

Protestant Church The Hague, 19-01-2019

## **Fairer children's amnesty big step closer with the support of CDA**

**The Protestant Church The Hague welcomes the decision of coalition parties CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal) and D66 (Democrats 66) to apply the children's amnesty in a more humane manner. A political majority is now in favour of less stringent rules. The church hopes that the years of uncertainty will soon come to an end for the Armenian Tamrazyan family and all families in similar situations. Until there is more clarity, the church continues its nonstop service to prevent the family from being deported.**

Derk Stegeman (pastor and coordinator of the church asylum in the Bethel Chapel): "We are very grateful for this change of position. It is encouraging that CDA and D66 now joining the Christian Union for the expansion of the children's pardon. We very much hope that swift action will be taken. Hundreds of children are seriously harmed by the current policy and that should stop soon.

The Protestant Church of The Hague has opposed deportation of rooted children for a long time. Since the end of October a church service is being held day and night in the Bethel Chapel in The Hague to offer safety to the Armenian Tamrazyan family. The family with three children has lived in the Netherlands for almost nine years and is threatened with deportation. With this service room for political dialogue has been created.

The widespread support for the church asylum shows growing resistance against the current policy. Children who have grown up in the Netherlands have proven to suffer significant psychological and neurological damage. A recently published research report by more than thirty experts underlines the serious consequences that children undergo in case of (imminent) deportation.