



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

EUROPEAN COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK – WILL POVERTY REMAIN ON THE AGENDA?

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The adoption by the European Council of the “**Strategic agenda for the Union in times of change**” will impact strongly on the future of the European Union and sets the direction for the European Union’s legislative work for the next five years. Yet are the five priorities agreed enough to ensure the well-being of people across the European Union and will the existing imbalances between economic and social policies be rectified?

Eurodiaconia welcomes the text’s recognition of rising inequalities, its direct reference to the empowerment and protection of citizens (objective 2) and in particular its commitment to “help ensure all our societies have their safety nets (...) to accompany change and reverse inequalities.”

However there remains an unbalanced emphasis on economic growth and there is still no commitment to identifying and addressing the social impact of economic reforms. In addition, the Europe 2020 strategy seems to be sidelined. Heather Roy, Secretary General of Eurodiaconia commented “*This strategic agenda states that the EU2020 review will be the occasion for Europe 2020 to be brought in line with this new agenda. Does this mean that the European Union will move away from the goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth with a clear focus on reducing poverty and social exclusion alongside other targets such as addressing unemployment? A European Union that does not prioritize the well being of people, addresses poverty and social exclusion and which does not promote social investment is a European Union in danger of losing the support of an ever growing percentage of the population.*”

Eurodiaconia members have constantly been reporting and monitoring on the implementation of European economic and social policies at Member States level. Their conclusion has been that too often poverty reduction policies, in line with European Union’s policy direction, have amounted to labour market “activation” policies, regardless of the unavailability of jobs or the unbridgeable gap between labour market and the situation of some of the most excluded in Europe.

Heather Roy stated “*the European Commission must also commit to the coherence of its policies, and that this new strategic agenda aiming towards growth and competitiveness will not impair but rather support member states efforts to care for their most vulnerable, through social investment approaches and access to quality social services*”.

End of press release

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Eurodiaconia is a dynamic, Europe wide community of organisations founded in the Christian faith and working in the tradition of Diaconia, who are committed to a Europe of solidarity, equality and justice. Eurodiaconia is based in Brussels and currently has 40 members in 22 countries.



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Eurodiaconia is a federation of organisations, institutions and churches providing social and health services and education on a Christian value base throughout Europe. Eurodiaconia is registered as an AISBL in Belgium.