

Pope Francis speaks out on human rights and care for creation when addressing European Parliament

The alliance of Catholic development agencies, CIDSE, welcomes the address of Pope Francis to the European Parliament today, November 25, 2014. Continuing on his encyclical [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#), CIDSE sees in the Pope's message a challenge to current consumerism and models of economy.

CIDSE Secretary General **Bernd Nilles**, present in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the invitation of the Holy See reacts on the speech of Pope Francis: *"We hope Members of European Parliament were listening well to the message of the Holy Father."* In his speech, Pope Francis said we all share in the responsibility to act as stewards of the gift of creation. He called for developing just forms of governance for the service of the common good, in which human rights take primacy over privatized economic interest. *"The EU is a major world trading power, but European citizens need assurances as to the morality of the economic system. European businesses also have to take their share of responsibility"*, says Nilles.

The Pope made a strong critique of consumerism, and of an exploitative approach to economy and natural resources, and remarked that often economic and technical questions dominate a European debate rather than considerations of human dignity. One example where this can be seen is in the current debate in the European Parliament on "responsible mineral sourcing". 70 Church leaders, supported by CIDSE, have signed a [common statement](#) urging the EU to give assurance to the morality of trading system by making the legislation's requirements consistent in scope and binding for companies, rather than the current voluntary approach. Another response would be European politicians, business and people addressing climate change. Today the EU is not ambitious enough to protect creation and people. Pope Francis wants us to promote ecology through the use of alternative sources of energy, rather than coal and oil.

The Pope's strong call for a changed relationship to food production and an end to food waste is a challenge to our current model of agricultural production, opening up for modes of sustainable rural development.

"Today Pope Francis put the poor and vulnerable at the heart of his message. It is now up to European politicians to live up to this call, and I'm certain it will strengthen the work of many social justice, development and environmental organisations, including CIDSE," says Nilles.

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Notes to the editors

- **CIDSE** is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. www.cidse.org
- **CIDSE members:** Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD - Terre Solidaire (France), Center of Concern (USA), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenopfer (Switzerland), FEC

(Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Fondation Bridderlech Deelen (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland)

- **Recent statement on food by Pope Francis:**

Pope Francis addresses FAO nutrition conference: <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-addresses-fao-nutrition-conference>

- The “*Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council setting up a Union system for supply chain due diligence self-certification of responsible importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating in conflict affected and high-risk areas*” or “Conflict Minerals Directive” will have a Hearing in the INTA Committee of the European Parliament 3/4 December 2014, with a vote in the Committee foreseen on 18-19 March 2015. A final vote in Plenary remains TBC.