

Statement on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day, 20 November 2019

No-poverty strategy for all children in Europe

On the occasion of the Universal Children's Day 2019, Caritas Europa calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that every child in Europe who is at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to free healthcare, free education, free early childhood education and care, decent housing and adequate nutrition.

These services have to be available, affordable, accessible and adequate for every family in Europe. To this end, the concept of a European Child Guarantee should be translated into concrete action by adopting framework legislation and by monitoring national policy development through the European Semester process.

“ **We live in a small cargo-container where we have only one table. After meals, my mother cleans the table, covers it with a cloth, and only then I can do my homework.**

Arthashes, age 14

Existing EU funds should also be used to encourage EU Member States to monitor and improve the availability and quality of services offered to children and families at risk of poverty. In addition, a more personalised approach adapted to the specific needs of the child is indispensable. Only then will no child be left behind.

“ **Investing in our future will also imply investing in our children. 60 years after the adoption of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child and 30 years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, generations of children are still growing up in poverty. The proposed European Child Guarantee is an opportunity to really impact on child and family poverty, provided that it is part of a coherent and coordinated no-poverty strategy at EU and national level and that it is properly implemented.**

Maria Nyman

Secretary General of Caritas Europa

Such a no-poverty strategy includes national child poverty reduction plans, the implementation of which should be monitored at the EU level through the European Semester process. This relates to complementary policy initiatives and helps put into practice other principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as the right to adequate minimum income benefits, ensuring a life in dignity. Caritas Europa is committed to contributing to the development and implementation of the European Child Guarantee. This instrument should ensure that the voices of the most affected children and families are heard in the process, that their needs are met and that they have guaranteed access to healthcare, education, early childhood education and care, housing and nutrition.

more information

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about caritas

Caritas Europa is a network of 49 member organisations in 46 European countries and one of the 7 regions of Caritas Internationalis. Our members assist and provide services to millions of people in need.

Caritas Europa aims at lifting people out of poverty by empowering them and by influencing unjust structures and unfair policies that keep people trapped in positions of disempowerment.