



Ursula von der Leyen, President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 28th December 2022

Subject: EU response to the alarming increase in the social service needs

Honourable President von der Leyen,

As we are approaching the end of another extraordinary year for our Union and for our people, marked by numerous crises, most notably by the far-reaching and complex consequences of the Russian aggression on Ukraine, it is already clear that the gravest social impacts of these perturbing events are yet to come in 2023.

In their recently published survey conducted in 18 European states,¹ two large European charitable networks reveal alarming prospects for the quality of life in the EU and in its neighbourhood in the coming year. The economic and social effects of the current crisis, particularly rapid increase in the costs of living, including the costs of covering people's basic needs, such as housing, heating and food, threaten to expose large numbers of people across the EU and in the neighbouring countries to poverty. Already in 2022, charitable organisations recorded average 40 % increase in the requests for social services support. The impacts of the current crisis have been most severe for vulnerable groups, such as single persons, older people, refugees and migrants, young people, persons with disabilities, Roma people, and members of rural households.

The survey points to population of Belarus, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Serbia, Sweden and Turkey as hardest hit by the social hardship. What is more, it raises further concerns about the ability of social services providers to respond to the rapidly increasing needs for social services, given the impact of the rising energy and living costs on themselves as well as the lack and often absence of any financial support from the governments.

¹ Results of the survey are available at <https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Energy-survey-Data-with-Eurodiaconia.pdf>.

In the light of the abovementioned alarming situation, we the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call on the Commission to put forward decisive, all-encompassing and targeted policies and measures, such as a directive on minimum income schemes, combined with sufficient funds to ensure the access of vulnerable groups of individuals to basic goods and services as well as to support the non-profit social services providers.

The chain of crises in the Union must not impede our efforts in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EU headline targets. On the contrary, European solidarity and unity must once again come to the forefront, reflecting in a set of ambitious policies and measures in a social Europe where nobody is left behind.

With best wishes and high expectations for our common endeavours in 2023,

Milan Brglez, MEP

Agnes Jongerius, MEP

Dietmar Köster, MEP

Pierfrancesco Majorino, MEP

Matjaž Nemec, MEP

Aurore Lalucq, MEP

Brando Benifei, MEP

Marc Angel, MEP

Nora Mebarek, MEP

István Ujhelyi, MEP

Sylvie Guillaume, MEP

Klemen Grošelj, MEP

Domènec Ruiz Devesa, MEP

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, MEP

Irena Joveva, MEP

Klára Dobrev, MEP