

Press release, Brussels 5 September 2013

The future of the Welfare State is a key issue for the European Union, says Caritas Europa

- A new report launched by Caritas Europa stimulates debate and discussion

At the launch of its new report on “**The Future of the Welfare State**”, Caritas Europa has described welfare as “one of the most critical issues to be faced by the EU and its Member States as they struggle to respond to the economic crisis”. Caritas organisations across Europe work on the front line with people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

The preface to the report has been written by the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, **Jean Claude Juncker**. He says “We are moving towards a new type of economy and society, both of which call for a new model of social policy. Therefore we have to transform the welfare state of the 19th and 20th centuries into a strong and positive political network of social subsidiarity and political priorities: full employment, inclusive growth, investments in families and young people, strong social security, decent retirement and active health policy.”

Mr Juncker concludes: “The only way to get us out of the current crisis is a wise combination of a strong welfare state, strong economy and strong budget consolidation.”

This report provides an analysis of five different welfare models that currently co-exist in the European Union. It reveals considerable differences in the way that European Member States guarantee adequate levels of social protection to their citizens. It raises several interesting questions in relation to the future of welfare states in Europe. It suggests that the impact of the recent economic crisis combined with other factors such as changing demographics across Member States have strengthened the case for reform of welfare systems. It questions whether Europe’s different models of welfare should continue to function independently, or whether some level of ‘convergence’ of welfare models should take place.

Caritas Europa Secretary General, **Mr Jorge Nuño Mayer** says: “This comparative study will be valuable not only to European decision makers in their quest for a sustainable *welfare state*, but also to social partners, civil society organisations and anyone interested in contributing to a future *welfare society*. We all are concerned.”

The report will also serve as a basis for further research by Caritas Europa on the future of welfare in Europe. The organisation intends to focus on the issue of social models in Europe over the coming years and to develop proposals for their reform and development.

Note to the Editor:

The Report will be launched at Caritas Europa’s premises at 16:30 on 5 September 2013. Speakers include Raymond Maes (Member of Cabinet of Commissioner László ANDOR - Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Thomas Dominique (President of the Social Protection Committee), Frank Vandembroucke (Professor at the KUL Leuven Faculty of Economics and Business), Robert Urbé (Caritas Luxembourg, editor of the Publication), Séan Healy (Social Justice Ireland) and Chiara Lucchin (Caritas Italy).

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