



**Outcome and Activity
Report 2015**

Introduction

“The poor and the earth are crying out.”¹

People and societies are facing increasingly challenging times. . For us in Caritas, this is a crucial moment in history in which **“we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.”²**

The world is burning, also Europe. The so called “refugee crisis” is among our daily concerns and endeavours. The effects of the war in Syria, and of the wars in the whole Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan, are no longer “there” they are “here”. The refugees are a symptom of long lasting wars that have been fuelled by many interests, including European ones.



The war in Ukraine has caused more than 5 million direct victims, including Internally Displaced Persons, refugees and those living in territories ruled by warlords.

Regretfully, European border policies are also contributing to fuelling life threatening and illegal ways of migration, instead of preventing them. The challenge of migrant integration - starting with those who are already in Europe, often undocumented - showcases the failure of decades of erroneous political choices. Ghettos, fears and xenophobia are also spreading in the political arena. Poverty and inequality are growing in Europe in a time when luxury goods’ markets are experiencing an unprecedented growth. Children and families are suffering the most from this impoverishment, along with women with family responsibilities, long term unemployed and migrants.

Many European countries are making cuts in development aid. A major concern today is the trend of allocating this aid to security and migration measures. This is happening in a time when the impact of climate change, like el Niño, has very severe consequences on the most vulnerable.

But one can also witness signs of hope when looking back at 2015.

Pope Francis launched the Encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* on integral ecology, giving recommendations not only to every Christian and to local communities, but also to the major decision makers of this world. We know that Pope Francis also targeted the climate conference, COP 21, in Paris with it.

The agreements of COP 21 and the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa, are also signs of hope. The approval of the Sustainable Development Goals are a major success. But regretfully we know by experience, how often good political agreements end in the dusty shelves of meaningless good intentions. From Caritas’ side we will follow up, for sure. People deserve it!

“We do not wish our outlook to be dominated by pessimism, or the defects and deficiencies of present time. We also want to thank God for the gifts and blessings he has

¹ *Laudato Si*, 246

² *Laudato Si*, 52

bestowed upon us, for the occasions of dialogue and encounter which he has granted us, and for the fruits of peace which he has enabled us to savour,”³ wrote Pope Francis.

We are all witnesses of these fruits of charity and hope through many outstanding Caritas experiences all over Europe and all over the world. They are contributing to a better life for people and society as a whole. Through these experiences, we also recognise the presence of the Kingdom of God among us. My deepest gratitude for it!

The European dimension of Caritas has also contributed to our mission. A very big thank you to all who have made it possible! In this spirit, I hope you will enjoy reading the main outcomes of our joint efforts during 2015; which also was the opening year of the Holy Year and Jubilee of Mercy.

³ Address of Pope Francis to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, 12 January 2015

Advocacy

“Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also ‘macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones’.”⁴

Advocacy Successes in 2015

European decision makers continued to recognise Caritas Europa as a relevant partner in policy dialogue and were influenced by our lobbying activities in the domains of social policy, migration, asylum, humanitarian aid, development and the right to food.

Some examples:

Discussion with the European Parliament about Caritas Europa’s model of a social Europe

A major advocacy outcome was achieved in September 2015 in relation to Caritas Europa’s work on inclusive social models. Based on our analysis of current European social models, our Basic Principles for a Sustainable Social System, as well as the reality-test we conducted in our successive Crisis Monitoring Reports and Europe 2020 Shadow reports, Caritas Europa developed a set of fundamental elements that social models should incorporate. The European Social Models Working Group presented the draft set of elements and discussed them with the social policy experts of political groups in the European Parliament. As a consequence of this, Caritas Europa was invited to present its views at a seminar on child and family poverty that the group of Socialists & Democrats (S&D) organised. ; In addition, Caritas Europa was invited to comment on the S&D’s draft position paper on a proposal for an EU Child Guarantee. Furthermore, our work in this field has granted Caritas Europa an invitation to present the network’s views on the reconciliation of work and family life in a joint hearing that the FEMM⁵ and EMPL⁶ Committees of the European Parliament will organise in March 2016.

European Parliament’s Written Declaration on Investing in Children

Caritas Europa implemented a successful strategy to ask members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to sign the Written Declaration on Investing in Children. Member Organisation Caritas Europa showed its strength as a network and the action was successful since 428 MEPs (57% of all MEPs) signed the Written Declaration. This is an exceptional result that will be very useful for our work in 2016 and for maintaining the pressure on the EU to keep child and family poverty high on its priority list.

Access to international protection

Caritas Europa influenced EU policy debates on safe and legal paths to Europe, in particular on **humanitarian visa**. Caritas Europa, together with other Christian organisations, explained to MEPs the implications of the humanitarian visa and the reasons why they should support it. Thanks to our advocacy work, Caritas Europa was invited to speak in two events of the European Parliament on safe and legal paths to Europe. Subsequently, the draft report on the visa code (with a vote scheduled for February 2016) includes amendments that take on board Caritas Europa recommendations. Through a letter-based campaign, Caritas Europa’s Member Organisations called on their MEPs to urgently support the humanitarian visa.

⁴ Laudato Si, 231, including a quotation from Pope Benedict XVI “Caritas in Veritate”

⁵ Women’s rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM)

⁶ Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL)

This action led to establishing new contacts with MEPs, which will be useful for ongoing advocacy work. Our advocacy messages were also used by the S&D group to draft their common position on migration.

Media presence

Caritas Europa's communication efforts have resulted in a significant amount of media presence and interview opportunities. Caritas Europa produced:

- 32 press releases, yielding at least 151 dedicated articles in the media.
- 1288 twitter posts, gaining 2120 new followers (growing from 7279 in December 2014 to 9389 in December 2015).
- 550 facebook posts.
- In terms of intra-network activities, the communication unit: issued 69 email alerts during the year.
- In response to one media statement in September, Caritas Europa received a letter from the Cabinet of the European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker.

Contribution to Frontex Consultative Forum trainings

As an official member of the Frontex Consultative Forum, Caritas Europa acted as co-chair of the working group in charge of ensuring that fundamental rights are implemented in trainings for border guards. In this role, Caritas Europa delivered some lectures on Ethics and Fundamental Rights at the Joint Masters on Strategic Border Management that Frontex organised for national border guards. As a recognition of the quality of our work, the members of the Frontex Consultative Forum asked Caritas Europa to continue to be the co-chair of the working group in 2016. However, we will assess this participation by the end of 2016.

In 2015, **Caritas Internationalis's (CI) campaign on the Right to Food** came to an end. At the session of the European Parliament of 20 March in Strasbourg, 20 MEPs decided to support the campaign by delivering concrete proposals about how "the EU should act in order to fight against global hunger". All pictures and opinions were collected and presented during Caritas day in **Expo Milan** (May 2015), together with other outcomes coming from all over the world.

COP21 in Paris

Caritas Europa participated actively in COP21 as part of the CI delegation that attended the Conference and supporting the Member Organisations that were present in Paris. CIDSE also sent a delegation to Paris, including representatives and supporters from our "dual" members: CAFOD, Trocaire and SCIAF. During the two weeks that the event lasted, the delegation participated actively in national and intergovernmental negotiations. They monitored the agreement, mobilised people inside and outside the COP - via side events, workshops and seminars- and drafted articles and press releases. The Caritas delegation was also directly linked to the Holy See delegation, with which we had a fruitful exchange on specific policy aspects.

Politically successful events

Launch of the Crisis Monitoring Report in the European Parliament in Brussels, 19 February 2015

The main objective of this activity was to raise awareness, among European decision makers, of Caritas' analysis of the current social and employment developments in the EU. In addition, it also aimed at introducing some findings from our "Shadow Report on Europe 2020". MEPs Jutta Steinruck (S&D), Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D), Marek Plura (EPP)⁷, and Ulla Tørnæs (ALDE)⁸ attended and spoke during the event. The Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Market, Marianne Thyssen, sent a video message and the Deputy Head of Unit for Europe 2020 at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Nicholas Costello, represented the European Commission. The civil society was represented by Patrick Itschert, Deputy Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation; Conny Reuter, Secretary General of Solidar; Jose Manuel Fresno, the author of the report. More than 75 participants attended this successful event.



For this activity and from a communication point of view, we produced a [publication](#), a [press release/web article](#) including the main messages of the report, 2 infographics and a live twitter-coveredged (#eurocrisis). These efforts yielded:

- At least 70 press clips.
- Published in at least 20 countries and spanning over 3 continents.
- Media presence that lasted for at least 1 week (19 February – 26 February).
- Promoting messages on social media; gathering over 1000 facebook likes. Twitter analytics clearly showed that during a particular period, our twitter account doubled the amount of visits from 1066 in January to 2075 in February. Caritas Europa also received almost six-times the amount of mentions going from 51 in Jan. to 284 in Feb. and the amount of impressions (potential reach) skyrocketed from 40.000 to 67.000. <https://analytics.twitter.com/user/CaritasEuropa/home>
- Caritas Spain contributed to the debate and to the rise in impressions. One of their posts tops the impression ranking for individual posts with 213.

Ecumenical Conference on Climate Change and Papal Encyclical at the European Parliament in Brussels, 29 September

On 18 June, Pope Francis published the Encyclical Laudato Si'. This has been an amazing tool to raise awareness on themes related to the right to food and the interrelationship between stewardship of



⁷ European People's Party (EPP).

⁸ Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

creation and integral ecology. Thanks to this, Caritas Europa co-organised an [ecumenical event](#) in the European Parliament on the topic, along with the Conference of European Churches (CEC), CIDSE, COMECE, and ACT Alliance. Caritas Europa's President, Monsignor Luc Van Looy delivered a key-note speech. Other speakers were representatives of different Churches and MEPs from the two most important political groups in the European Parliament (EPP and S&D). The room was so full that many guests had to stand. This large interest was a clear proof that there is a need of moral guidance in Europe. This event helped to open new spaces for dialogue and raised attention among different stakeholders, MEPs and political groups that are traditionally difficult to reach because of different ideas on production and consumption models. The encyclical allowed Caritas Europa to have new arguments to defend the interests of the most impoverished in "our common home".



Stronger relationship established with the Council of Europe and anti-poverty day event: At the start of the refugee crisis in the Balkans, Caritas Europa and Caritas Serbia sent a letter to the High Commissioner on Human Rights of the Council of Europe (CoE), detailing the situation in Serbia. In addition to receiving an answer, this also led to follow up advocacy meetings with the CoE on the economic situation and response to refugees and migrants in Cyprus. Caritas Europa also actively attended the meetings of the

International NGOs (INGO) Conference of the CoE and contributed actively with its child poverty exhibition to the anti-poverty event that was held on 17 October. The exhibition was shown in the CoE's premises for several weeks.

Cooperation with Member Organisations and other EU Networks

Caritas Europa produced relevant information based on evidence and analysis in cooperation with Member Organisations and other EU networks, for instance:

Simplified presentation of reporting on poverty; the new Caritas Cares Series

Following an evaluation assessing the political impact of previous Caritas Europa poverty reports, a revised concept was introduced with the Caritas Cares Series. This included a change in methodology. Starting first with the national reports and then, based on the grassroots evidence of members presented in the national reports, producing a simplified European comparative report. 22 members completed their national reports and 1, Caritas Rumania, organised a national launch in 2015 (more national launches are planned in Portugal and Czech Republic for 2016). The European launch is planned for 2016 in The Netherlands. Meanwhile, we have received positive feedback regarding the presentation of the data, the simplified format, the clarity and ease for readers. This shows that the revision achieved its intention of being more attractive for busy policy makers.

EU-solidarity sharing meeting on migration and asylum

Upon the initiative of Caritas Germany and Caritas Italiana, Caritas Europa hosted an EU solidarity sharing meeting. 20 participants from 15 Member Organisations from EU countries shared experiences and ideas on the migration situation in the 28 EU Member States and on the different national positions on solidarity sharing. They also discussed the situation at the main EU borders and the potential solutions to share responsibility among EU countries, such as relocation

and migrants' preferences. Considering that this meeting took place in May, before the arrival of new refugee influxes, this event is an indicator of the forward-looking approach of Caritas in general when it comes to being solution-oriented.

CE's Advocacy and Communication Forum

Between 27-29 May, Caritas Europa organised its first ever advocacy and communication forum in Vienna. The forum was attended by 71 participants, about half of whom were communication officers. The forum helped to showcase the different understandings and practices of Member Organisations across Europe when it comes to bringing about structural changes on the ground via advocacy, awareness raising and campaigning. An important discussion took place about members' willingness to engage in and support coordinated actions at European level and about Caritas Europa's strategic role. Caritas Europa Secretariat (the Secretariat) seized the occasion to present some tools that are under development, such as the advocacy learning path, the advocacy handbook and guidelines, promoting socially innovative projects, and the Caritas Poverty Observatories. A report from the event was circulated afterwards within the network.

Migramed

Caritas Europa contributed actively to the **Migramed meeting**, which took place in Tunis, Tunisia in June. The meeting gathered participants from Caritas organisations in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (MONA) region, and the CI General Secretariat. Participants discussed the migration situation and the issue of terrorism in the three regions. Caritas Europa contributed to the discussion about the European Commission's Agenda on Migration and about a common Caritas position on this topic. Caritas Europa also contributed to the talks between the different regions on the strategic objectives and wider advocacy impact of the Migramed meetings. A strategic group, composed of Caritas Italiana, Caritas MONA, Caritas Europa and Caritas Internationalis, was established to conceptualise the future evolution of Migramed meetings, some capacity building options, and the possibilities for raising visibility of Caritas' advocacy concerns among the EU, the African Union and UN levels. An evaluation for the MONA and European regions was carried out to this end. A decision on the future development of Migramed will be made in 2016.

Emergency Migration and Refugee Crisis Meeting in Vienna, 18 September

The aim of this meeting was to bring together the Caritas organisations that are directly affected by the influx of people in need. Caritas staff working with humanitarian response, advocacy, communication and grassroots mobilisations gathered to discuss the immediate and long-term needs of the refugees and migrants, as well as of our societies. The meeting attracted wide media coverage, with live interviews from directors across the Balkans. Several statements and key Caritas' messages were also picked up by print media (several interviews for Spanish, Danish, German, British, American, French, Czech and Vatican media).

Valetta Summit

A direct result from the Vienna Emergency meeting was the development of a Caritas Europa task force to prepare a statement ahead of the EU Valetta Summit. Cordaid took the lead in drafting the document. Caritas Africa participated and also signed it. This was a successful example of a joint advocacy action between two Caritas Regions. Some messages were picked up by the negotiators, although the conclusions were less strong regarding security and border management than expected. Our messages were picked up by media, leading to a live TV interview with France 24 and an online article printed in Afronline. Caritas Europa was also contacted by MEPs (Cecile Kyenge) and the Committee of the Regions to talk about the links between migration and development.

World Food Day and the universal exhibition in Milan

Caritas Europa's Member Organisations working on the right to food as a development aspect of their own countries had the opportunity to present their projects at the EXPO Milan in October. Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina and Caritas Armenia projected video reportage of their projects and 15 Member Organisations answered a specific questionnaire that helped to map and understand the role that food has within Caritas Europa. This is a fundamental point for future discussions about sustainable food systems. Caritas Europa presented the results from a survey covering all regions around Europe, concerning the extension and different means of food aid within countries. Caritas Europa's working group on this topic had the chance to visit a social innovative project related to food waste and soup kitchens led by Diocesan Caritas in Milan and to discuss about food poverty and the right to food with Member Organisations coming from Finland, Malta and Georgia.

Promising practices on migrant integration and social inclusion

14 Member Organisations working on migrant integration met in Vienna in May to discuss the Caritas Europa publication on social inclusion and migrant integration. They defined a structure for the report, which will include the vision of Caritas on integration, the reality today in Europe and how to go from the reality to the vision through several promising practices. Some of these practices were presented during this meeting. Thanks to inputs from the members, the Secretariat drafted an internal analytical paper, presenting the challenges of the social inclusion and integration of migrants. The paper also included selected best practices applied by Caritas organisations. This document will serve as a basis for the report that will be prepared and published in 2016. A launch event will be organised in December 2016.

European Year for Development

2015 was appointed by the European Commission as the European Year for Development. The concrete significance of it culminated in early June, when Caritas Europa organised an event on: "the Right to Food and sustainable food systems" within the framework of the European Development Days. The event was a good success both in terms of communication and publicity. It led to Caritas Europa gathering in Brussels key people, including scientists, representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, and people from the field. It was a moment of sharing between the Caritas network, EU institutions and academics. European policies followed this external calendar in order to grant a consistent and meaningful European position in all these.

Humanitarian Coordination and Learning

“I appeal to the entire international community to take concrete steps to bring about peace and to protect all those who are victims of war and persecution, driven from their homes and their homelands.”⁹



Balkan Route

In 2015, refugees from Syria and other places in the world where people are lacking protection and are unable to live in human dignity, started to arrive in high numbers to Europe. They came mainly via the so-called Balkan route. Starting as a European emergency coordinated by the secretariat, the emergency became a major one and the CI Secretariat took over the coordination. Since then, the Secretariat has been following the situation in close cooperating with the Member Organisations and CI.

Greek Crisis and refugee influx

Since its outset in 2008, the social-economic crisis in Greece has affected the Greek people and the most vulnerable, in particular. Unemployment rates remain high, especially for youth (approx. 50%), and an increasing number of families are on the verge of poverty (2.3 million Greek people live below the poverty line.

At the same time, more and more migrants and refugees have been arriving to the Greek islands from Turkey. It is estimated that in 2015 alone, more than 800,000 people entered Greece (source: IOM). The majority of them entered via the island of Lesbos, others via Chios and Kos. The migrants and refugees are from diverse countries. 57% from Syria, 24% from Afghanistan, 9% from Iraq, 3% are from Pakistan and another 3% are from Iran. The remaining 4% are from other Middle East and African countries. On average, 55% are men, 17% are women and 28% are children. Caritas Europa launched an emergency appeal in July 2015 to support Caritas Hellas in assisting 23,000 people in need. Most of them were migrants and refugees that arrived in Greece, seeking a better future in Europe. Once in Greece most of them take the Western Balkan Route through Serbia. In total it is expected that up to 1.5 Million migrants could arrive in Germany just this year; with most of them coming through Serbia. From November onwards, an increasing number of borders have been closed entirely to some of those trying to transit through the Balkans to northern European countries. With the recent EU-Turkey agreement also the border between Greece and FYROM has been closed.

Serbia: a transit country

In Serbia migrants are not seen as a threat. Both the government and the public have a positive view towards them. The main reason for this is that Serbia is only a transit country for the migrants and only very few of them have remained in the country. Even most of those who have applied for asylum in Serbia decided to travel further. The main destination country being Germany, the travel route is the same for the large majority of the migrants: From Turkey to

⁹ Address of Pope Francis to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, 12 January 2015

Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Germany. Some continue to Sweden, Norway or other countries.

Since mid-June 2015, the number of migrants entering Serbia has increased drastically. On average there were about 1,000 migrants registered at the Preshevo admission centre per day. The centre in Preshevo was the main entry point for the largest number of migrants and the most stable place for a planned intervention. Since the beginning of August until 6 October, 114,645 migrants have gone through Preshevo on their way to the north-west.

There are busses waiting for the refugees at the exit of the registration point. As soon as a bus is full, it drives directly up to Šid, at the border with Croatia. Once there, people get out to grab food and immediately continue their journey across the border.

A few hundred migrants per day arrived in the North of the country (mainly Subotica); some wanting to cross to Hungary there, whereas others made their way to the Croatian border. A few hundred also remained in Belgrade. They stayed in the park by the bus station in small camping tents. There were only limited sanitary facilities and drinking water had to be brought in with trucks every day. A “child-friendly-space” was established in a nearby hotel, which provides some shelter for the most vulnerable (mothers with their children).

In every location where people were stuck for some time, the people became much more vulnerable once the weather got colder. The same situation applied for all the other exit locations when the borders were closed.

In September 2016, Caritas Serbia started a first emergency project, to supply basic needs, during 4 months, to 100,000 beneficiaries (women, children and men) looking for a better future outside their home country.

Ukraine crisis

In 2015, security conditions improved in Ukraine but the situation deteriorated again as increased fighting took place along the conflict line in eastern Ukraine.

Freedom of movement across the line of conflict remains a primary concern, particularly in light of the worsening security situation which has led to the closure of some crossing points. The shrinking humanitarian space in the east has affected aid delivery. Insecurity, damages to infrastructures, coupled with extreme weather conditions, aggravated the situation. The most vulnerable have been struggling to survive the winter. People living in the Non-Governmental Controlled Areas (NGCA) coped with damaged homes, schools and hospitals, shortage of food and limited access to medicines.

The situation in the villages near the conflict line remained particularly difficult due to continued insecurity and poor socio-economic conditions. Most people had no income or livelihood opportunities. Access to social assistance was difficult since governmental services were suspended. The infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed in many locations, leaving many people without water, gas or electricity. Many houses have been damaged and are not ready for the winter. Coal was not affordable for many families because of high prices.

As the conflict in Ukraine has entered its third year, displacement is becoming a long term prospect. Housing solutions for IDPs are difficult to find since affordable quality housing is in short supply. The most vulnerable IDPs often end up living in collective centres.

Despite many difficulties, Caritas continues to provide much needed emergency aid to vulnerable conflict-affected people and IDPs in the eastern conflict area. In total, Caritas has reached 6,500 households with urgent financial support to cover the purchase of winter clothing, food, medicine, and to make rent and utility payments. In particular, Caritas focused resources on IDPs living in rural areas of the oblast of Luhansk, with aid that allowed for the purchase of wood to keep houses warm as temperatures dropped below -25 degrees Celsius in late December. In addition, Caritas is finalising the distribution of 9,000 food parcels in Luhansk and Donetsk, rural areas in the buffer zone and at checkpoints, where aid is delivered to people crossing from the NGCAs. The multifunctional social centre set up by Caritas in Dnipropetrovsk as part of the effort to link emergency relief to rehabilitation efforts served more than 6,000 people a month with a wide range of services both to the host community and to IDPs. These included provision of warm meals, basic legal advice, employment assistance, home care and work for youth.

ECHO

Caritas Member Organisations holding a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission's directorate for humanitarian aid (ECHO) attended the ECHO annual conference and seized the opportunity to hold an annual Caritas meeting. Caritas Europa is represented in the VOICE board and the ECHO FPA Watch group (facilitated by VOICE). The Secretariat, together with Member Organisations and the European humanitarian network VOICE, put in place some coordinated advocacy actions in order to influence ECHO's policies.

During 2015, Caritas Europa intensified its relationship with DG ECHO and with the Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

Capacity building in emergencies

Two Caritas groups on disaster preparedness and response in the European region - SEECEG (Caritas organisations in South Eastern Europe) and EECCEG (Caritas organisations in Eastern Europe and Caucasus) - continued functioning with success, exchanging good practices, making field-visits to members dealing with emergencies and developing tools that have been very useful for other Member Organisations in the groups.

Strengthening the Network

“True wisdom [is] the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons”¹⁰.

Learning paths

Caritas Europa has been developing a capacity building approach for the network. The approach is based on learning paths, i.e. a sequence of learning activities (modules) that drive people and organisations to reach efficiency and effectiveness in their job and mission. Each learning path is designed around a theme for which there is a clear capacity building need and that is related to the Caritas Europa Strategic Framework. Moreover, each learning path foresees time to discuss the links between the main theme of the learning path and Catholic Social Teaching, as well as Caritas identity. Learning paths underline the added value of learning with and from each other, mostly based on practice whereby creating a common understanding around priority themes and approaches in the group.

There is a wealth of knowledge, skills and expertise available in the network that can be made available for the development of capacities in Caritas Europa. These resources need to be better mobilised. The learning paths’ approach results in strong networks (communities) around specific priority themes and will contribute to developing the capacities of the individuals, the Member Organisations and ultimately, the Caritas Europa network as a whole.

A first learning path on Organisational Development (OD) started in 2015. Two new learning paths - one on Advocacy and another on Catholic Social Teaching (CST) - were prepared in 2015 and will start in 2016. Themes so far addressed are “What is an organisation?”, “What is organisational development? How does it work?”, and “Leadership”. As far as discussions on the links with CST and Caritas identity, some examples of questions that have been explored are: “What does CST say about organisations?”, “What distinguishes a Caritas organisation from another organisation?” and “What are the characteristics of a Caritas leader?”.

The first experiences of the participants in the OD learning path were positive, assessing it so far as a useful journey. Mainly the peer learning and using the knowledge present in the network are considered to be interesting. Some participating colleagues have been travelling to other Member Organisations offering their support in organisational development issues, notably in support of the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS) self-assessment process. Sharing is at the heart of the sessions; it is not a by-product.

Support from within the own organisation is crucial to make the whole ‘system’ of the learning path function. The participant does not only need the time to do the homework, he/she needs also to be given the possibility to be the change agent in the organisation.

The participation in the learning path has set in motion other processes in the organisation. To implement what has been learned, concerns the whole organisation of the participant.

Mapping

The Caritas Europa mapping project knew important developments in 2015. A workshop with members of the mapping pilot group and the developers of the platform allowed for the participants to fully appreciate the potential of the re-vamped mapping tool and gave opportunity to give inputs for some changes and additions to the design. The number of Member Organisations in the testing phase increased from 13 to 21 in the end of 2015. The participants are

¹⁰ Laudato Si, 47

very pleased with the user-friendliness, the interface and the possibilities of the system for mapping data, expertise, projects and activities of Caritas organisations. A video tutorial has been developed to support the Member Organisations when filling in their data in the system.

The mapping system has the possibility to link up with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) which is very attractive for all Caritas organisations with international cooperation projects to comply with international transparency standards.

Caritas Development Fund (CDF)

In 2015, 4 Caritas organisations applied for a first year support for their organisational development plan in the framework of the CDF. Another 9 organisations applied for support for the second year of their development plan and 4 applied for a third and final year. In all, 17 Caritas organisations are contributing to the financing of the system. In support of the CDF, an Organisational Development workshop took place in Vienna in February 2015. 43 participants from 29 Member Organisations participated in this training. The Organisation development cycle, the self-assessment of the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards, risk assessment, monitoring and evaluation and the development of an improvement plan were the main topics in the workshop.

EU funding service

58 colleagues all over the Caritas Europa network have been regularly updated on EU funding opportunities on a monthly basis. In case of new calls for proposals of special interest, an ad hoc alert is sent to the relevant Member Organisation. Five partnerships have been established thanks to the facilitation role of the Secretariat. One specific training was offered during the capacity building week of Caritas International Belgium in June 2015. In general terms, Member Organisations have expressed their acknowledgement and appreciation for this service.

The complementarity of the different angles of the Caritas Europa institutional development (ID) initiatives that have been developed to support Caritas organisations in becoming increasingly sustainable has becoming clear: capacity strengthening; access to financial support for the implementation of development plans; management standards; accompaniment and mapping. The existing ID tools are used across all the organisational development processes and activities.

Working in Communion

“Social love moves us to devise larger strategies...to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society.”¹¹

The General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis took place in 2015. 33 European Member Organisations participated. A new Strategic Framework 2015-2019 for the Confederation was discussed and approved, Cardinal Tagle was elected President and Michel Roy renewed his mandate for a second term as Secretary General. Caritas Europa’s president Monsignor Luc Van Looy was appointed member of the CI Executive Board, and CAFOD, Caritas Spain and Secours Catholique - Caritas France started their mandate in the CI Representative Council. Caritas Europa continues being committed to the common good of the Caritas Confederation.

In Caritas Europa, Monsignor Van Looy started his mandate as President, and Jorge Nuño Mayer started his second term as Secretary General. A very carefully planned and successfully implemented transition process helped the new Executive Board, elected the year before, to smoothly start their term with a strong ambition to serve the network and take responsibility. Caritas from Czech Republic, England and Wales, France, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland form the ExBo 2015-2019.

The Mid-Term-Review of the Caritas Europa Strategic Framework 2011-2020 was carried out in a long and very participative process. Part of it was the Strategic Discussion Forum (28-29 October), where the leadership of Caritas Europa’s Member Organisation discussed the future direction of the network.

The Programme **CARES**, co-financed by the European Commission, and the programme funding pledged by some Member Organisations beyond the statutory fees, allowed the implementation of most activities presented in this report.

Las but not least we have to mention the change of the seat of Caritas Europa and the premises of its Secretariat to rue de la Charité 43 in Brussels. More space and a welcoming environment offers now a place to meet, work and be among friends to every Caritas person that comes to Brussels.

Thank you so much to everybody who made this year 2015 a year of love and service for Caritas Europa!

“In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. [...] Let us open our eyes and see the misery of our world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognise that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship and our fraternity!”¹²

“Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.”¹³

¹¹ Laudato Si, 231

¹² Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy Misericordiae Vultus, 15

¹³ Laudato Si 246, final words of the prayer for our earth



caritas europa

Rue de la charité, 43
1020 Brussels - Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 280 02 80
info@caritas.eu
www.caritas.eu

Caritas Europa, the network of Caritas organisations in Europe, has a heartfelt commitment to analyse and fight poverty and social exclusion; and to promote true integral human development, social justice and sustainable social systems in Europe and throughout the world.

Caritas Europa, le réseau des organisations Caritas en Europe, a, au fond du cœur, l'engagement d'analyser et de lutter contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale et de promouvoir un développement humain vrai et intégral, la justice sociale et des systèmes sociaux durables en Europe et à travers le monde.

Mit Zuwendung des Herzens, engagiert sich Caritas Europa, das Netzwerk der Caritas Organisationen in Europa, für die Analyse und Bekämpfung von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung und für die Förderung einer wahren und ganzheitlichen, menschlichen Entwicklung sowie sozialer Gerechtigkeit und nachhaltiger Sozialsysteme in Europa und auf der ganzen Welt.