

4 March 2010, CIDSE & Caritas Europa Press release –
for immediate release



Catholic development agencies and partners worldwide demand better cooperation with the European Commission

BRUSSELS - Today in the European Parliament, the two networks of Catholic development agencies, CIDSE & Caritas Europa, presented a unique set of recommendations to the European Commission (EC) in an attempt to improve cooperation between the Commission and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). After discussion with Commission officials, CIDSE & Caritas prepared a joint statement on the challenges the networks and their partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America encounter in working with the Commission on development aid. They say it is vital to act now to ensure that the Commission supports CSOs in their fight against poverty.

“The current financial crisis, which is heavily affecting developing countries, forces us to renew our commitment to development cooperation and to invest in new innovative partnerships. The effective use of available funds, while taking into account new issues like climate change, is critical if we are to have an impact on poverty eradication,” said **René Grotenhuis**, CIDSE President and Director of Cordaid/Caritas Netherlands. *“Today, we have made another important step in strengthening our cooperation with the European Commission, whose support we need to defeat poverty.”*

The event, hosted by MEPs **Thijs Berman**, **Bart Staes** and **Anna Záborská**, and with a key note address by **Koos Richelle**, Director General of the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, concluded a three day forum with over 60 participants from Northern and Southern CSOs, as well as EC officials.

The forum addressed a range of serious challenges that need attention, both within CSOs and the Commission, especially in relation to the question of how development funding translates into results. Richelle stressed that the aid effectiveness agenda is not only meant for official donors, but for CSOs also. However, **Pierre Efoe Aholouvi**, Executive Director of Caritas Man, Ivory Coast, emphasised that *“Much can still be learned about improving development outcomes and prospects. Accountability needs to go beyond the measurement of the ‘right’ use of funds. The EC must reconsider how it funds development projects; rules which govern the distribution of funds are overcomplicated, which means they are out of reach for many grassroots organisations in the South. It’s a shame that these funds don’t often reach their intended target, the world’s poorest communities.”*

ENDS

Note to the editors:

- **CIDSE** is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies working together for global justice. www.cidse.org
- **Caritas Europa** is the European network of 48 Caritas organisations, working in 44 European countries. Its activities focus on poverty and social inequality, migration and asylum within all countries of Europe, humanitarian assistance and international development throughout the world. www.caritas-europa.org

Contact:

- Roeland Scholtalbers, CIDSE Media & Communication Officer; +32 (0) 477 068 384, scholtalbers@cidse.org
- Annalisa Mazzella, Caritas Europa Advocacy and Communication Officer; +32 (0) 2 235 03 94, amazzezza@caritas-europa.org