Cordillera Community in Europe and Fostering Solidarity With The Cordillera People’s Aspiration for Life, Land and Self-Determination.”**

In the spirit of community, solidarity and mutuality, we shared our stories, information, experiences and insights as human beings uprooted from our ancestral and motherland due to the economic, political and social factors beyond our control. We, who are uprooted and scattered, have gathered to share our fears and aspirations as well as our hope and dreams. In the process, we are strengthened and empowered.

It is our love for our family and hope for a better future, which compelled us to leave our homeland. It is this same love, which sustains us and keeps alive the dream of returning.

For us who gained citizenship, we share the same dream.

Our dreams, are time and again, shattered by the discrimination, abuse and humiliation we suffer individually and as a people. With courage, we carry on our work, contributing to the wealth and enrichment of societies in Europe. Fortress Europe opens its borders to the free flow of trade, goods, commodities and investments, but not to migrant labor. We are valued for our cheap labor. Too often our contribution to society is not recognized. At times, we are made to feel powerless.

To those who hold political power in the Philippines, we are called “modern heroes” for our multi-billion dollar remittances. Sadly, we feel deep within that we are the “modern slaves” of today. We are saddened that the Cordillera, Philippines where we would like to return to, does not offer much to sustain a decent existence.

We mourn, but above all, we organize and mobilize to protect and advance our rights and welfare and to link our sectoral migrant struggle with those of our *kababayan* back home working to defend land, life and self-determination. It is in standing up for our rights that we affirm our being human. We salute the peoples of Europe for their solidarity. Their struggle for a just, democratic and progressive Europe is ours too. With them, we can dream and work for a migrant-welcoming and friendlier Europe.

In ACPE, we adopted a resolution and made decisions to develop further our collective commitment to uphold our human rights and to be part of the larger community of the uprooted people in Europe. We were made to realize our possibilities and responsibilities to our people back home.

Our coming together now and in the future is a testimony of our love for life and hope. Recognizing the need to sustain our fellowship, network and commitment, we unanimously agree to meet again for ACPE II.