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## Welcoming refugees – learning from Europe’s response to those fleeing Ukraine

As we mark World Refugee Day, Caritas Europa calls on EU decision makers to ensure safe pathways, dignified reception, and integration support for all people seeking refuge in the EU, regardless of their country of origin. As shown by the positive response to those fleeing Ukraine, where there is political will, there is a way.

Globally, more than 100 million people – a record figure representing 1% of the world population – have so far been forcibly displaced in 2022 due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, and persecution in countries such as Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Ukraine or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. People do not take the decision to leave their home country lightly. Rather, it is often a question of survival.

“ My children in Somalia always talk about the explosions and terrorist attacks that still persist 30 years since the start of the war. That’s why I came to Belgium, and I’d like to bring them (my children) here”.

**Ali Adan Osman**

Asylum seeker in Belgium, who receives assistance from Caritas Belgium

“ When I realised that my daughter was scared to leave the basement in Kyiv to eat in our kitchen, it took me only a few minutes to decide to leave Ukraine”.

**Yevheniia Bondarenko**

Employee at Caritas Belgium’s telephone helpline for Ukraine

Worldwide more than 1.5 million people are in need of resettlement, a crucial life-saving tool to bring refugees to a country where they will receive long-term protection. However, only around 20,000 refugees were admitted to the EU in 2021 through resettlement or humanitarian admission.

We call on European countries to increase resettlement and enable more safe pathways to Europe. This is a matter of global solidarity since countries near conflict zones have been accepting almost 90% of the world’s displaced for years, despite numerous domestic challenges, which have only worsened by soaring food insecurity and supply chain challenges linked to the war in Ukraine.



### 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 CaritasInternationalis. 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.



Walls and fences at the borders cannot become the norm. People on the move should not be perceived as a threat, and pushbacks at our borders must stop immediately. Instead, we urge European leaders to provide a humane response to all, drawing on the welcoming response to those displaced from Ukraine.

**Maria Nyman**

Secretary General of Caritas Europa

The unprecedented response and immediate political act of solidarity towards those fleeing the war in Ukraine inspires hope that when there is political will, incredible efforts can be made to facilitate access to protection and support refugees' full participation in society, in line with EU values. A refugee is a refugee, and this is not the moment to scale back Europe's commitment to refugee protection.