

For a European minimum income framework to end poverty

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17 October

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Caritas Europa calls for a legally binding [EU framework directive on adequate minimum income schemes](#) in all EU Member States as a key element to end poverty in Europe.

We welcome the recent adoption of the [EU Council conclusions on Strengthening Minimum Income Protection to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond](#), which is greatly needed. It also marks an important sign of good will towards the implementation of the minimum income principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The Council conclusions acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on people's income and the need to act now. They also confirm that minimum income protection systems have to meet a set of key principles in order to effectively reduce poverty. However, we believe that semantics and goodwill is not enough. Rather, Europe is in need of a legal instrument.

"A legally binding directive on minimum income in the EU would provide common ground for the Member States to enable people's inclusion and full participation in society. It would also provide a level playing field by setting up minimum social standards across EU Member States," said Caritas Europa Secretary General, Maria Nyman.

Caritas Europa believes that people in vulnerable situations should have access to an adequate minimum income provision with good quality social services and a high take-up, as this can be an essential safety net, covering basic needs and greatly contributing to a life in dignity.

Caritas Europa fully acknowledges the recent efforts of the German EU Council Presidency to address the issue of strengthening minimum income at the European level as a first step in order for minimum income schemes to ensure a decent living for everyone who cannot rely on sufficient other sources. Moreover, there is an urgent need to address the remaining gaps in minimum income protection. It is thus high time for a decisive step forward through the adoption of a binding EU framework directive on minimum income.

For Caritas Europa, the next steps in the right direction would be for:

- **all EU Member States** to recognise the need for a legally binding framework directive for minimum income schemes, as a decisive step to ensure dignified living for all people in the European Union,
- **the upcoming EU Council Presidencies of Portugal and Slovenia** to pursue the objective of such a framework directive, and for
- **the European Commission** to propose a legally binding EU framework directive for minimum income schemes, to be adopted by the **Council and European Parliament**, and implemented by the **Member States**.

Caritas Europa will, along with other civil society organisations, continue calling for such a framework directive and is willing and available to work in partnership with the institutions to make this a reality.

Notes to the editor:

- 17 October was proclaimed International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in 1987. This year's theme is "*Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all*".
- Caritas Europa's position paper "[Minimum income schemes to ensure dignity for all](#)" (April 2020)
- Caritas Europa OpEd "[An EU minimum income framework is an urgent safety net after Covid-19](#)" (June 2020)