

## **Joint Statement**

Inequality is increasing in all of the Nordic countries, and this puts pressure on the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. Welfare systems in the Nordic countries are experiencing a growing number of people who need help and a helping hand.

Christian-based social organisations from the Nordic countries gathered in a conference in Copenhagen in June 2015, have recognised that the dignity and respect for the individual is declining in our welfare societies. It is becoming more acceptable to speak about various excluded groups as “a burden”. The gap between people in the labour market and those outside the market is expanding in terms of finance, education and housing.

We protest against the conditions for homeless people, the young and the elderly vulnerable groups as well as the migrant groups.

The number of homeless people is increasing dramatically in all of the Nordic countries.

One sector of the homeless population is young people. We see young people becoming dropouts from society, in the cities as well as in the countryside, with no education, no employment and no real opportunities in their adult life.

The increasing level of loneliness is especially hard hitting for the elderly people whose economic conditions and opportunities participating in their local community are getting worse.

In the Nordic cities we experience an increasing number of migrants who live in extreme poverty on the streets and who do not have access to any medical or welfare help.

We call for all politicians and other decision-makers to get involved and listen to people and their stories about exclusion and poverty before taking decisions that affect the lives of marginalised people. People in need do not always get the support they are entitled to because the systems are inaccessible.

## **Joint Working**

We wish to work more collaboratively by sharing experiences and mutual initiatives relevant to the Nordic countries and at the EU level, for example:

- Coordinated actions across the Nordic countries
- Joint hearings facilitated by Eurodiaconia
- Campaigns across the countries

We suggest that representatives from all of the Nordic countries take part in working groups to develop and coordinate these joint activities.