

Caritas Europa's annual Regional Conference statement

Caritas Europa elects new president

Caritas Europa elected Msgr Michael Landau as its new president during its Regional Conference, the annual general assembly.

Msgr Landau is president of Caritas Austria, one of Caritas Europa's 49 members. Msgr Landau is also Caritas Vienna's Director. He is a biochemist and a catholic priest. Since the beginning of his work at Caritas he has been focusing on sensitive social topics and on the people that rely on the work of Caritas. He is convinced that each and every one of us has the power and will to change a society for the better. For his dedication, he was honoured with the award of the Golden Decoration of Honour of the province of Vienna and the Golden Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria.

In his address to members, he expressed his sincere gratitude for their trust. He stated that it is with joy and confidence that he begins his mandate, albeit in the midst of a particularly challenging situation, affecting the whole world, and most particularly the people that the Caritas network are called to serve.

“During the recent years as in the current crisis we could experience both: On the one hand the risk that social cohesion and solidarity at a state level were eroding in European society. But on the other hand, we could experience encouraging signals of cohesion, solidarity, dedication and love from person to person in challenging times, especially among young people.

The current crisis underscores that we all bear responsibility, for ourselves and for each other, for the most vulnerable and for the planet. Just now, the humanity and solidarity of each and every one of us is needed. We can't change everything. But we can change a lot if we want to. Together. In a spirit of love and solidarity. Let's focus on the chances we have. Let's focus on our strengths. Let's leave no one behind.”

Msgr Michael Landau, Caritas Europa president

The Caritas Europa Regional Conference took place on 19 May. It was held virtually due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. It was attended by representatives of 42 member organisations of the Caritas Europa network.

The participants wholeheartedly thanked the outgoing president, Bishop Emeritus Msgr Luc Van Looy, who led and served the Caritas Europa network for the last five years. In his final address to the membership, Msgr Van Looy underlined that as Caritas members, we are not only caring for the people close-by, but we are also connected with the bigger Caritas family, worldwide. This opens our own local and national organisations to the needs of people all over the world. We are connected to the rest of the human family, to creation and to those who will come after us in future generations.

Our focus for the next eight years

The event took place in the midst of the preparation of the Caritas Europa Strategic Framework 2021-2028, and during the week in which we celebrate the five-year anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical letter [*Laudato Si*](#).

Laudato Si focuses on the care of our 'common home'. It is and will continue to be an important reference document for Caritas in the years ahead.

“While our mission remains unchanged, as Caritas we always aim at responding to the ‘signs of the times’. Our future strategy will integrate care for creation into its core priorities, as a means to promote social justice and the dignity of the people we serve as a network”, said Caritas Europa Secretary General, Maria Nyman.

“It has also become clear that promotion of youth engagement in Caritas will be another cornerstone in our work in the next eight years”, she added.

The 2021 Regional Conference will take place in Andorra on 10- 12 May and the 2022 edition will be hosted by our Greek member, Caritas Hellas.

Notes to the editor

- Caritas Europa has 49 members, present in 46 European countries, and is one of the major social actors in Europe. Caritas Europa is one of the 7 regions of Caritas Internationalis. For more information about Caritas Europa visit: <https://www.caritas.eu/>
- Msgr. Michael Landau is the President of Caritas Austria and Director of Caritas Vienna. Ordained priest in 1992, Msgr. Landau was granted the title of Monsignor in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI. He is a member of the Cathedral Chapter of the St. Stephen's Cathedral of the archdiocese of Vienna.
- *Laudato Si* 'one-pager': <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/Laudato-Si-Bulletin-Insert.pdf>

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