



ONE HUMAN
FAMILY
ZERO POVERTY

A photograph of two hands, one from a darker-skinned person and one from a lighter-skinned person, holding a white frame. The frame contains the title text. The background is a solid red color.

CARITAS
EUROPA
STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK
2011 – 2020

Identity

Caritas Europa is the network of Caritas organisations on the European continent. It is one of the seven regions of Caritas Internationalis. Caritas Europa is governed by the Regional Conference and the Executive Board and is supported by the Secretariat in Brussels.

Moved by the Gospel's challenge, inspired by the witness of the prophets¹ and by the practical knowledge of and the partnership with people and communities experiencing poverty, Caritas is an authentic expression of the Catholic Church's diakonia, that is, service². For Caritas, our works of justice, peace and development are testimony of Christ's love for humankind.

Vision

Our vision is of a civilisation of love and justice where every human person can flourish and live in peace and dignity as part of one human family.

Mission

Caritas Europa has a heartfelt commitment to analyse and fight poverty and social exclusion; and to promote true integral human development³, social justice and sustainable social systems in Europe and throughout the world. Caritas Europa advocates for, and with, people in need in order to transform society into a more just and inclusive civilisation. Caritas Europa recognises the need for mutual learning and innovation in all we do.

¹ The witness of the prophets refers to three aspects:

- "the seeing heart" (Deus Caritas Est, 30-31): to analyse the situations of poverty and exclusion and their causes
- to denounce injustices and
- to announce good news on behalf of the people in poverty or social exclusion.

² Lk 10:25-37 - Caritas puts in practice the programme of the Good Samaritan

³ See Encyclical Letter Caritas in Veritate

Guiding values and principles

Centrality of the person

⁴ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, art. 1

Caritas Europa believes that we are part of one human family, all made in the image of God. People should be at the heart of their own actions and of all social, economic and environmental policies. The basic principles of the inviolable dignity of every human being⁴, social justice and human rights are inextricably linked. Therefore, all policies and actions tackling the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty should foster the integral development, autonomy and participation of every person in the society, without any discrimination.

Solidarity, fraternity and gratuitousness

Caritas Europa is led by the basic principles of fraternity and solidarity, which express the equal dignity of all human beings: equality between women and men, between people of different ethnicity, place of origin, capacity and socio-economic status. The free, gratuitous and loving contribution of every person to the common good, for example through volunteering, supports and fosters community building. Love, seeking the integral development of every human being and of the entire human family, is a right and a responsibility of every person and community.

Peace and Development

European Caritas organisations are involved in building spaces of reconciliation where there is violent conflict, relieving the suffering of those affected by conflict and addressing the causes. True peace and integral human development reinforce each other. A culture of peace and reconciliation is the basis of the Caritas commitment through education, awareness raising, advocacy, dialogue, conflict resolution – especially promoting non-violence – and other actions.

Religious Freedom and Cultural Diversity

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right. It is enhanced by an appreciation for cultural diversity. Caritas Europa regards the cultural diversity of Europe as an enrichment, allowing the opportunity to meet other cultures and religions with respect and openness. Caritas Europa is committed to the multi-level dialogue among faiths and cultures towards the common good.

Cooperation and subsidiarity

Caritas Europa also dialogues and cooperates with other organisations and networks in the Church, with civil society and the 'social partners' and with European institutions and governments in order to better serve people in need. Caritas organisations in Europe belong to the same global Caritas family. They work together respecting each member's autonomy, strengthening their unity and sustainability. We remain committed to the principle of subsidiarity, which both requires and promotes grassroots empowerment, participation, decentralised decision-making where possible and a partnership of equals.

Professionalism and heartfelt concern

Caritas Europa is committed to the personal and continuing professional development of its employees and volunteers, so as to assure their professional competence. All those working with Caritas need to live and show heartfelt concern, enabling themselves and those with whom they work to experience the richness of their humanity.⁵

⁵ See Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 31

Ecological stewardship

As a basic ethical principle and a responsibility and commitment to future generations, Caritas Europa not only works to eradicate poverty and social exclusion today, but firmly commits itself to sustainable development and the stewardship of a sound ecological order.

Strategic functions, goals and outcomes

Caritas Europa's Strategic Framework is built around three priority functions. Each one reinforces the others, so as to fight poverty in Europe and throughout the world. This unity and coherence is reflected in the goals, in the framework of Caritas Internationalis strategy, the working structures and internal and external communication.



PRIORITY
FUNCTION

1

ADVOCACY

**JE M'ENGAGE
POUR UNE EUROPE
SOLIDAIRE !**

PRIORITY FUNCTION 1 ADVOCACY

Caritas Europa aims to improve the quality of life of people experiencing poverty or in situation of vulnerability by advocating⁶ for integral human development and social justice.⁷

Strategic goals by 2020

STRATEGIC GOAL

1 Policy development

Caritas Europa develops its policy positions based mainly on research, member organisations' expertise and experience and through strategic partnerships with Church and faith-based organisations, social partners and other civil society organisations.

Outcomes by 2015:

- People experiencing poverty and social exclusion are actively involved in the development of Caritas Europa policy statements concerning policies at national and European levels.
- The effectiveness of the Caritas contribution to shaping public policy is enhanced by fostering networking and cooperation at a national and European level with other appropriate, relevant and like-minded civil society actors.

⁶ Advocacy encompasses all we do to influence policies and practices of government and institutions. It includes: research, policy analyses and formation, lobbying, public campaigning and media work.

⁷ The main target institutions for this advocacy work are: the Council of Europe and the European Union: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council, among other European Institutions. In a multilayer advocacy approach, where the European and national organizations of Caritas cooperate, also the states and other key stakeholders will be addressed.

2 **STRATEGIC GOAL** Lobbying

Caritas Europa actively contributes to improving the quality of life of people experiencing poverty and to strengthening social cohesion through lobbying for a social, development, humanitarian aid and migration policy framework in Europe which is both needs-based and rights-based.

Outcomes by 2015:

- ➔ Caritas Europa influences those European policies affecting the quality of life of people experiencing poverty across Europe and in developing countries.
- ➔ Caritas Europa gives substantial input to Council of Europe policy recommendations and advocates for the implementation by its member states of the Council of Europe's legal and policy instruments.
- ➔ Caritas Europa is recognised by European Union Institutions for its constructive contributions to policy areas relating to the Europe 2020 strategy, in particular the initiatives that aim to achieve the 2020 strategy's poverty targets.
- ➔ Caritas Europa's recommendations, based on evidence provided by the network, contribute to the reform of the Structural Funds mechanisms (2014–2020) and the Multiannual Financial Framework.
- ➔ Caritas Europa influences the standard-setting procedures and financing systems of the EU in the area of humanitarian aid.

3 **STRATEGIC GOAL** Public campaigning

Caritas Europa organises campaigns to raise public awareness in Europe on human development, human mobility and social justice and mobilises society at large in support of its policy positions.

Outcomes by 2015:

- ➔ Caritas Europa develops and conducts European wide campaigns, firmly rooted in its grassroots structures.
- ➔ Caritas Europa uses its website and other social media to reach out to and mobilise society at large.



PRIORITY
FUNCTION

2

HUMANITARIAN
COORDINATION
AND LEARNING

PRIORITY FUNCTION 2 HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION AND LEARNING

Caritas Europa responds as a professional and effective actor to humanitarian crises in Europe and, situated within the global response of Caritas Internationalis, also all over the world. Caritas Europa will create an enabling environment for sharing and learning from operational experience and expertise.

Strategic goals by 2020

1

STRATEGIC GOAL

Caritas Europa, as part of Caritas Internationalis, strengthens the effectiveness and coordination of its response to humanitarian crises

Outcomes by 2015:

- ➔ Caritas Europa gives an effective and coordinated response to humanitarian crises in Europe.
- ➔ Caritas Europa, working with Caritas Internationalis, ensures that there are efficient and effective mechanisms which allow a more coordinated response to humanitarian crises worldwide.
- ➔ Caritas Europa gives visibility and promotes the best practices its members employ in response to humanitarian crises.
- ➔ Caritas Europa gives visibility and promotes the best practices its members employ in disaster risk reduction and prevention.



PRIORITY
FUNCTION

3

STRENGTHENING
THE NETWORK

PRIORITY FUNCTION 3**STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK**

Caritas Europa aims to increase the impact of its common action. It promotes the mutual support and performance of its members.



Strategic goals by 2020

1

STRATEGIC GOAL

Caritas Europa acts in communion, building its action on the basis of shared reflection and awareness within the network.

Outcomes by 2015:

- ➔ Inspired by the Gospel, Caritas Europa systematically seeks consonance between its practice and the Social Teaching of the Church.
- ➔ Caritas staff and volunteers in Europe interact to create comprehensive and flexible communication channels within Caritas Europa.
- ➔ Caritas Europa establishes forums for reflection, exchange of information and good practice, and for the further development of Caritas' action.

2

STRATEGIC GOAL

Caritas Europa is a network of organisations that seeks to encourage its members to learn and exchange knowledge, experience and expertise in order to be more effective and sustainable.

Outcomes by 2015:

- ➔ Caritas Europa operates a knowledge management and capacity building system.
- ➔ Caritas Europa has access to diverse public and private **funding sources**.
- ➔ Caritas Europa has a comprehensive system for institutional development, including inter alia:
 - The broad ratification and implementation of the Caritas Common Management Standards.
 - An effective system of mutual support – the European Solidarity Fund.
 - A strategy for institutional risk management.



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