

EU countries must urgently follow the lead of Luxembourg and Germany to relocate refugee children from Greece

“ Caritas Europa welcomes the relocation of 12 unaccompanied children from the Greek islands by Luxembourg and 50 by Germany, where the national Caritas organisations are ready and pleased to support with reception. Now is time for the other EU Member States to show solidarity and to deliver on their promises to relocate refugee children. Caritas remains available to help in welcoming.

Maria Nyman, Secretary General of Caritas Europa

Caritas Europa has repeatedly denounced the unbearable conditions reigning on the overcrowded Greek islands and **called for the immediate relocation of unaccompanied children**. This is even more urgent today due to the COVID-19 pandemic. EU Member States must now do their utmost to put the European Commission coordinated relocation scheme into practice and transfer the promised 1,600 vulnerable children to a safe place.

We welcome the relocation efforts made by the Luxembourgish and German governments and call on other EU Member States to follow their example. On Wednesday 15 April, **Luxembourg received 12 unaccompanied minors** between the ages of 11 and 16. Caritas Luxembourg is supporting the government with the reception of these children.

Tomorrow, Saturday 18 April, 50 unaccompanied minors will arrive in Germany, which might relocate in total up to 300 refugees from Greece. **Caritas Germany has proposed to the states' authorities to support in the reception** of these children.

“ Caritas offered to provide support and care. We want to help children and young people in Germany. [...] It's also about keeping the promise made by ten Member States, including the federal government. In view of the approximately 14,000 vulnerable children on the Greek islands, it is important that the current campaign is successful. Children and teenagers on the move need our help quickly and non-bureaucratically.

Peter Neher, President of Caritas Germany

Mr. Neher refers to the above-mentioned EU relocation scheme whereby 10 Member States and Switzerland have pledged to relocate 1,600 unaccompanied minors from the Greek islands. Caritas now expects the remaining nine (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania and Switzerland) to honour their commitments and for the other Member States to follow suit in the spirit of European solidarity.

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.

Press release

Notes to editor

- CSO joint statement of 3 April on relocation of unaccompanied minors from Greek islands: <https://www.caritas.eu/states-to-honour-their-relocation-commitments/>
- CSO joint statement of 4 March on relocation of unaccompanied minors from Greek islands: <https://www.caritas.eu/call-to-relocate-unaccompanied-children/>
- Caritas Germany press release of 16 April on supporting in reception of refugee children from Greece (in German): <https://www.caritas.de/fuerprofis/presse/pressemeldungen/caritas-gibt-fluechtlingskindern-aus-griechenland-beistand-8d5c576d-73b5-4850-9299-f398c65a7c79>
- Luxemburger Wort article of 15 April on the country's relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece (in French): <https://www.wort.lu/fr/luxembourg/ne-laissez-pas-les-enfants-dans-les-decharges-5e970a31da2cc1784e35ba7c>
- European Commission press release of 15 April on relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece to Luxembourg: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_668
- UNCHR press release of 15 April on relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece to Luxembourg: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/4/5e9707ed4/un-agencies-welcome-first-relocation-unaccompanied-children-greece.html>
- EU Court of Justice press release of 2 April on the failure of Poland, Hungary and Czechia to fulfil their obligations under EU law by refusing to comply with the previous, temporary EU relocation scheme, which was binding on Member States: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-04/cp200040en.pdf>