

Caritas Europa statement on International Day of Families (May 15th)

“The family is a fundamental pillar of social welfare and should be supported in times of crisis”

“Families are increasingly facing serious poverty risks during the current crisis. To Caritas Europa, the family is a fundamental pillar of social welfare, which should be supported in times of crisis,” says Jorge Nuño-Mayer, Secretary General of Caritas Europa.

“In many cases the household income can remain below the poverty line if the earnings on the labour market are low, and the number of non-working family members is high” he says. “The extent to which both parents can secure gainful employment also depends on whether affordable childcare is available or not.”

The Secretary General of Caritas Europa points out that the recent [Crisis Monitoring Report](#) – published by his organisation examined the impact of the economic crisis on Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy – revealed that the strong traditions of family support which are a feature in each country are being severely tested during the crisis. Single parent families and those with more than two children are often hit exceptionally hard by poverty.

“This has not only to do with low income, but also with insufficient material relief from family costs,” he says. “These are the reasons why so many children are at risk of poverty today and indeed why child poverty is an issue of concern in most EU Member States”.

Caritas Europa is calling on the European Union and its Member States to ensure the proper protection of the family, in particular in contexts where austerity measures are being implemented.

“The cumulative impacts of cuts in benefits, and increases in VAT and energy prices, for example, are hitting low-income families much harder than anybody else,” Mr Nuño-Mayer says.

“If the European Social Model means anything, it must mean that the family – a fundamental pillar of social welfare – is supported and protected in times of economic difficulty.”

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