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## PRESS RELEASE

### CIDSE WELCOMES BERND NILLES AS NEW PRESIDENT

CIDSE is pleased to announce the election of Bernd Nilles as its new President, following the Board of Directors' Meeting held in Ireland on 16-18 June. Mr. Nilles currently serves as Director of Fastenaktion, CIDSE's Swiss member organisation, and brings with him a long and meaningful history of collaboration within the CIDSE network.

From 1999 to 2005, Mr. Nilles worked with MISEREOR, CIDSE's German member organisation. He later served as CIDSE's Secretary General from 2008 to 2017, and has been an active member of the CIDSE Executive Committee since mid-2023.

Mr. Nilles has been elected for a three and a half-year term, succeeding Caoimhe de Barra, outgoing President and CEO of Trócaire, the Irish Catholic international development agency.

*"Looking at CIDSE and its members, the coming years will be tough for all of us. But I believe in our family of Catholic social justice organisations. CIDSE is key to keeping us strong, as it represents our collective voice at the European and international levels, where we speak out together."* **Bernd Nilles**, new CIDSE President

The Board of Directors extended its heartfelt thanks to Ms. De Barra for her dedicated leadership over the past two and a half years. Elected CIDSE President in 2023, she had served on the Executive Committee since 2020 and has worked with Trócaire in various roles since 1997.

During her tenure, Ms. De Barra played a vital role in guiding CIDSE through a period of transition. This included the adoption of a new strategic framework and branding identity, organisational restructuring, and the implementation of a fully integrated Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) culture. Amid global uncertainty, her leadership remained steadfast, consistently advocating for systemic justice and the protection of our common home.

Mr. Nilles begins his presidency at a pivotal time, as CIDSE prepares to commemorate several significant milestones. These include the 60th anniversary of its foundation, the tenth anniversary of the publication of the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, and the forthcoming United Nations climate conference in Brazil (COP30). In the face of global prevailing uncertainty, international solidarity is more than ever imperative.

*"I wish Bernd all the very best as he steps into this important role. He is taking charge at a complex and challenging time, but I have every confidence in CIDSE's strength as an organisation — built on deep commitment, a strong shared vision, and a community of people who truly believe in justice and solidarity. With his leadership and the support of the CIDSE network, I'm certain the organisation will continue to be a force for transformative change in the world."* **Caoimhe de Barra**, CIDSE outgoing President

In addition to the election of the new CIDSE President, Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD (England and Wales), was elected as member of the Executive Committee for a three-year mandate.

## NOTES TO THE EDITORS:

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations. We work with global partners and allies to promote justice, harnessing the power of global solidarity to achieve transformational change for people and the planet. We challenge systemic injustice and its destructive impacts through connecting, mobilising, influencing and telling stories of change. We promote environmentally and socially just alternatives to allow everyone to thrive in our common home. CIDSE's work is guided by Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values. [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org)

CIDSE members are: Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenaktion (Switzerland), FEC (Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Partage Lu (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland), Vastenactie (the Netherlands).

The **CIDSE Board of Directors** met in Dublin (Ireland) from 16 to 18 June 2025. It is composed of the Directors of CIDSE's [18 Member Organisations](#).

The **CIDSE Executive Committee** consists of Anja Appel (KOO, Austria), Christine Allen (CAFOD, England and Wales), Axelle Fischer (Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium), Ricardo Loy (Manos Unidas, Spain)

### Short biography of Bernd Nilles



Bernd Nilles has a long history of collaboration with CIDSE. From 1999 to 2005, he worked for Misereor, our German member organisation: first as a campaigner and then as a policy officer. From 2008 to 2017, he served as Secretary General of CIDSE. Since 2017, he has been Director of Fastenaktion, CIDSE's Swiss member organisation. From 2005 to 2008, he also worked for the government of the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia. Bernd is a board member of Alliance Sud, and served on the board of Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe from 2015 to 2021.

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## MEDIA CONTACT:

- Giorgio Gotra, CIDSE Operations and Communications Manager, [gotra\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:gotra(at)cidse.org)