

New Report on Food Security: How the EU can champion the fight against world hunger

Caritas Europa's new report on the 'Right to Food' includes series of recommendations how to create sustainable food systems with the goal of ending world hunger by 2025.

The European Union should support the eradication of worldwide hunger as a priority for the post 2015 agenda, and push for a clear definition of a “Zero Hunger” goal, addressing all the root causes of hunger, in particular those that are a result of policies pursued by the European Union.

In this report - ["The EU's Role to End Hunger by 2025"](#) - Caritas Europa is addressing six main topics of utmost importance, calling on the European Union and its Member States to take action in the following areas: Right to Food – Agriculture – Climate change – Nutrition – Resilience – Policy Coherence for Development.

FOOD SECURITY

While nearly one billion people – one in eight – are undernourished¹, more than 3 million children die each year from the causes of under- and malnutrition,² and some 2 billion people suffer from one or more micronutrient deficiencies.³ But there is enough food for everyone – according to FAO estimates there is food enough in the world to provide every single person each day with approximately 2,770 kcal.⁴

The global food system currently fails to ensure the right to adequate food for hundreds of millions of poor and marginalized people in developing countries, and only deep reforms at multiple levels will ensure a more equitable, sustainable and resilient food system truly capable of **ending hunger by 2025 and of feeding 9.6 billion people by 2050.**⁵

Ending hunger cannot simply be done by supplying enough food for everybody. The structures that prevent people from self-sufficiency must be changed. Experts such as Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, agree that the root causes of hunger and malnutrition stem from disempowerment, marginalization and poverty. People are not hungry because we produce too little; they are hungry because they cannot afford the food that is available on the markets, or lack access to resources to produce it sustainably themselves.

¹ FAO (2013) *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, FAO: Rome

² *The Lancet* (2013) *Maternal and Child Nutrition series, Executive summary*, 6 June 2013, *The Lancet*

³ FAO (2013) *The State of Food and Agriculture*, FAO: Rome

⁴ FAO estimate world average per capita availability of food for human consumption was 2,770 kilocalories per person per day in 2005-2007. See: FAO (2012) *World agriculture towards 2030/2050, The 2012 Revision, ESA Working Paper No.12-03*, FAO: Rome

⁵ UN Population Division (2013) *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, UN Population Division, New York

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN BEING

At the heart of the mission of Caritas lies the dignity of the human being. Hunger is the basic manifestation of poverty and a violation of basic Human Rights. It is not only a matter of right to food, but also the right to life and human dignity of the millions of people who starve every year. Eradicating hunger is the basic requirement for every human being to live in a dignified and meaningful way. **Caritas Europa believes that hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can and must be ended irreversibly by 2025.**

Stewardship of the planet is a shared responsibility of the human race, and a central concern for Caritas. As an expression of this, the international confederation of Caritas organisations has recently published a very interesting reflection paper on the impact of climate change on food security.⁶ Climate change is only one of several obstacles to ensuring food security for all. To overcome these challenges, we need strong political leadership. As a network of European Caritas organisations, we are therefore approaching the EU with a set of recommendations for the crucial years ahead.

OUR CHALLENGE TO THE EU

Worldwide, the European Union - with its 28 Member States - is the most important donor of development aid. Policies pursued by the European Union have a crucial impact on global food security and sustainable development paths. Therefore the EU has an essential role to play when it comes to the fight against hunger. Ensuring that EU policies are genuinely coherent and mutually reinforcing, in terms of ensuring food security and the right to food, is vital.

Despite the stark financing gaps and aid flow inconsistencies, the EU adopted an enlightened Food Security Policy Framework in 2010,⁷ and there are many forthcoming policy opportunities where the EU can implement its public commitment to the right to food, and to increasing access to food. The negotiations on the Post 2015 development agenda have the potential to set the tone and direction for development and aid during the next 15-30 years, and are a unique occasion to strengthen EU commitment and actions to eradicate worldwide hunger.

The report's conclusions are based on the unique grass-roots life testimonies that Caritas organisations are witnessing through their work with people experiencing poverty. **Authorities do have choices. They can decide what policy approaches to use and who to target with them, basing their decision on fairness and justice.**

[The Report](#) concludes with clear recommendations towards major decision makers and stakeholders; especially EU-Institutions and governments of EU Member States.

Non-negotiable recommendations:

- **Right to Food:** the Right to Food should be mainstreamed as a priority in all EU policies having an impact on agriculture and food security;
- **“End Hunger” Goal:** the EU and its Member States promote an ambitious “End Hunger” Goal in the post 2015 framework - worldwide undernourishment must fall below 2% and stunting in children under 5 should be reduced to 5%. The EU must contribute at all levels to its achievement (financially and by implementing the principle of Policy Coherence for Development);

⁶ The report can be found here: <http://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/advocacy/>

⁷ For EC (2010) An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges, SEC (2010)379, Brussels 31.3.2010 COM(2010) 127 final, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2010_0127_EN.PDF

- **Small-scale farming:** development assistance to agriculture by the EU and its Member States should focus on supporting sustainable small-scale farming activities. No funding should be allocated to high-input agricultural activities that lead to degradation of eco-systems;
- **Civil Society Organisations** are the EU and Member States' key partners in the fight against hunger. Their experience in working with people affected by hunger and under-nutrition is considered in decision-making processes. The EU should foster an enabling environment for CSOs, including access to funding, political space and participation of the most vulnerable populations, to enable them to get wider access to their rights;
- **Policy coherence for development** is granted by the European Union. For this reason the regulation of biofuels, land tenure, and trade policies should be considered from a global view by assessing all the consequences and risks they could bring to Low Development Countries and to the poorest of the world.

Main recommendations should be supported by further measurable achievements:

- **10% of Official Development Assistance to sustainable agriculture:** the EU and its Member States should increase their support to sustainable agricultural activities and spend at least 10% of their Official Development Assistance on sustainable agriculture;
- **Specific support to programmes aimed at fighting against under-nutrition:** the EU and its Member States should increase their support to countries in their efforts to combat under-nutrition. In doing so, a holistic and integrated approach upholding the interdependency links between food security, social and health policies should be applied;
- **Stop speculation on food:** the EU and its Member States should implement swiftly and strictly the recently adopted directive on financial markets (MiFID II) in order to stop excessive speculation on food in European commodity markets;
- **Prevent land grabbing:** the EU and its Member States have to contribute to the prevention of land grabs by supporting partner countries in the national implementation of the UN Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests;
- **Regulate the private sector:** the EU strictly needs to regulate and monitor European private sector investments in developing countries' agriculture. Further importance should be given to the ongoing negotiations on the UN Principles for responsible agricultural investment ('RAI').⁸
- **Climate change:** the EU should secure a binding target in terms of emissions reduction in order to contain global warming below 1.5°C;
- **Foster resilience:** the EU must integrate a resilience approach into emergencies.

Jorge Nuño Mayer, Secretary General of Caritas Europa says:

"Nobody should die because of lack of food; nobody should suffer hunger. This is a moral imperative of highest priority for all decision makers in a global society. Failing on this is failing on being humane. This report is aimed at showing Caritas's support for this idea and giving evidence for its advocacy work towards European Institutions on the Food Security debate."

Charles Goerens – Member of the European Parliament, says:

"Right to food is more than a right, it is a fundamental human right. It is in this spirit that we should act by improving the political, administrative, scientific and trade-related environment of agriculture whose most crucial actor is the farmer. He deserves our support and respect."

⁸ See also: *Concord (2013): Spotlight Report on EU Policy Coherence for Development. The real life impact of EU Policies on the poor.*

Notes to the Editor

In over 160 countries, Caritas relief and development organisations work with the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race and religion. Present on the ground in local communities all over the world, Caritas has access to some of the world's most vulnerable and marginalised people.

[Caritas Europa](#) is the network of Caritas organisations on the European continent. A total of 49 members, present in 46 European countries, make us one of the major social actors in Europe. The network brings forward the needs of the people experiencing poverty and the voice of its member organisations to the European Institutions, EU Member States, public authorities, and private stakeholders.

We believe in the importance of basing international policy decisions on the experiences of those most closely affected by the issues at stake. The aim of this report is to bring the voices of people living in poverty to the attention of EU policy makers, anchoring our recommendations in practical experience at grassroots level. Case studies are presented from a range of projects by Caritas partners all over the world.

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