

Statement on the international Human Rights Day, 10 December 2019

# We call for the new EC to put people at the centre of EU external policies!

**On the Human Rights Day, 10 December, Caritas Europa calls on the new European Commission (EC) to reaffirm with actions its commitment to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and to upholding Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in all the EU external policies. Only this way will the EU ensure the protection of the human rights and dignity of all.**

Caritas Europa urges the Commissioner-designate for International Partnerships to prioritise human-centred international development policies, and calls on the entire College to put people at the centre of all EU external policies.

Human rights, such as freedom and equality, are part of the EU's founding values (Article 2 in the Treaty on European Union) and of the Agenda 2030 and the SDG goals, to which the EU and its Member States have committed. Human rights should be protected and promoted in all EU external policies including in the areas of agriculture, trade, taxation, and migration, as well as in the EU's security and development policies.

However, the current agenda puts the EU's own economic and security interests first, to the neglect of poverty eradication, fighting inequalities, and creating safe and legal pathways for migration, among others. The EC should thus prioritise its efforts to reverse the EU policies that have a negative impact on sustainable development in the Global South and to ensure that all future policies commit to leaving no one behind. For example, the EU and its Member States – as the most important donor of development aid – play an essential role in the fight against hunger. In this regard, the EU should consider the regulation of biofuels, land tenure and trade policies from a global point of view by assessing all the consequences and risks they could bring to the poorest in the world.

**“All political activity must serve people. EU leaders have a responsibility to adopt an ethical interpretation of the relation between migration, development and the human person. Human dignity should be the central moral consideration in the design and implementation of EU external policies.”**

**Maria Nyman, Caritas Europa Secretary General**

Caritas Europa advocates that EU development aid must emphasise integral human development over economic growth, and the human dignity and human rights of every person over preventing migration to Europe. All human beings should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential in dignity.

**“The International Human Rights Day is an opportunity for us to remind EU leaders to take diversity seriously, to put human dignity at the heart of policy-making, and to rethink how they themselves relate to the people. We want them to listen to those experiencing poverty and exclusion and to design policies that work for the people.”**

**Dr. Shannon Pfohman, Caritas Europa Policy and Advocacy Director**

## Note to the editor:

Integral human development is an all-embracing approach to development that takes into consideration the well-being of the person and of all people in seven different dimensions: social, work, ecological, political, economic, cultural and spiritual.

## 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.