

Press Release, 15/11/2019



## 2019 World Day of the Poor

### COMECE and Caritas Europa encourage the EU to address the structural causes of poverty

On the occasion of the World Day of the Poor, which will be celebrated on Sunday 17 November 2019, COMECE and Caritas Europa encourage the European institutions and the Member States to enhance their social policies in order to combat the structural causes of poverty, promoting integral human development and putting an end to poverty in the EU.

According to recent statistics, nearly a fifth of the population in the European Union live in poverty or at risk of poverty. Unemployment, adverse economic and working conditions, especially among young people, affect millions of families, who are denied a fair and just remuneration that would allow them to live in dignity.

In his message *"The hope of the poor shall not perish for ever"*, Pope Francis invites all of us to reflect on the growing inequalities between rich and poor in our societies and their painful consequences, and asks us to *"encourage more and more people to cooperate effectively so that no one will feel deprived of closeness and solidarity"*.

Following the line indicated by the Holy Father, COMECE and Caritas Europa call the European institutions to dedicate at least 30% of the European Social Fund to social inclusion and the fight against poverty, and to develop a strategy for 2030 outlining a roadmap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and translate the European Pillar of Social Right into concrete policies and actions.

As highlighted in the Future of Work Statement published in November 2018 by the COMECE Social Affairs Commission, the EU and its Member States shall promote decent and stable forms of employment, including for online platform work and hidden self-employment. In the long run, moreover, it is necessary to fundamentally rethink the European social model, adapting social protection to the new realities of the digital economy.

It is unacceptable that our societies do not adequately support children, who are the group most at risk of poverty in Europe. In order to break this circle and guarantee a future to all children in the EU, COMECE and Caritas Europa welcome the idea of developing a European Child Guarantee - as proposed by Ursula von der Leyen, EU Commission president-elect – and encourage the EU institutions to equip it with adequate financial resources.

Exactly as Pope Francis invites all of us to “*initiate a true fraternal dialogue*” with people living in poverty, we encourage policy makers to enhance the social and civil dialogue in Europe, and to sincerely listen to people experiencing poverty in order to shape a more fair, inclusive and person-centered society.

On this occasion, the General Secretaries of COMECE and Caritas Europa, respectively Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto and Maria Nyman, address their recommendations to the EU institution in these video messages.

**COMECE Communication Officer**

Alessandro Di Maio  
[press@comece.eu](mailto:press@comece.eu)  
0032 (0)2 235 05 15

**Caritas Europa Communication Officer**

Leticia Lozano  
[llozano@caritas.eu](mailto:llozano@caritas.eu)  
0032 (0)2 235 26 54