



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

BUCHAREST, 14TH - 17TH MAY

Draft Programme

TUESDAY 14TH MAY

Afternoon	Arrivals & Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board Meeting
Afternoon	Registrations at the hotel
18.30 - 19.30	Opening Service

WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY

8.30 - 9.30	Morning Worship
8.30 - 9.30	Registrations at the venue

Welcome: Diaconia and Democracy

9.30 - 10.00	Olli Holmström , Chairperson of the Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board Father Ciprian Ioniță , President of the Filantropia Federation of the Romanian Patriarchate Representative(s) of Patriarch Daniel of the Orthodox Church of Romania
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Panel: Are there links between poverty and democracy?

10.00 - 11.00	<i>This panel will delve into the crucial connection between poverty and democracy, exploring strategies to empower marginalised communities for active engagement in democratic processes. The discussion will feature insights from a diverse panel of experts, shed light on the intricate relationship between job precarity and democracy, share practical approaches to inclusivity and civic participation, and explore the potential role of universal basic income in addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering democratic ideals.</i>
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Speakers:

Elena Dobre, Director, Social Policy Department, Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, Romania

Eszter Sandor, Research Manager, Eurofound

Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Director Social Rights and Inclusion Unit, European Commission

Facilitator: Heather Roy, Secretary General, Eurodiaconia

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break

Panel: Empowerment through community mobilisation

11.30 - 12.30 *This panel will focus on the transformative power of community mobilisation in empowering low-income groups. By exploring innovative projects and initiatives, our panellists will share successful strategies to uplift communities and address poverty at its roots. Join us to hear from the director of a pioneering diaconal project that trains community volunteers as debt aid buddies, providing crucial financial support and guidance. Learn from an inspiring speaker who supports churches to organise themselves as powerful catalysts for poverty alleviation. Discover first-hand how grassroots initiatives and community engagement can lead to sustainable empowerment and positive change.*

Speakers:

Rosie Hopley, Jubilee+ Voices Lead

Carla Van Der Vlist, Director, SchuldHulpMaatje

Facilitator: Olli Holmström, Chairperson of the Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch

Study visits

13.30-17.30 *The study visits will offer opportunities to get to know some of our host organisation's essential work, providing social services throughout the city of Bucharest. From daycare centres for children to elderly homes, Filantropia aims to reach people from different backgrounds and make social, educational, and health services easily accessible for all. Participants will be able to visit two different study visit locations, see their everyday work, speak about their challenges, and learn from their practices. Registered participants will receive a link to a separate form in April, offering the choice of two study visit locations:*

- Social Clinic "Smile for everyone"
- Daycare centre for children "St. Sophia"
- Daycare centre for children "Holy Trinity"
- Shelter home for elderly people "St. Sylvester"
- Centre for palliative care "St. Nectaros"

More venues to be confirmed

19.00 - 21.00 Dinner

THURSDAY 16TH MAY

08.30 - 09.00 Morning Worship

European Elections - What is next?

9.00 - 10.30

Former Members of the European Parliament who have dedicated their work to social affairs will provide a comprehensive analysis of the current social state of the European Union. They will share perspectives on the challenges and achievements in fostering social cohesion across the European Union. They will give insights into the critical issues at stake and their visions for the future in the perspective of the European Elections. They will be joined by representatives of other European institutions to give their perspective on what is next in European policy. Join us for engaging discussions, combining retrospective reflections with forward-looking perspectives, providing attendees with understanding of the social dynamics shaping the European Union and its impact beyond political borders.

Speakers:

Jean Lambert – Former Member of the European Parliament for the UK

Ana Gomes – Former Member of the European Parliament for Portugal

Facilitator: Malte Lindenthal, Member of the Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break

Parallel workshops - Accessibility in Democracy

11.00-12.30

[Artificial intelligence, digitalisation, and social services: ethical challenges](#)

This workshop aims to explore the complex ethical landscape social services must navigate as we integrate more AI and digital solutions into our work. It will look at how technology can be harnessed responsibly to enhance social service provision without compromising ethical standards.

Speakers:

Sara Speicher, Deputy General Secretary, World Association for Christian Communication

Archid. Lect. Dr. Adrian Sorin Mihalache, University of Iași, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Romania

Facilitator: Kewan Mildred, Policy Officer, Eurodiaconia

Essential services and the cost-of-living crisis

While most of the EU population has access to essential services, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and the most marginalised face the greatest barriers in accessing such services. Price increases have a greater impact on the most disadvantaged, eroding their purchasing power and hindering access to essential services. What is the impact of this situation for social service providers and how can they support lowest income groups toward a better access of essential services? These are the questions we invite you to come and discuss together!

Speakers:

Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Director Social Rights and Inclusion Unit, European Commission

Facilitator: Annika Sparrer, Policy Officer, Eurodiaconia

User involvement: S.O.R.A - Roma feminist community intervention method, case studies and scaling

At the core of diaconia is the idea of a global family with the mission of transformation, sisterhood and equality. In this workshop, we will introduce E-Romnja's method of social intervention and intersectional feminist work: S.O.R.A.– Study, Organize, Revendication, Advocacy. We will also have an interactive discussion on community intervention and democracy, and how through this method Roma women and girls work to organize and advocate for their rights and aims. Grass-roots self-organization practices can inspire and teach us a lot about how to make democratic practices representative and inclusive, that is to say to make democracies more robust and genuine.

Speakers:

Anca Enache, Development Manager, Helsinki Deaconess Foundation

Anca Nica, Community Support Project Coordinator, E-Romnja

Facilitator: Andrea Sánchez Caballero, Policy Officer, Eurodiaconia

4 stories of participation

How can community-based projects foster better participation among people in vulnerable situations and empower them in decision-making processes in their everyday lives? Our member Slezka Diakonie will share their experience by telling the story of different people and lining out how participation can be achieved for the elderly, people with mental health challenges, or individuals experiencing homelessness. This workshop aims to exchange best practices among members, discuss the obstacles in participating in our society that people in vulnerable situations face, and find strategies for empowerment.

Facilitator: Romana Belova, Slezka Diakonie Deputy Director for Social Work

If you are interested in co-leading this workshop or bringing in your ideas, please reach out to Annika Sparrer: annika.sparrer@eurodiaconia.org.

What future for Civil Society?

Is the space for civil society shrinking across Europe and what could that mean for diaconal work? How does the trend of 'online activism' change our thinking around engagement? This workshop will delve into the challenges of the civil society movement from a number of angles – technology, extreme politics, challenges to legitimacy, and the role of faith-based organisations as bridge builders.

Speakers:

to be announced

Facilitator: Heather Roy, Secretary General, Eurodiaconia

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch

Capacity building sessions for democracy

This part of the programme includes different capacity building sessions on specific topics. While at first sight these might not seem related to the main theme of our conference, we hope that participants will leave their respective sessions with learnings and inspiration that can help their organisation navigating through current democratic and European challenges. All sessions will offer space for questions, in-depth exchange with other members, and insightful debates about the chosen topic.

EU funding opportunities

13.30 - 15.00

In this session, we'll look at funding opportunities for social services through private foundations and the EEA Grants Framework, focusing on areas like innovation, social inclusion, and youth employment in the following countries: Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia. We'll also cover the European Programme for Integration and Migration, a collaboration of 25 private foundations aimed at creating inclusive communities and humane migration responses based on human rights and social justice.

Speakers:

to be announced

Facilitator: Giorgia Signoretto, Projects Officer, Eurodiaconia

Briefing to members: What does the Green Transition mean for social services?

In this session, we will explore the impact of the Green Transition on social services and lowest-income groups. We will discuss the impact of environmental policies on social services and people, and how to better adapt to this change.

Speakers:

Anna-Lena Guske, Project Leader Environmental & Social transformation, Diakonie Deutschland

Facilitator: Clotilde Clark-Foulquier, Deputy Secretary-General, Eurodiaconia

Speaking from the margins - a theological context for Diaconia?

This workshop will bring together inputs on how diaconia can support, develop, and make space for voices from the margins. What does it mean to make space? Are we ready to give up some of our space? Building on the theological and biblical contexts such as the open table we will look at power dynamics, participation, and empowerment.

Speakers:

to be announced

Facilitator: Heather Roy, Secretary General, Eurodiaconia

Communicating Diaconia

This workshop will explore how we, as civil society organisations and churches, can contribute to shaping narratives and reinforce the image of Diaconia, especially online. It is a great opportunity to share experiences of addressing those challenges and develop common strategies for the future.

Facilitator: Donal Brady, Communication Officer, Eurodiaconia

Peer-coaching session: Leadership in turbulent times

With this session we invite CEOs and leadership team members of Eurodiaconia member organisations to engage in interactive discussions on the difficulties confronting non-profit leaders. We will look at how to develop an organisation to match existing needs and challenges, building on the diverse experiences of the participants. Join us to get inspired by the practices of others, receive advice from your peers on the issues you bring in, and leave with new connections.

Facilitators:

Olli Holmström, Chairperson of the Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board

Andrea Witt, Head of Operations, Eurodiaconia

EU Elections - What is at stake for Europe?

The upcoming European elections and the expected rise of the far-right will heavily influence Europe and its societies. This capacity building session intends to explore the possibilities of our members to bring our theme 'Diaconia and Democracy' into practice and campaign for the upcoming elections. Diakonie Germany will present its new tool 'Sozial-O-Mat' as a starting point for insightful debates, brainstorming, and sharing ideas.

Facilitator: Mirko Schwärzel, Diakonie Germany

If you are interested in contributing to this session with your ideas or campaigns, please reach out to Annika Sparrer: annika.sparrer@eurodiaconia.org.

Thematic networking cafe

15.00 - 16.30 *This informal session will connect fellow Eurodiaconia members from all over Europe. There will be space for conversations about participants' work, current challenges, and best practices in a speed meeting format. This session will also allow time to build new partnerships for projects, mutual learning visits, and to get inspired by other members' work or strategies. During the Annual General Meeting, you will find a 'Project ideas wall' at the venue, where you will be able to promote your project or partnership ideas. These will be discussed during the networking café.*

19.00 - 21.00 Dinner

FRIDAY 17TH MAY

9.00 - 9.30 Morning Worship

9.30 - 11.30 Business session

11.30 - 15.00 Closing network coffee

Optional afternoon activity coordinated by the Host organization

- a) Guided old city tour**
Embark on a captivating journey through the heart of Bucharest's history with this guided tour. As you stroll through the cobbled streets, you will unveil the layers of Old Town's history from its medieval roots as a bustling mercantile hub to its transformation into the vibrant district it is today. Admire the diverse architecture, from French-inspired structures to communist-era buildings and enjoy the rich heritage of the city.
- b) Visit to the Palace of Parliament and the Museum of Contemporary Art**
Begin your journey at the impressive Palace of Parliament, where you can explore its architectural styles, and learn more about this famous symbol of Romania's communist time. Afterwards, enter the Museum of Contemporary Art, where modernity meets creativity, and dive into a diverse collection of exhibitions, showcasing the works of both local and international artists. This combination of architectural history and artistic innovation promises an enriching experience in the heart of Bucharest.