

Editorial


Dear friends,

We are happy to present to you “Caritas Europa at a glance”, a new information tool specifically studied for publication within the Caritas Europa network. In April 2007, we released the latest issue of our traditional Newsletter and promised to come back at a later time with a new format. In the meantime the organisation has further developed and several tools have been created.

In terms of informing our member organisations, we have introduced the Advocacy Update, which puts special emphasis on the advocacy work of Caritas Europa and also targets external actors such as EU Institutions, partner NGOs and press. Furthermore, the thematic departments of Caritas Europa regularly distribute newsletters specifically related to their policy areas.

Planned to be published twice a year and in three languages (EN, FR, GE), “Caritas Europa at a glance” will give you a concise overview of our work. If you wish, you can simply print it recto-verso on one page and read it during the lunch break, in the metro or whenever you have spare time. You can use the hyperlinks highlighted in the text, if you wish to learn more about the different topics. We hope that this tool will promote knowledge of the Caritas Europa activities among our member organisations.

Annalisa Mazzella,
Advocacy and Communication Officer



Activities review

➤ The first meeting of the Task Force on 2010 – the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (EY 2010) took place in Brussels on 14-15 April 2008. This Task Force includes experts from member organisations and is led by Stefan Wallner (Secretary General, Caritas Austria). ❖ Contact: jgaleziak@caritas-europa.org

➤ A Caritas Europa migration study visit was held in collaboration with Caritas Austria in Vienna on 28-31 May 2008. The event offered an introduction to the Austrian asylum law and a workshop on EU funding. Participants also visited the asylum centre of Caritas Vienna and reception/detention facilities for asylum seekers.
❖ Contact: pverhaeghe@caritas-europa.org

➤ The Emergency Forum for this year was organised in London on 3-4 June 2008. The main themes were climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) linked to food insecurity. Special sessions followed for member organisations who have a Framework of Partnership Agreement with ECHO and on humanitarian advocacy.
❖ Contact: hhappel@caritas-europa.org

➤ All IECs (Intra-European Coordinations) related to International Development met in Brussels in April and May 2008. Among others, IEC Africa discussed the new Caritas Africa Operational Plan. IEC LAC focused on DRR. Caritas MONA exchanged on strategies towards the MONA region. IEC Asia & Oceania examined structural changes in Caritas Asia. Furthermore, IEC Asia and IEC MONA jointly had a second workshop on “Working as Caritas in a non-Catholic environment”. ❖ Contact: bbouniol@caritas-europa.org

➤ An IEC Europe meeting took place in Brussels on 7-8 April 2008. Highlights included presentations by Caritas in Azerbaijan, Caritas Kosovo, Caritas Belarus, and Caritas Albania as well as more thematic discussions on reporting standards and gender.
❖ Contact: afrisk@caritas-europa.org



Caritas Europa and the EU Presidency

In the framework of its advocacy efforts towards the countries scheduled to hold the EU Presidency, Caritas Europa attended a gathering with the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union in March 2008. The [positions](#) presented by the Caritas Europa delegation on that occasion reflected current concerns of Caritas Europa and its member organisations and covered topics such as: Participation of civil society in the process leading to the NSR/spsi (Social Policy); EU policy on irregular migration (Justice and Home Affairs); and Aid effectiveness (Development Policy).

In June, just before the beginning of this presidency, a delegation composed of representatives from Caritas Europa and national Caritas organisations from France and the next two EU Presidency countries (Czech Republic and Sweden) had a [meeting](#) in Paris with Brice Hortefeux, France's Minister for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development. This was an opportunity to discuss aspects concerning the Dublin Procedure, access to the EU labour market for all workers, and integration.

On the occasion of the French EU Presidency, Secours Catholique-Caritas France has planned and is implementing an extensive programme of policy, advocacy and communication activities. The Secours Catholique and Caritas Europa conference “Combating the trafficking in children: what can be done in the European Union” is accompanied by a meaningful photo exhibition and will be held in Paris on 16 October 2008 with the support of the French EU Presidency.

❖ [More on our advocacy work in the Advocacy Update – Issues 5/March 2008 and 6/June 2008](#)

Caritas Europa Executive Board about the network's involvement in EY 2010

Introduction

Erny Gillen – President of Caritas Europa:

Caritas Europa has been supporting the European Commission's designation of the European Year 2010 and encouraging related dialogue among EU institutions. We are pleased that the legislative procedure to officially proclaim this year is successfully coming to an end and look forward to being actively involved, jointly with our member organisations, in shaping this time at European and national level.

I. What is the main concern regarding poverty in your country?

Silverio Agea – Caritas Spain: Spain has benefited from a strong economic growth. However, poverty has not sufficiently diminished and the gap between rich and poor has got wider. Severe poverty is experienced especially in urban areas and by mono-parental families.

Paolo Beccegato – Caritas Italy: An important aspect of the debate on adjusting/increasing social spending in Italy refers to the pension system.

Kari-Mette Eidem – Caritas Norway: Despite the in general well functioning welfare system, poverty still affects the lives of people in Norway, especially of single-mother families.

Mario Junglas – Caritas Germany: Child poverty is one of the biggest concerns. It is important to reaffirm that child poverty is an issue of poverty within the family.

II. What are the activities planned by your organisation in view of EY 2010?

Emanuil Patashev - Caritas Bulgaria: We will continue "Parish Social Ministry and Voluntarism", the cross-boarder cooperation project aimed at creating an effective and grass-root parish partnership. It is our wish to further expand this project geographically, if possible.

Alojzij Stefan - Caritas Slovenia: A 'social week' will be organised together with our partner organisations. We also want to stimulate a debate on the contribution made by Caritas Slovenia to the eradication of poverty in our country.

Daniel Verger – Secours Catholique: Secours Catholique has not decided yet. An activity for the whole Caritas Europa network could be "10 Million Stars". In the framework of this campaign, candles are used to enlighten public places during the Christmas period.

Andrij Waskowycz - Caritas Ukraine: Our organisation will design and carry out an anti-poverty campaign with the direct involvement of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

❖ Read the integral version of this [interview](#)

➤ Caritas organisations are actively involved in denouncing poverty and social exclusion in Europe.

In France, Secours Catholique offered its expertise on questions related to the root causes of poverty to both voters and candidates through a targeted poster campaign on the occasion of municipal and cantonal elections.

❖ Secours Catholique (February 2008): '[Elections municipales...](#)'

In Austria, 100 000 children and young people live in poverty. Caritas Austria, emphasised that this condition is particularly worrying, considering that poverty implies not only limited financial resources, but also lack of chances.

❖ Caritas Austria (March 2008): '[Kinderarmut ist die schlimmste.](#)'

➤ Caritas Norway approached the national Parliament to advocate for strengthening the rights of undocumented migrants.

❖ Caritas Norway (April 2008): '[Rettigheterne til papirløse...](#)'

Meanwhile, Caritas Italy, jointly with other stakeholders, took position against a reform project of the new Italian government aimed at hardening migration and asylum law. One of the proposals included in the package could lead to immediate expulsion of asylum seekers whose request has been rejected before they can appeal against this decision.

❖ Caritas Italy (May 2008): '[Non toccate il diritto d'asilo](#)'

➤ After the ravaging passage of the cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, foreign aid was limited through the restrictions imposed by the ruling junta. Nevertheless, the Caritas Internationalis Confederation and its member organisations, succeeded in providing help through effective support of local partners.

❖ Caritas Europa (May 2008): '[Update on the Caritas response...](#)'

In Portugal, according to Caritas experience, the situation related to poverty is worse than what the official numbers show. "In this context, the activities of solidarity provided through Christian faith and inspiration can make a real difference", affirmed Jorge Ortiga, Archbishop of the diocese of Braga.

❖ Caritas Portugal (June 2008): '[Situação de pobreza...](#)'

➤ Cordaid (Caritas Netherlands) has launched an alternative fund for Africa. The 'InReturn East Africa Fund I C.V.' will invest in small and middle-size enterprises with a great potential to develop valuable job opportunities in the region.

❖ Cordaid (June 2008): '[Geen hulp maar handel!](#)'

Calendar

10-11/09 - Management Forum, Budapest

13-17/10 - COATNET Annual Users Meeting, Paris

24-26/09 - Training on Migration and Asylum, Brussels

24-25/10 - Transnational Conference on Social Inclusion, Charleroi (Belgium)

08/10 - Meeting of the Task Force on Migration and Development, Rome

01-05/12 - Basic Emergency Response Training, Freiburg (Germany)