

Statement**EU-Turkey deal: a bitter 1st anniversary**

Caritas Europa finds it shameful how the EU-Turkey deal has left thousands of people stranded in inhumane and degrading conditions in Greece, inevitably resulting in others taking more dangerous routes to seek protection in the EU.

“The EU cannot continue externalising the management of migration. Focusing on internal security and deterrence is not the solution. We need a paradigm shift and must stop criminalising migration. In line with European values, we must protect the right of every person to live in dignity,” said **Jorge Nuño Mayer, Secretary General of Caritas Europa.**

“A 37-year old Iraqi man, his wife and 3 kids arrived in Lesbos via Turkey. Staying in Iraq – where they were living without water or electricity – was too dangerous for them as they were facing problems with ISIS. They walked through the mountains to Turkey where they stayed for two months. Now, they are living in the Kara Tepe refugee camp, hoping to move to Germany where some of their relatives live. Despite all the difficulties and hardships the family has encountered, the father remains optimistic, hoping to start working again soon to take control of his life and to send his kids back to school,” said **Irene Loukidou, Social Worker, Caritas Greece.**

Thousands of people share the fate of this Iraqi family and find themselves in limbo in Greece. Caritas Europa implores EU Member States’ governments to find durable solutions for these people, who are being denied international protection in Europe. The EU-Turkey deal is not a solution, since it fails to respect basic human rights and shifts the governments’ responsibilities under humanitarian and international law back to countries of origin and of transit. Therefore, such a bilateral deal should by no means be replicated. Instead, Caritas Europa calls on EU Member State governments to:

- Live up to their commitments to relocate the remaining 92,454 persons out of the 106,000 pledged and continue with the resettlement efforts regarding the 8,082 persons out of the 22,504 pledged;
- Prioritise respect for human dignity at the core of all bilateral agreements;
- Provide for fair and transparent asylum procedures and dignified reception conditions;
- Open more safe and legal ways to come to Europe (such as via resettlement, humanitarian corridors, humanitarian visas or family reunification);
- Never use official development aid as a tool to stem migration flows. Instead, this aid should be used to tackle poverty in non-EU countries, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Art. 208).

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Notes to editor:

- Caritas staff and volunteers work every day with people in need in Europe and throughout the world. This access to first-hand grassroots experience across Europe is a strength that underpins Caritas Europa's advocacy messages and relief actions.