

A social Europe championing solidarity and global justice

Caritas Europa has a heartfelt commitment to fighting the injustices which lead to poverty and the exclusion of people in the most marginalised and vulnerable situations. Our mission is to work through coordinated actions to promote social and environmental justice through inclusion, integration, integral human development and humanitarian response. We aim to contribute together to building a world where the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth is listened to and responded to.

We call for a European Union that: puts people at the center, fully respects human and social rights and supports the empowerment of each person, family and community; places solidarity and the common good at the core of its actions; works closely with civil society, paying particular attention to people in the most vulnerable and marginalised situations; and respects the human dignity and equality of all.

We believe that the following recommendations are key to this vision of Europe, and the European Parliament has a strong role to play in bringing them about in the next five years.

1. Effective, adequate and inclusive labour markets and social protection for all

In order to ensure decent living conditions for all, and to reach the Sustainable Development Goals' targets on poverty reduction in Europe by 2030, effective, adequate and inclusive labour markets and social protection are essential. Within this, an adequate minimum income, long-term and person-centred care, child and family support, improved access to worker's rights, access to adequate, decent and affordable housing, decent working conditions, including for care workers and non-discrimination should be prioritised. We call on the European Parliament to make the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality by carefully monitoring the successful implementation of all 20 principles addressing these social concerns within the next mandate of the EP. We ask in particular to call on the Commission to present a proposal for a framework directive on minimum income standards, and to elaborate a strengthened Child Guarantee after evaluating the current phase.

2. High-quality, accessible and affordable social services for all

Social services are an integral part of a social Europe that prioritises well-being and leaves no one behind. Access to social services is a right and governments should therefore guarantee high quality, accessible, available, and affordable social services for all people, as they are an essential safety net. At the same time, not-for-profit organisations, like Caritas, also need further support in their provision of social services. Now, more than ever, not-for-profit social service providers are bridging the gaps in our welfare systems, responding to community needs and serving as a lifeline for people experiencing poverty and exclusion. We call on the European Parliament to recognise the value of social services in our communities and to promote the work of and encourage investment in not-for-profit social service providers by calling on the Commission to present

a proposal for a 'golden rule' for social investment and for the creation of an enabling framework for not-for-profit service providers. This golden rule should guarantee and balance between social and climate investment.

3. A more welcoming Europe

We call on the European Parliament to defend, promote and design migration and asylum policies that respect EU values, the UN Refugee Convention, human rights and dignity of all people without distinction. We want the European Parliament to demonstrate global leadership in encouraging the EU and its Member States to facilitate and enable human mobility and end violence, pushbacks and discrimination within and at the EU's borders. Noting threats to international protection globally, we call for access to dignified and efficient asylum procedures and reception conditions. We ask for expanded safe and regular pathways to Europe for people in need of international protection, but also for labour purposes through resettlement, family reunification, humanitarian visas, community sponsorships, mobility partnerships, work and residence permits, etc. It is time to acknowledge the positive and indispensable contribution that migrants make to the diversity of social, cultural, political and economic life in Europe. A welcoming Europe should also put migrant workers' rights and the fight against exploitation at its centre and promote the social inclusion and full participation of migrants in society.

4. Locally-led humanitarian action and development

We call on the European Parliament to promote locally led humanitarian action and development in the EU's external action, pushing for the implementation of the European Commission's 2021 Communication on Humanitarian Aid as well as of the Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. The EU must urgently and significantly increase direct humanitarian and development funding to local grassroots civil society organisations, paying particular attention to the overhead costs borne by these actors. Such funding should be flexible and adaptable to allow for programming at the nexus of humanitarian, development and peace action.

5. Global justice and policy coherence for sustainable development in the global South

The EU must support partner countries and civil society priorities that are key to redressing power imbalances and structural obstacles to poverty and inequalities reduction, such as fair food systems, loss and damage and climate financing. We call on the European Parliament to be the leading voice pushing for EU institutions to avoid inward-looking strategies and short-termism, and rather have the political will to promote fair and coherent policies and practices, especially in the sectors of trade, agriculture and migration.

About Caritas Europa

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.

We aim 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.



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