

# Annual Activity Report

Edition 2006



**Caritas** EUROPA

<http://www.caritas-europa.org>

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# Foreword

Dear reader,

This Annual Activities Report covers the period between May 2005 and May 2006.

No annual report can ever do complete justice to the incredible effort, experience, expertise, commitment and energy that is so generously devoted by so many talented and committed people from all across Europe, who ultimately make Caritas Europa what it truly is: a network that is much more than the total sum of its individual elements.

This report therefore has to remain fairly limited in its scope. It aims at informing and being accountable to the member organisations and other stakeholders.

Brussels, May 2006

Marius Wanders



Secretary General

# Analysis of the European Context

Throughout the reporting period, Europe's political, social and international landscape has been constantly and rapidly changing.

The accession to the European Union of 10 new member states in May 2004 continues to have a profound impact on the daily lives of people in Europe.

## The political landscape

The 'European project' based on an ever-enlarging EU with ever-growing competences, suffered a serious set-back when the process of ratification of the draft European Constitution was profoundly shaken by the negative results of the referenda in France and in the Netherlands during the spring of 2005. Although these results created a short period of profound "Euro-confusion", the European institutions today seem to be back to 'business as usual'.

Member states, however, continue to give priority to national interests, thus undermining some vital processes for the EU, such as the adoption of the Union's budget for the period 2007-2013 or granting Turkey status as a candidate member state of the EU.

Although democracy is steadily gaining ground throughout Europe – the notable exception perhaps being Belarus, which remains the last European dictatorship – the concept of the 'caring Europe' that Caritas Europa, together with many others, would like to see emerge tends to be undermined by neo-liberal and nationalist political approaches that are gaining ground across the continent.

Europe, as a continent, reveals a relative absence of violent conflicts. However, there still are some forgotten, slow-brewing or latent conflicts that could easily flare up again and that simply don't make it enough to the agenda of the political decision-makers. Examples are the unresolved issues in Chechnya, the South Caucasus or Kosovo.



## The social landscape

Social disparities alongside weak or weakening systems of social protection continue to concern Caritas Europa. This situation is particularly dire in Eastern and South East Europe, as well as the South Caucasus, where social protection systems and social services are either non-existent or disintegrating rapidly, leaving large segments of the population unprotected or insufficiently protected.

There is also a growing reliance on churches and on civil society to fill the gaps. Caritas Europa is at the forefront of this work by developing innovative social services that offer high quality at relatively low costs and access thresholds, particularly in the field of the provision of home care.

The explosive growth of HIV & AIDS, notably in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, is of particular concern to Caritas Europa, with its focus on preventing the general stigmatisation of people living with HIV & AIDS. Caritas Europa also observes a worrying lack of recognition of the scope and the seriousness of the problem, not only by governments and public authorities, but also within the Church. As one of the few organisations that truly focuses on the 'social dimension' of this disease and aims to contribute to a better understanding of the links between HIV & AIDS, in addition to poverty and social exclusion, Caritas Europa has recently created a special Task Force on HIV & AIDS to address the issue at the European network level.

Those who care about a truly socially inclusive Europe, including Caritas Europa, need to remain vigilant of the increasing risk of greater disparities suffered by those who already are the most vulnerable members of European societies. The Caritas Organisations Network to Challenge the Exclusion and Poverty Trap (CONCEPT) program offers a unique opportunity to bring 'grass roots' experience on fighting poverty and social exclusion to bear in the shaping of adequate policies.

At the EU level four current debates are of special concern to Caritas Europa: the revised Lisbon strategy; the challenges posed to social services of general interest by the European Directive on Services; the situation of migrants living or attempting to live in Europe; and the instrumentalisation and militarisation of official humanitarian aid.

Caritas Europa reacted immediately to the new direction that the EU's Lisbon strategy took in its revised format, since it appeared to predominantly concentrate on 'growth and jobs', leaving behind the third pillar of the original Lisbon strategy, 'social cohesion'. Together with many other civil society actors, Caritas Europa engaged in consistent and energetic lobbying and advocacy that eventually succeeded to salvage - to some extent - the 'social cohesion' pillar in this key EU strategy.

The new EU Directive on Services posed important potential threats to social services of general interest, such as the services provided by many Caritas organisations.

The framework of this new Directive on Services posed the threat of the introduction having free and liberal market mechanisms regulating all kinds of services in Europe.

Together with social and ecumenical partner networks, Caritas Europa continues to lobby political decision-makers in favour of the protection of social services of general interest and of their exclusion from the scope of this directive.

The autumn riots and civil unrests in several European cities drew public attention to the disadvantaged position and lack of opportunities that young people with migrant backgrounds suffer across

Europe, even if they are the 2nd or 3rd generation after the actual migration. Caritas Europa works on a holistic approach towards integration, pointing out that integration must go beyond the concept of the 'minority' having to assimilate to the culture of the 'majority', usually at the expense of their own cultural values.

Caritas Europa is also at the forefront of the political dialogue on an open and inclusive labour migration, as well as on just, dignified, fair and humane immigration and asylum procedures.

Trafficking in human beings and, particularly the trafficking and exploitation of those who are most vulnerable - women and children - is followed up by Caritas Europa through its Network of Christian Organisations Against Trafficking (COATNET), in which the network's specific expertise and experience on the issue of human trafficking is brought together by Caritas Europa member organisations across Europe and its ecumenical partners.

Caritas Europa also notes, with concern, the threat of misusing official humanitarian aid by the EU or its member states as a foreign policy or security policy tool that suits the political agenda of the donors rather than the needs of those suffering the catastrophe. Shortly after the tsunami of 26 December 2004, the EU developed plans and initiatives aimed at bringing control over the Union's humanitarian response under a joint umbrella of the Commissioner of External Relations, the chief of the (future) Common Foreign and Security Policy together with the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian relief.

Caritas Europa considers such initiatives as worrying rather than reassuring and continues to monitor further developments. Similarly worrying, is the idea launched by the EU of creating an EU Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.



## The international landscape

Europe as a continent has an immense responsibility with regard to responding to major humanitarian emergencies around the world. However, the 'hardening' and 'selfish' political climate in Europe towards other parts of the world is in remarkable contrast to the outpouring of solidarity shown by the European public when its help is needed by the thousands suffering outside Europe.

Linked to the above, there is the challenge of relations with the military in humanitarian relief efforts. More and more, institutional relief donors entrust the delivery of aid to (semi-) military forces that invade the 'humanitarian space'. In this respect, the recently adopted Caritas Internationalis paper on relations with the military in humanitarian relief work raises realistic concerns, but also provides valuable insight and guidance.

The overwhelming solidarity shown by the European public in cases such as the devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the terrible earthquake in Pakistan exceeded, in many cases, the responses of European governments.

Notwithstanding some exceptions, most member states of the EU are falling behind on their agreed targets for their Official Development Aid. Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, which calls for the creation of a global partnership for development, is therefore still a long way from being realised.

European governments and the EU itself are conspicuously reluctant to abandon their protectionist attitudes with regard to international trade, as a result of which the opportunities for developing economies in the South to compete with our markets are severely limited.

A similar reluctance manifests itself in the revision of the EU's outdated Common Agricultural Policy, where agricultural subsidy policies cause massive over-production in Europe and 'dumping' of this over-production on southern markets, competing unfairly with southern producers and leading them into bankruptcy and poverty.

Even more unwillingness to make serious efforts to cancel 'debt servicing' for the most heavily indebted, poor countries is shown by the refusal to substantially relieve the burden of debt servicing. This cripples these countries' realistic opportunities of ever successfully escaping the 'poverty trap'.

In spite of all the politically correct rhetoric, the fact of the matter is that the true political will and the bold policy decisions that are needed to address any or all of the above mentioned issues are carefully avoided by northern governments at the G8 meetings, at the WTO and at other high level international summits. Yet, the billions of euros that would be needed to truly make a serious impact on world poverty pale in comparison to the billions of euros spent towards sustaining, since 2001, what has been so inappropriately labelled "the global war against terrorism", a term that has come to cover up a worrying multitude of sins.

Caritas Europa has great expertise and experience in all these matters through its member organisations and southern Caritas brothers and sisters. A strategic partnership with the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE) network has been created, especially in response to the EU and its development

policies. Together with CIDSE and Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Europa has access to powerful lobby and advocacy networks at European and global levels. As a network, Caritas Europa has the potential to share its expertise with stakeholders who are still in the early stages of orienting their action towards international development cooperation.

As an actor of peace, Caritas Europa has built up considerable experience and expertise in contributing to conflict resolution and promoting peace and reconciliation. Caritas Europa, through its member organisations, is closely involved with the emphasis on contributing to peace building campaigns led by Caritas Internationalis, such as the campaigns in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia and Israel/Palestine.



# Milestones and Achievements

The work of Caritas Europa during the reporting period was marked by high energy and high intensity activities.

The following list is a snapshot in time of many milestones and achievements that are especially noteworthy.

## Throughout the report period,

► Caritas Europa worked on the preparation of its Third Poverty Report: "Migration, A Journey into Poverty?", which describes and analyses the socio-economic conditions and needs of immigrants in regular and irregular situations across Europe. The report was formally launched on 19 June 2006.

At the beginning of the summer of 2005, Caritas Europa held the Fourth Caritas Europa Migration Forum, which explored the links between migration and development.

► Caritas Europa kept producing important contributions in the humanitarian relief and rehabilitation efforts coordinated by Caritas Internationalis in the tsunami affected areas, in Darfur, in the earthquake affected areas in Pakistan, and other areas of the world.

### In the spring of 2005,

the European Commission launched a Call for Proposals inviting networks engaged in the fight against poverty and social exclusion to propose programs eligible for EU funding. Caritas Europa succeeded in obtaining European Commission co-financing for a year-long work program on the national action plans for social inclusion, known as the CONCEPT program. The successful implementation of this program started on 1 December 2005.

### In September 2005,

Caritas Europa and COATNET, building on their important work in the area of human trafficking, provided leadership in shaping the Caritas Internationalis' Inter-regional Workshop on Human Trafficking, which led to the creation, in October 2005, of a Caritas Internationalis Commitment to combat human trafficking entitled "Created in the Image of God, Treated Like Slaves..."

### In October 2005,

Caritas Europa organised the Second Communications Forum on the issue of fundraising in humanitarian emergencies.

### December 2005

saw the successful organisation of the First Caritas Europa Management Forum.

### As of January 2006,

Caritas Europa started a long-term program aimed at promoting and facilitating the process for its member organisations from the 10 new member states of the European Union, to engage in their nations' efforts towards increased international development cooperation.

# Priority I - Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion



Caritas Europa encourages a spirit of partnership with people experiencing poverty or exclusion through listening, discussing their concerns and jointly designing and delivering adequate responses to their needs.

In this sense, Caritas Europa is deeply engaged in promoting the quality and the sustainability of social and health protection, the level of protection systems, and the level of service provision.

Based on this partnership with the deprived, Caritas Europa promotes and works towards poverty eradication and against social exclusion through the development and implementation of a comprehensive social policy framework and through fostering the principles of participatory democracy and civil dialogue.



























## CONCEPT program

The Caritas Organisations Network to Challenge the Exclusion and Poverty Trap (CONCEPT) is a project submitted by Caritas Europa, jointly and in direct partnership with 13 of its member organisations, to the European Commission in response to a Call for Proposals launched in the spring of 2005 under its Community Action Programme to fight social exclusion and poverty.

Caritas Europa is the only faith-based network out of the 6 European level networks that have been especially selected by the European Commission for financial support.

The lead partner of the CONCEPT program is Caritas Europa, while 13 member organisations are involved as direct partners, and are twinned with an additional 12 member organisations, along with Caritas Cyprus.



DIRECT PARTNERS	TWINS
 Caritas Belgica	 Cordaid
 Czech Catholic Caritas	 Caritas Polska
 Eesti Caritas	 Caritas Finland
 Secours Catholique	 Caritas Social Action
 Caritas Hellas	 Caritas Cyprus
 Caritas Italiana	 Trócaire
 Caritas Lithuania	 Caritas Latvia
 Caritas Luxembourg	 Deutscher Caritas Vd.
 Slovenska Katolicka Charita	 Caritas Hungarica
 Slovenska Caritas	 Österreichische Caritas
 Caritas Espanola	 Caritas Portugal
 Caritas Sverige	 Caritas Danmark
 Caritas Bulgaria	 Caritas Malta



The main objectives of Caritas Europa in carrying out this CONCEPT project are the following:

- ▶ To build up a 'network of experts' on the National Action Plans (NAPs) on Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion of each participating country.
- ▶ To create a 'European overview' report on the 2006 wave of NAPs and to make European-level policy recommendations.
- ▶ To advocate Caritas Europa's points of view, proposals and recommendations on social inclusion and poverty reduction at national levels in discussion and debate on the individual member states' NAPs.

The duration of the program was initially set for the period 1 December 2005 until 30 November 2006. However, it is Caritas Europa's intention that the program be extended at least one more year under this Community Action Programme.

## Home Care

An informal Home Care Working Group has been working since early 2004 on the issue of home care as an innovative response to the growing demand for easy-access social services for even those who are most needy.

This informal Working Group successfully organised the First Home Care Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria on 29-30 May 2006.



The event was a fruitful occasion to exchange information and experience between Caritas Home Care Programmes and service providers; to discuss ways to enhance and improve the quality of the services provided by Caritas Home Care and to back lobbying and advocacy initiatives on national levels.

## HIV & AIDS

In December 2005, Caritas Europa approved the creation of a special HIV & AIDS task force, whose first task was the creation of a work plan on HIV & AIDS at the European level. Future planned actions to be part of this work plan could include:

- ▶ The organisation of a large Caritas Europa Forum on HIV & AIDS (foreseen for early 2007) with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe, which will bring together representatives and experts from Caritas organisations from Eastern and Western Europe and the Central Asian countries, as well as Church leaders and government representatives.
- ▶ The participation in the EU Civil Society Forum on AIDS, a body of civil society representatives that advises the European Commission on EU policies with regard to HIV & AIDS and at which Caritas Europa has an observer status.

Caritas Europa is also working on the creation of a comprehensive database and fact file with relevant information on HIV & AIDS for each country in Europe and in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia.



## Third Caritas Europa Poverty Report

The third Caritas Europa Poverty Report (2006) entitled “Migration, A Journey into Poverty?” examines the risks of poverty and social exclusion for migrants living in Europe as opposed to the nationals of the countries in which these migrants reside.

The chapters in this report deal with the situation of migrants in our European societies with regard to the basic rights and elements of social inclusion:

1. Dignified employment
2. Decent housing
3. Access to basic health care
4. Access to education
5. Participation in public life

The report concludes with 9 key political recommendations, which will form the ‘backbone’ of a sustained and coordinated, network-wide advocacy campaign.

The 2006 poverty report is available for downloading from the Caritas Europa website in the following 6 languages: English (original), French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian.

## The “List of Principles”, a social policy framework for Caritas Europa

Caritas Europa is working on a “List of Principles” comprised of basic social policy issues. This work, which should be completed by fall 2006, aims at developing a “coherent social policy framework that is structured around social policy themes” and at ensuring that the Caritas network in Europe promotes sustainable development and contributes to economic and social inclusion and cohesion.

In this respect, the List of Principles will contain a range of policy messages and political recommendations, from which Caritas Europa and its member organisations will be able to select those that are most relevant to advocate on each European national context or advocate at the European level.



# Priority II - Migration, Asylum, Anti-trafficking and Integration

International migration is one of the central dimensions of globalisation. Improved facilities for transportation and communications and large economic and social inequalities within Europe and in the world, are increasingly driving people to move across national borders in an effort to improve their own and their families' well being.

Other important drivers for the increased migration from third countries to European countries are man made or natural catastrophes, causing people to seek refuge and protection in Europe.

Meanwhile the awareness in many countries and societies of the positive and negative impacts of migration is growing and becoming a matter of intense policy debate, as migration itself brings with it many complex challenges - trafficking in human beings perhaps being one of its most alarming and shocking side-effects.

Caritas Europa promotes a welcoming and inclusive environment for migrants and works towards the fair, dignified and humane treatment of all, documented or undocumented, that seek shelter and hope for a better life in Europe or elsewhere in the world. Simultaneously, Caritas Europa is strongly engaged in combating human trafficking and the forced displacement of people, taking into full account the situation in countries of origin and countries of destination.



## Fourth bi-annual Caritas Europa Migration Forum

Caritas Europa held the Fourth bi-annual Caritas Europa Migration Forum, in Bad Honnef, Germany on 30 June - 2 July 2005. The forum fostered a broad debate on the links between migration and development through its central theme: "Migrants and Refugees as Active Citizens and Agents of Change - Linking the Internal and External Dimensions of Migration and Development".



The Migration Forum worked on a variety of sub-issues related to the main theme, such as:

Remittances (money sent by migrants back home to their countries of origin)

Labour migration

Development in creating alternatives to forced migration

Durable solutions for refugees

The Human Rights perspective of migration and co-development

The cultural impact of migrants on sending and receiving societies

The role of the media in migration and development

Returnees: are they agents of change or a social challenge for the countries they return to?

## Migration Study Visit 2005

Organised on an annual basis, this 5th Migration Study Visit took place in Bucharest, Romania on 21-24 September 2005.

Romanian government officials gave a presentation on the Romanian Asylum and Migration Policies, and a UNHCR representative described the UN's view on the situation of refugee protection in Romania. The event also included a visit to a reception centre for asylum seekers in Bucharest, as well as a visit to the migration project of Caritas Campulung.



## Migration Troika Meetings

Having been conceived and initiated by Caritas Europa for the first time in the year 2000, these meetings take place every six months and gather expert representatives of Caritas Europa and its member organisations from the three member states that are consecutively holding the EU Presidency. Lobbying and advocacy meetings are then organised (sometimes also involving other NGO's) with the government officials of the member state that is going to hold the next EU-presidency.

A Caritas Europa Troika Meeting with the UK Presidency of the EU took place in London on 9-10 June 2005. Caritas Europa met Home Office Minister Tony McNulty, along with government officials and British NGOs. Topics such as the Asylum Procedures Directive, and integration as well as trafficking were raised by Caritas Europa. These discussed firstly in direct dialogue with Tony McNulty, and subsequently in more detail during a meeting with the government officials of Home Affairs and the Cabinet Office.

With Austria taking over the EU Presidency in January 2006, a series of Caritas Europa Troika Meetings were held with the Austrian minister of Home Affairs Liese Prokop, and Franco Frattini, EU Commissioner for Freedom, Security and Justice, together with government officials and Austrian NGOs in Vienna on 25-28 November. Caritas Europa expressed its concern with certain migration developments, the action plan on trafficking in human beings, the Return Directive and the improvement of cooperation between asylum authorities in the EU to Mrs. Prokop.

## NGO Network of Integration Focal Points

The NGO Network of Integration Focal Points is a project for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (INTI). The project is co-financed by the European Commission.

The INTI project is implemented in partnership with the European Council for Refugees and Exile (ECRE) who as the lead partner, aims at setting up an EU-wide network of NGOs that continuously monitors national integration policies and the implementation of the Common Basic Principles on Integration agreed upon by the EU.

This project will run over the course of 17 months (until 31 October 2006). Two joint ECRE/Caritas Europa seminars were held as a part of the project between November 2005 and March 2006. A third and concluding seminar took place in Brussels in June 2006. At these seminars, discussions were held on topics such as integration from day one and integration policies in practice.

## Human trafficking and COATNET

Created in 2001 at the initiative of Caritas Germany (DCV) and Caritas Europa, COATNET aims at emphasising the trans-national dimension of human trafficking and at developing an effective trans-national network, which creates tools and mechanisms that would allow the transfer of information, mutual support, and operational partnership across borders. This network, under the legal authority of Caritas Europa, is ecumenical and consists of organisations and persons of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant identities.

Currently numbering over 40 registered COATNET user organisations, from Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, North America and Oceania, the network spans the globe.

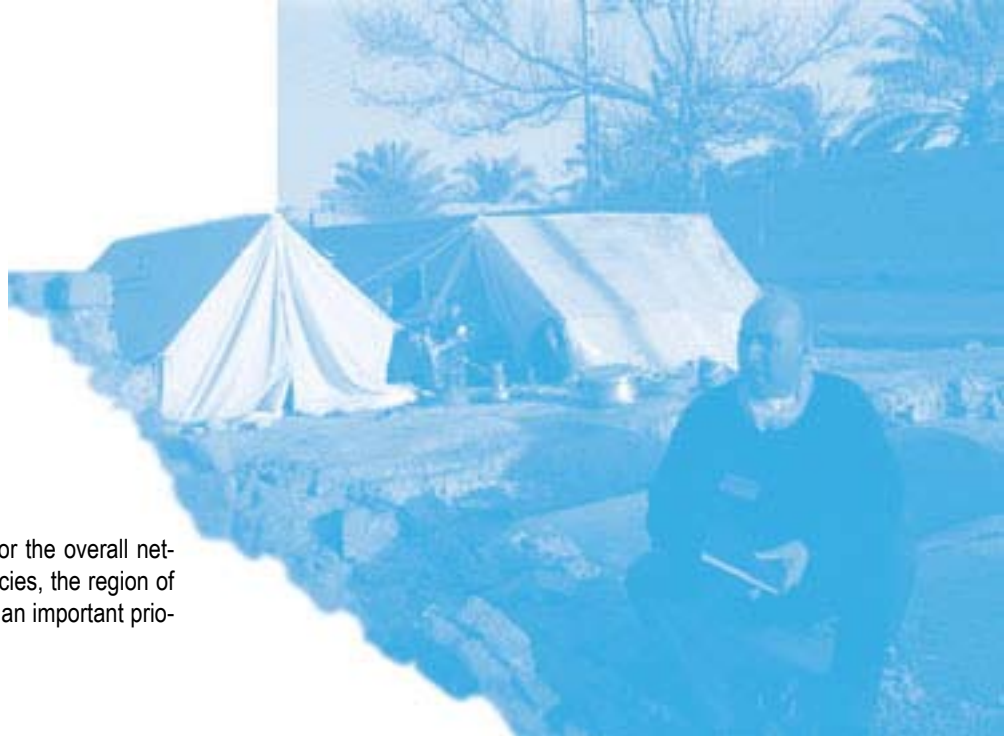
Among many other activities, COATNET contributed to a seminar at the 2005 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brasil and made a presentation at the Workshop entitled, "Improvement of Local Capacities for Anti-Trafficking Project" in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 13-14 June, 2005.



**Christian Organisations  
Against Trafficking in Women**

# Priority III - Responding to Major Emergencies

Although Caritas Internationalis is responsible for the overall network coordination in response to major emergencies, the region of Caritas Europa recognises Humanitarian Aid as an important priority under the new Strategy 2005-2010.



## Confederation support

Under the leadership of its Humanitarian Aid Commission, Caritas Europa made important contributions to the Confederation led responses. By mobilising the material and human resources of members of the Caritas Europa region, they were able to provide staff to Caritas Internationalis' operational support missions for the National Caritas affected and to engage in the consultation process of Eastern member organisations' applications for emergency aid.

► Pakistan Earthquake - A massive earthquake hit the remote northern mountain regions of Pakistan on 8 October 2005. Immediately after the first news flashes about the disaster, Caritas Europa took the initiative to actively coordinate European member organisations to the anticipated Pakistan Emergency Response. By the evening of Sunday, 9 October 2005, Caritas Europa already had a team of 7 people ready to travel within the next 48 hours under a Caritas Internationalis mandate to the crisis site.

## Overseas emergencies

► Tsunami - The Caritas Europa Secretariat contributed to the coordination of the overall Caritas Internationalis led response through the mobilisation of suitable candidates for the then constituted ERST missions to Sri Lanka and India. It was especially noteworthy that member organisations from Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans area contributed substantially to the Special Operation Appeals (SOA) and some of them became operational in the stricken area itself.



## European emergencies

- ▶ A number of smaller and bigger emergencies also occurred in Europe, more precisely in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia & Montenegro, Georgia and Portugal. Caritas Europa provided advice and consultation to the affect Caritas member organisations prior to them launching appeals to bilateral donors or through Caritas Internationalis to selected network members.
- ▶ Chechnya remains a forgotten emergency in the international arena, but is high on the agenda of Caritas Europa. Under a Caritas Internationalis mandate Caritas Europa provides advice and guidance to Chechnya program operations through its involvement in the Caritas Internationalis Country Group Meetings, led by Caritas Czech Republic.

## Further Confederation support

- ▶ Organising the Caritas Europa region's input for ongoing strategic planning processes (e.g. Revision process of the Caritas Internationalis Emergency Mechanisms).
- ▶ Providing well-tailored emergency training courses for a range of different target groups on regional and inter-regional levels. This also includes training courses for Eastern European Member Organisations.
- ▶ Setting in motion and managing the Mid-term evaluation of the ACT/Caritas Program in Darfur.



## Policy Activities

Following the tsunami, the EU's Foreign Ministers, assembled in the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), came together at an 'extraordinary' meeting in Brussels on 7 of January 2005 to recommend that the European Commission investigate the possibilities of setting up an EU Rapid Response Capability and a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

Caritas Europa - in close cooperation with Caritas Luxembourg – created a position paper which advocates for a strong role for the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and stresses the need to protect the humanitarian space and its underlying principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence in the delivery of humanitarian aid. The position paper served the purpose of having member organisations take up this issue with their national governments.

Caritas Europa – in preparation of commemorating the 1st anniversary of the tsunami - participated in the creation of "NGO Aid Intervention and Future Challenges", an info-pack initiated by the European Platform of Voluntary Organisations in International Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE) and the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD). This info-pack has gathered information about NGO's successes and problems in response to the tsunami, together with examples of best practices, advocacy challenges and an overall template of the funding sources and allocations.

## Humanitarian learning and sharing within the Network

Caritas Europa, as a network of European Caritas Organisations, works constantly to promote the exchange of experiences and information between its member organisations. In order to achieve this goal, Caritas Europa held its 3rd Emergency Forum, in Paris on 3-4 November 2005 with 16 member organisations present. The Forum focused mainly on the approach to organisational learning within the Darfur Response, the evaluation of the tsunami program in India, and the Disaster Risk and Drought Cycle management.

## Collaboration with ECHO

At the EU level, Caritas Europa serves its members as the liaison office to the EU institutions. As far as humanitarian aid is concerned, it is the focal point for 12 Caritas Member Organisations who became signatories to a Framework of Partnership Agreement (FPA) with ECHO. Caritas Europa as a network is represented within the FPA Watchgroup, an inter-agency working group which deals mainly with operational matters arising from the terms and conditions of the FPA. The Secretariat in Brussels facilitates and coordinates MOs applications before approaching ECHO for funding and nourishes the work of the FPA Watchgroup with concrete examples drawn from MOs experience in program implementation. Through special Caritas FPA Holder meetings – organised around the ECHO's Annual Conference – or by means of teleconferences and special Forum events, the Secretariat successfully promotes the mutual exchange of best practices and experiences and a platform to engage in strategic planning and direction setting towards ECHO.

# Priority IV - International Development and Peace



Caritas Europa challenges structures that cause injustice and inequality throughout the world, in order to contribute to the eradication of poverty by promoting sustainable development, peace building and the application and respect of human rights.

## Caritas Europa eastern member organisations' role in international cooperation

Being a member of the European Union means that every member state needs to integrate all regulations and legislations adopted up until now by the European Union and needs to fulfill obligations that are part of this legislative framework. This also applies to the field of international cooperation where the government of each member state faces the obligation of devoting a certain percentage of its budget to Official Development Aid. Therefore, Caritas Europa member organisations, as part of their national civil society, have an important role to play in this regard.

Since the recent enlargement (May 2004) of the European Union with ten new member states from Central and Eastern Europe, Caritas Europa has been deeply and actively engaged in fostering and strengthening the role of its member organisations in these ten countries play, as members of their respective civil societies, in proactive international cooperation, in partnership with their government to ensure that objectives and obligations in the field of international cooperation are being taken care of.



## EU development policy

Caritas Europa and CIDSE have developed a strategic partnership with regard to advocacy towards the EU on its development policies. During the reporting period, Caritas Europa and CIDSE have jointly developed a wide range of advocacy activities.

As an active member of CONCORD, Caritas Europa lobbies for instruments that can deliver on the eradication of poverty and for their sufficient funding. Recent actions include CONCORD's Recommendations on the Instrument for Development Cooperation, which significantly influenced the European Parliament's report on the subject.

## Intra-European Coordinations

When working on international development and peace, Caritas Europa focuses on coordinating and strengthening the development work in the global South of its member organisations.

To ensure better coherence of this work, Caritas Europa has created four Intra-European Coordination platforms (IEC): IEC Africa, IEC MONA (Middle East and North Africa), IEC Latin America/Caribbean and IEC Asia. These groups meet on a regular basis to share experiences and thoughts and coordinate their activities with regard to their work in development aid at the global level.

Caritas Europa has started a close cooperation with International Alert, one of the most recognised institutions in the field of conflict sensitivity, in order to introduce conflict sensitive approaches in the design and implementation of development and relief projects of the Caritas Europa member organisations.

# Priority V - Support to Member Organisations & Internal Networking

Caritas Europa sees the strengthening of its internal network of 48 member organisations in Europe as one of its main priorities. In this respect, Caritas Europa has developed a coherent approach toward increasing the sense of ownership and joint commitment within the European network.

This approach includes such important elements as the development and strengthening of all its member organisations and their structures; the promotion of good governance and transparency within the network; fostering capacity building within member organisations and their structures; the administration of a multilateral solidarity-based mechanism for funding aid for structural funding and the Intra European Coordination (IEC) of projects, programs and partnerships.

## Management Forum

Caritas Europa has created a Management Forum to be held on an annual basis, which aims at exchanging ideas on management issues and management challenges common to Caritas organisations.

The first Caritas Europa Management Forum was conducted in Brussels on 2 December 2005. The Forum offered member organisations the opportunity to present and discuss case studies on Human Resources Management, Management Standards and Ethical Financing.

## IEC Europe

The IEC Europe is a semi-annual platform meeting to promote and enhance the Intra-European Coordination of programs and projects and partnership. The IEC Europe aims to create, within the European region, synergy in strategies, as well as programs and activities that lead to more efficiency.

IEC Europe is also continuously monitoring and assessing the ongoing pan-European issues and work, such as the Caritas response to the HIV & AIDS pandemic in Central and Eastern Europe, the activities of the Home Care Working Group, the Management Forum, the advocacy and anti-trafficking work of Caritas Europa and other issues.



Regular updates and briefings are given to the participants of the IEC Europe with regard to the European Solidarity Fund (ESF) and to Caritas Europa capacity building programs.

During the October 2005 IEC Europe meeting, participants were offered a training programme on Conflict Sensitive Approaches in Development and Relief Work, delivered in cooperation with International Alert.



## Capacity building: SODA process and trainings

One of the 'flagship' programmes carried out by Caritas Europa in the service of its members is the process of the Strategic Organisational Development Approach (SODA). Under this process, a team of highly qualified and experienced consultants is available to accompany and consult national Caritas member organisations in setting up, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their own organisational development program within their own national and Church context, together with their diocesan structures.

The SODA process of Caritas Europa is based on the so-called "Excellence Model" developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management, which offers a highly flexible, yet very systematic approach to continuous evaluation and updating of the organisational development of Caritas Europa's member organisations.

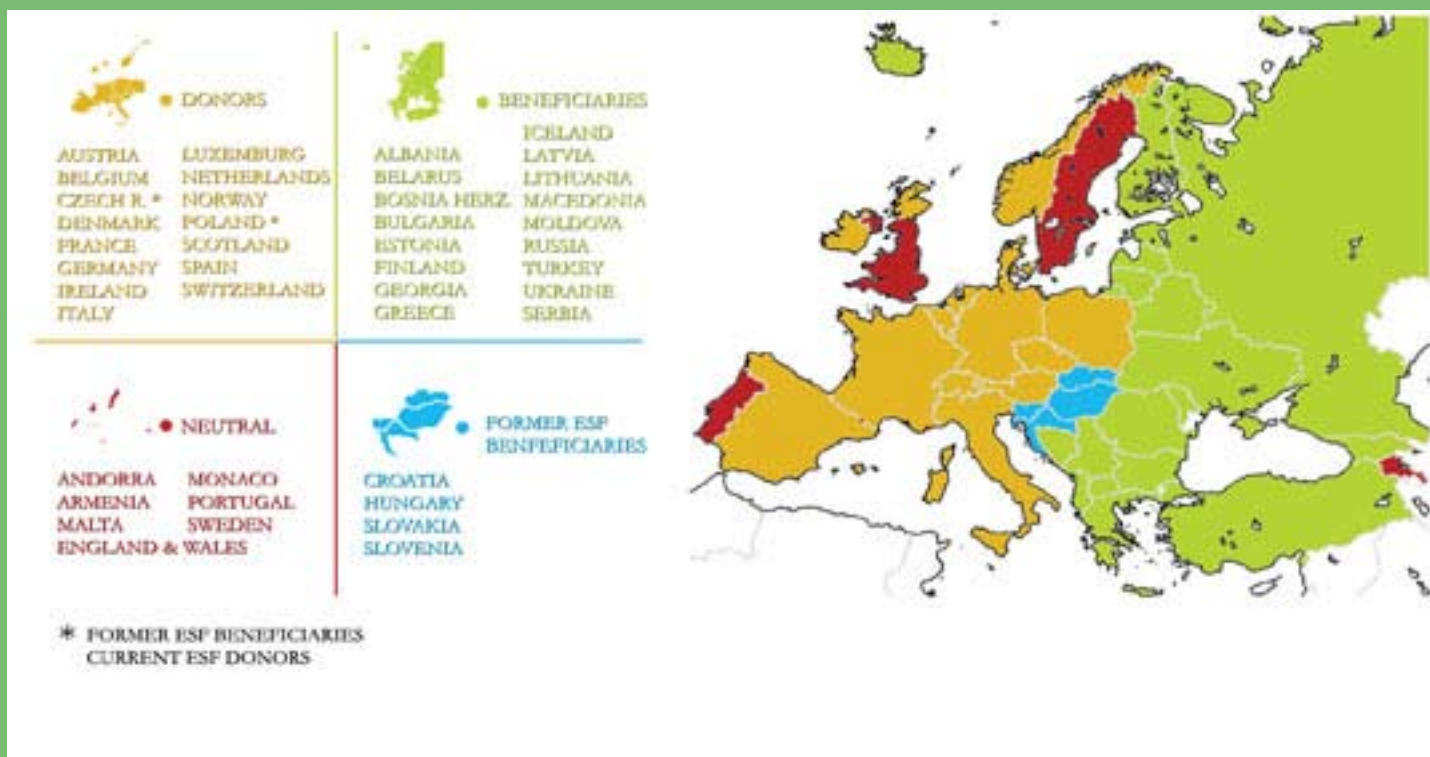


## European Solidarity Fund

The European Solidarity Fund (ESF) is a multilateral solidarity-based mechanism, coordinated and administrated at the Caritas Europa level that offers structural funding support by member organisations to financially weaker member organisations in need of such support. The coordination and administration of this multilateral funding support system is carried out by the ESF Committee.

The ESF Committee met twice during the reporting period. The annual allocation meeting for the allocations of ESF support for the year 2006 took place in Prague on 24-25 November 2005. A meeting devoted to current and future ESF strategies and other issues related to member organisations' structural funding was held in Prague on 30-31 March 2006.

### Caritas Europa Member Organisations' status at the ESF



# Priority VI - External Action

## Advocacy

Caritas Europa bases its advocacy work firmly on the practical experience of its member organisations and in turn gives feedback on these advocacy positions to the people who work at the 'grass roots' level in service to the poor.

During the reporting year, Caritas Europa fulfilled its goal of creating and implementing a new advocacy strategy.

Entitled "Advocacy...the other side of the coin", this new strategy was approved in September 2005 by the Executive Board.



A wide range of advocacy activities have been developed during the reporting period, among which the following are highlighted:

**A** statement on the European Commission's proposal for a new Declaration on European Union Development Policy (August 2005)

**A** letter to EU Commissioner Louis Michel on the EU-Africa Strategy, the importance of agriculture and the role of civil society (September 2005)

**A** letter to national governments on the new framework for EU Development Policy and funding for development in the EU 2007-2013 budget (September 2005)

**A** response to the EU Asylum procedures' directive (December 2005)

**A** response to the European Commission's consultation on managing economic migration (May 2005)

**A** response to the EU Basic Principles on Integration (April 2006)

**A** response to the Draft EU directive on the return/removal procedures for undocumented migrants and rejected asylum seekers (March 2006)

**P**articipation in the experts' committee meetings at the Council of Europe on the links between migration and development (2005-2006)

**C**omments on the Council of Europe adoption of the "20 Guiding principles on forced return" (May 2005)

**L**etter to the EU Presidency, highlighting main concerns related to the adoption of the "The Hague Action Plan", in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice (June 2005)

**P**articipation in a joint meeting between EU Migration Network and National Contact Points on Integration (December 2005)

**L**etter to the EU Presidency expressing deep concern about the dramatic events at the EU border in Ceuta and Melilla, Spain (October 2005)

**R**epresentation at the EU Presidency Conference on the theme of "Exploring the impact of migration within the EU" (March 2006)

## Communications

Caritas Europa is deeply engaged in facilitating communications, meetings, exchange of information, as well as best practices and internal policies within its network. As an implementation of this engagement, Caritas Europa held its 2nd Communications Forum in Paris on 27-28 October 2005.

The Forum was a splendid occasion for studying the methods and the role of communications in fundraising processes.



As a further dimension, the communications work aims to reach external audiences with special emphasis on decision-making bodies and the media. In this sense, Caritas Europa held the launching of its 3rd Poverty Report – Migration a Journey Into Poverty? - in the presence of Members of the European Parliament, representatives of European NGOs and the international press, on 19 June 2006.

An example of the work done to support the member organisations, Caritas Europa contributed to the organisation and the press work of the Conference "Poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Ten Years after the Dayton Peace Agreement", held in Sarajevo on 11 October 2005.

In terms of external communication, Caritas Europa also ensured:

- ▶ The diffusion of "NGO Aid Intervention and Future Challenge", the joint CONCORD/VOICE information paper with contributions of several member organisations, which includes key recommendations to the European Union.
- ▶ The finalisation and diffusion of the paper "Call for An Exemption of Social and Healthcare Services from the Scope of the Directive". A document issued on the occasion of the first reading of the Proposal for a Directive on Services in the Internal Market in the plenary session of the European Parliament. This was in collaboration with the Conference of European Churches, COMECE, and Eurodiaconia.

During the report period more than a dozen important press releases have been issued and posted on the Caritas Europa website. The following is just a short selection of them:

**M**igrants and refugees as active citizens for change - Linking migration and development at the 4th Migration Forum of Caritas Europa (June 2005)

**N**GO coalition expresses deep concern on proposed EU return standards (September 2005)

**T**he EU must respect the human rights it espouses in its migration and asylum policy (October 2005)

**B**osnia and Herzegovina: ten years after Dayton, people suffer from wide spread poverty (October 2005)

**"E**uropean NGOs assess their tsunami aid intervention." Presentation of a joint information paper by CONCORD/VOICE (November 2005)

**P**anel debate: "On the way towards elections: Stakes of the electoral process and transition in Democratic Republic of Congo" (November 2005)

**C**aritas Europa joins NGOs delegation and pleads for family-oriented labour market policies (January 2006)



## Networking with other civil society actors



**Social Policy:** Caritas Europa is a member of the European Anti-Poverty Network and the Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform). Caritas Europa participates in the Social Platform's Management Committee

and represents the Social Platform in the Civil Society Contact Group, an important forum for structured dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society on matters of economic and social importance.

Caritas Europa maintains a close relationship with the ecumenical partner network Eurodiaconia, with whom Caritas Europa develops positions on the issue of social services of general interest.



**Migration:** Caritas Europa has created an informal Christian network of 6 partners, together with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European

Community (COMECE), the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (JRS Europe) and the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA). This network works regularly, as a team, on the development and harmonisation of advocacy on EU legislation in the fields of asylum and migration, jointly creating position papers, and advocacy statements.

Caritas Europa has engaged in a partnership with the European Council for Refugees and Exile (ECRE) embodied in a joint project co-financed by the European Union, the "INTI-project" on monitoring the transposition into national legislation and the application in all countries of the Union of the EU directives on the integration of migrants.

Caritas Europa also works together with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on issues related to the training of persons dealing with migration projects. UNHCR contributes expertise and trainers to the bi-annual Caritas Europa Migration Training.

A strategic cooperation with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) has been created on anti-trafficking work. CCME is represented in the steering group of the COATNET network



**Humanitarian Aid:** Caritas Europa and its member organisations are closely involved with VOICE, a European humanitarian aid network that focuses on dialoguing with ECHO on policy matters and on the cooperation and co-financing of humanitarian relief operations.



**International Development:** Caritas Europa holds a strong strategic partnership with CIDSE. This involves having a common work plan and working group on EU Development Policy

matters, regularly publishing joint positions papers, advocacy documents, and organising joint events.

Together with APRODEV, the Protestant network of development agencies, and with CIDSE, Caritas Europa publishes EU-News, an electronic newsletter containing articles and information on development related issues at the heart of the European debate.

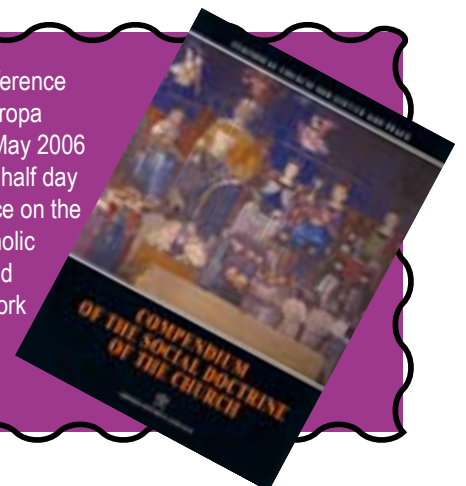
Caritas Europa is an active member of the Confederation of European NGOs active in Relief and Development (CONCORD), and is well represented in various governance and working structures of this platform.

## Theological Reflexion and Action

Throughout the entire year 2005, Caritas Europa paid respect to the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated in El Salvador in March 1980. A special section of the website of Caritas Europa is devoted to Archbishop Romero containing many documents that recorded and underlined the importance of this Archbishop's life, deeds and words to Caritas' work in the present day context.



The Regional Conference 2006 of Caritas Europa Mainz, Germany, May 2006 featured a 2 and a half day thematic conference on the links between Catholic Social Teaching and practical Caritas work in Europe and abroad.



# Caritas Europa and its Role in the Caritas Internationalis Confederation

Caritas Europa has a profound understanding of its role and obligations as a powerful region within the context of the global Caritas Internationalis Confederation. To keep close contacts and cooperation with the other parts of the vast and world-spanning Caritas Internationalis network is of vital importance to the European Caritas network. It is only through this cooperation with the whole Caritas network that Caritas Europa and its member organisations will be able to continue to improve and enrich their own work and to benefit from the possibility of learning from and being inspired by their Caritas brothers and sisters around the world.

The Secretary General of Caritas Europa plays an active role in the regular meetings and work of the team of Regional Coordinators and the Caritas Internationalis General Secretariat Management Team.

There are Caritas Europa representatives on each of the Confederation's working structures (Commissions and Working Groups) In June 2005, Caritas Europa was represented at the Regional Forum of the Asia Region, which took place in Bangkok, Thailand and focused on the work on gender equality.

In July 2005, Caritas Europa and COATNET participated at the CRS International Conference on Human Trafficking, organised in Cairo, Egypt.



In September 2005, Caritas Europa and COATNET led the process of the highly successful "Inter-regional workshop on forced migration and anti-trafficking" in Rome on 12-13 September 2005. The event led to the Caritas Internationalis Commitment on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, under the title "Created in the Image of God, Treated Like Slaves...".

In October 2005, Caritas Europa attended at the Caritas Africa Regional Forum at Mukono, Uganda, with as its main theme the self-sufficiency of African Caritas organisations.

A month later, the first formal meeting of the Caritas Africa-Caritas Europa Dialogue Group took place in Rome.

Caritas Europa also attended the Middle East and North Africa Regional Forum in Larnaca, Cyprus, at the end of April 2006.



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