

# ANNUAL 2024 REPORT Eurodiaconia S Connecting faith and social justice through action





Heather Roy Secretary General

Chairperson

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house." Matthew 5 v14&15

Europe has seen many challenges in 2024 that could feel dark but once again the members of Eurodiaconia have risen to them and brought light. Responding to horrific flooding in southern and central Europe, continuing to host refugees from the ongoing war in Ukraine and welcoming migrants from the global south, providing high-quality long-term care service against a backdrop of welfare cuts and continuing to support people and communities struggling with the cost-of-living crisis our members have done it all.

As a network, we have tried to support their efforts with our advocacy, our networking and policy development events and our capacity building programme.

The European Parliament elections saw us seek to influence the programmes of the various parties in the parliament – before and after the elections. It is a different parliament now to the ones we have worked with in the past and we must be realistic about how we work. We want to convince everyone of the need to strengthen the social fabric of our societies and share with them how our members can contribute to that while still ensuring respect and acceptance of the God given worth of every person. Our Parliamentary Breakfast in December 2024 underlined this message and gave an opportunity to discuss with Parliamentarians how to work in the new mandate.

Supporting our members to apply for EU and other sources of funding was at the heart of our capacity building programme 'The Social Europe Academy'. Over the year general and tailor-made programmes were provided to members as well as regular email updates on what funding is out there. Capacity building also took place during our network meetings with common work on policy initiatives. Throughout the year we launched several policy papers and briefing including on just transition, access to essential services, the future of social services and about migrant care workers in Europe. We also developed a paper on the social dimension of crisis response and resilience considering the role that churches and diaconia plays and can play in civilian protection at times of crisis.

We are grateful that 2024 has been another positive year for Eurodiaconia and we thank all our members, staff, partners and board members for their contribution in giving light to the house that is our continent in Europe.

## WHO WE ARE

### **MISSION, VISION AND OUR VALUES**

#### WHO WE ARE

Inspired by our Christian faith, our vision is of a Europe where social injustice is eradicated and each person is valued, included, and empowered to realise their fullest potential, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised.

#### **OUR MISSION AND VISION**

Eurodiaconia is a growing European network of churches and Christian NGOs with 61 national and regional organisations providing social and healthcare services, as well as advocating for social justice. Together we work for just and transformative social change across Europe

Eurodiaconia members provide diverse services to persons in need, working to see everyone live in dignity and their human rights are respected and protected. These services range from health care, childcare, elderly care, hospice and palliative care, youth inclusion programmes, employment and inclusion services to vulnerable groups such as migrants and Roma, housing services for persons experiencing homelessness and services to persons with disabilities.

Eurodiaconia represents over 33,000 service centres, with approximately 1,000,000 staff and over a million volunteers are involved in providing diaconal services.

#### **HOW WE WORK**

Eurodiaconia's work has a multifaceted approach, encompassing capacity building, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships that have shown tangible outcomes. Across 2024, with our members, we have highlighted and addressed high levels of poverty and social exclusion among a variety of vulnerable groups. In doing so, it has

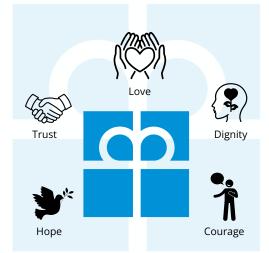
enabled awareness raising amongst EU decision makers on the social state of the EU, as well as key actions to be taken to address poverty and support non-for-profit social service providers.

Our network meeting opportunities among members have enabled best-practice exchange, contributing to inspiring innovation and problem-solving amongst Eurodiaconia members and therefore increasing social impact.

Our capacity building work equips members to engage in advocacy at home and at European level, bringing increased expertise that contributes to better policy making.

#### **OUR WORK**

- 1. THE SOCIAL EUROPE ACADEMY
- **3.** COMMUNICATING SOCIAL EUROPE
- 2. BUILDING SOCIAL EUROPE
  4. FUNDING SOCIAL EUROPE



## MEMBERSHIP

## MEMBERSHIP SURVEY FINDINGS

Through our Annual Members Survey, we learned members' feedback have on Eurodiaconia's work on policy advocacy, events, and funding and received recommendations to improve collaboration among members, joint project development, developing non-EU initiatives, improving relations, networking, and study visits and further capacity-building mutual and learning.

Members have also indicated their interest in developing work on key or emerging areas such as the next EU budget (58% of respondents), greening social services (42%), Social Climate Fund (35.5%), and long-term care workforce (32%).





### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

In 2024, we warmly welcomed our new members, Signo Foundation (Norway), Federatia Filantropia (Romania), Fida International (Finland) and Khachmeruk Educational Consulting Center (Armenia).

Our new members are experienced social service providers in the fields of social inclusion for persons with disabilities and special needs, supporting families and individuals in extreme destitution, children's education, community development, healthcare, support for internally displaced persons, victims of human trafficking and of domestic violence, and elderly care.

## SOCIAL EUROPE ACADEMY

### **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Eurodiaconia has continued to strengthen its capacity-building program Social Europe Academy in its 3rd year. Members were trained on EU funding for social inclusion, project development, EU policies and programmes on migration, Roma inclusion through education, and promoting opportunities in employment to combat poverty. The training programme in 2024 was delivered in both online and in-person modalities. The programme also produced high-quality modules and key resources.

The EU Funding Training 2024 cycle was held online with the participation of members from 9 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland, Romania, Latvia, Greece, Denmark and Germany). We also had a customized online training with Diakonie Austria on EU funding and project development. The training programme covered topics on **1**) MFF and the EU Budget, **2**) Key EU funding programmes and workplans, **3**) Current calls for proposals of interest to the members, **4**) How to read a call for proposals, **5**) Planning phase, **6**) Logical framework approach, **7**) Budget and finance of EU calls, **8**) Building a budget for EU calls and **9**) Simplified cost options.

Capacity-building is also integral to the network meetings. In 2024, Social Europe Academy sessions included key policy developments on migration and labour and skills shortages and their impact on social service providers, inputs on tackling anti-gypsyism/anti-Roma racism in diaconal service provision, funding opportunities for members working on migrant integration and inclusion, Roma inclusion and extreme destitution (e.g. homelessness, material aid support, child poverty).



#### <u>"Eurodiaconia Guidelines on</u> <u>Tackling Anti-Roma Racism"</u>

We have reaffirmed our commitment to combatting Anti-Roma Racism through these guidelines presenting our diaconal strategy and incorporating diverse national practical examples from our membership. Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all approach, they serve as a dynamic and flexible resource showcasing a range of actions that stakeholders can adapt and implement in their efforts to foster Roma inclusion.



FUNDING NETWORK MEETING, BRUSSELS

## **ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

This year, Eurodiaconia's policy work aimed to be forward-thinking, addressing some of the most urgent social challenges facing Europe today, particularly in the context of the European Parliament election. It focused on a wide range of issues, from essential services, a just environmental transition, in-work poverty, the future of social services, digitalisation, homelessness, children in poverty, migrant care workers, and third-country national women seeking labour market integration. Through strategic partnerships and coalitions, Eurodiaconia provided valuable expertise to ensure that the voices of social and health care service providers and those directly affected by these issues are heard at the policy-making table. This work has unfolded in the context of the European elections, a pivotal moment that has influenced both our advocacy and relationship-building efforts. Eurodiaconia's policy goal remains clear: to ensure that the realities of our members are fully considered in shaping future EU policies and that our efforts contribute meaningfully to building a more inclusive and equitable Europe.



To raise the voice of Eurodiaconia's members experiences and bring visibility to their work throughout the year, Eurodiaconia published an election manifesto in the first quarter 2024 "<u>Let's</u> <u>build a truly social Europe</u>". Eurodiaconia staff also met with representatives from different political groups, MEP assistants and MEPs before and after the election.



Finally, on 5th December 2024 we organised a "cross-Political Dialogue" gathering MEPs, representative from partner organisations, the European Commission and Eurodiaconia members, to discuss priorities in particular in the context of the newly announced upcoming anti-poverty strategy.

## **ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

#### **BUILDING A FAVORABLE ECOSYSTEM FOR THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

In 2024, part of our advocacy focused on addressing the pressing challenges facing social services across Europe and the need for a favourable ecosystem for social services. A review of the European Commission's 2024-2029 political guidelines, presented by President Ursula von der Leyen, revealed a concerning absence of concrete commitments or policies to strengthen social services. This omission comes at a time when the demand for social services, particularly long-term care, is on the increase due to demographic changes and an ageing population. Meanwhile, the sector continues to struggle with declining public funding, complex legal frameworks, labour shortages and the need to align with sustainability goals while adapting to digital and green transitions.

In response, we developed a comprehensive **Policy Paper on the Future of Social Services in Europe.** This document provided key recommendations to the European Commission and Member States, advocating for increased social investment, technological advancements in home-based care, and greater support for social service providers in adopting digital tools. Furthermore, we pushed for revisions in public procurement directive to include mandatory social criteria, promoting Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) as a means to enhance service quality and social impact.

Recognising the increasing role of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) in service delivery, we also published a **<u>Report on the adoption of AI and digital tools among Eurodiaconia members</u>. This study explored the opportunities AI presents for social services, the challenges it poses, and the ethical considerations necessary to ensure responsible implementation.** 





### **ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

#### WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS DESTITUTION AND POVERTY

Eurodiaconia actively advocated for several critical issues related to extreme destitution and social inclusion, with a particular focus on tackling child poverty, combatting homelessness, easing access to essential services, and addressing in-work poverty.

Together with the Alliance for Investing in Children, we engaged in a pivotal meeting with DG EMPL to discuss the state of play, current challenges, and next steps of the European Child Guarantee. During the meeting, we highlighted the ongoing efforts and identified areas that require further attention to ensure social inclusion of children across Europe. Additionally, we participated in a meeting with the National Coordinators for the European Child Guarantee, where we emphasized the crucial role of social service providers in addressing child poverty. These interactions underscored the importance of collaborative efforts and the fundamental role of civil society as well as social services in effectively tackling child poverty. As an active member of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH), we closely collaborated with diverse stakeholders to ensure mutual learning, better access to funding, and enhanced monitoring processes to effectively combat homelessness across Europe.

Within our network, we facilitated debates about pressing topics, such as access to social housing for vulnerable groups, through the Homelessness Expert Group. We also hosted a workshop during Diakonie Germany's "Europe Conference" to assess the current state of homelessness and housing exclusion across the EU.

This workshop provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas and strategies to combat homelessness and housing exclusion effectively.

> Social and Healthcare Services Network Meeting in Stuttgart



A crucial aspect of our work on social inclusion this year was the development of an in-work poverty policy paper. This timely initiative was closely related to our network meeting, which covered the topic "Employment & Poverty." The paper provides insights into the root causes of **in-work poverty**, the consequences for the working poor, and recommendations for national and European policymakers to address this complex, multidimensional issue. It underlined our continued advocacy for robust social protection schemes, adequate and sustainable funding of social service providers, and active support for the most vulnerable groups.

Access to essential services—such as water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services, and digital communications—is crucial in combating social exclusion, ensuring a dignified standard of living, and achieving the EU's 2030 goal of reducing poverty by 15 million people. Recognising their importance, Eurodiaconia started engaging on the topic set out under Principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Following a consultation with our members, we published the policy paper <u>"Promoting Access to Essential Services: Good Practices and Recommendations for Policymakers"</u> in November 2024, reflecting members' grassroots perspectives in EU discussions on reducing barriers to services for vulnerable groups. Synthesising key findings into actionable policy recommendations, the publication was disseminated among Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission's DG Employment and Social Affairs, and civil society partners. Following the publication, Eurodiaconia was the only CSO invited to present its insights at the European Commission's "Strategic Dialogue: Social and Essential Services".

Joint Extreme Poverty and Destitution Network Meeting in Santander



### **ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

#### **INCLUSION THROUGH EMPOWERMENT, BRINGING MEMBERS TO THE FOREFRONT OF POLICY MAKING**

Eurodiaconia worked to underline the gendered dimension of migration, acknowledging that migrant and refugee women face intersectional barriers in employment and social inclusion. Our focus resulted in two reports highlighting the structural inequalities shaping their experiences in Europe. <u>"The Labour Market Integration of TCN Women"</u> with input from 21 members across 12 countries, identifies key obstacles at the intersection of gender, migration, or refugee status. Drawing on best practices—including personalised employment and legal counselling, language courses, vocational training, social enterprises, networking initiatives, and community-building activities—the report underscores that labour integration cannot be addressed in isolation but must be embedded within broader social inclusion strategies. <u>"Migrant Care Workforce"</u>, informed by 10 members across 8 countries, analyses migrant workers' crucial role in the care sector, where they face unequal and precarious employment conditions. Eurodiaconia provided policymakers with recommendations to improve working conditions, strengthen skill recognition and enhance labour protections while supporting an inclusive and sustainable workforce.

We continued engagement with EU-level stakeholders and civil society alliances, advocating for antidiscrimination as a pillar of social inclusion and ensuring its integration across key EU policies. We provided input on the National Roma Strategic Frameworks and showcased our members' best practices under European funds, such as the ESF+, to support local authorities and Roma and pro-Roma NGOs in fostering Roma inclusion.

To strengthen national representation and highlight transformative practices in eco-social work, labour market integration, and countering anti-migration narratives, we collaborated with the Belgian Presidency of the Council. Five of our members from Spain, Finland, Italy, Scotland, and Serbia played a key role in delivering four sessions at the 2024 European Social Work Conference in Bruges, emphasising the imperative of leaving no one behind and addressing systemic conditions fostering social exclusion.



### **ADVOCACY AND POLICY**

#### A SOCIALLY JUST ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSITION

Eurodiaconia recognises the urgent need for an environmental transition that is socially fair and protects the most vulnerable communities. Eurodiaconia also acknowledges the pivotal role of its members in contributing to a just transition, by greening their services and promoting sustainability in their communities while protecting the most vulnerable affected by climate change and environmentally driven policies. To support their crucial role, Eurodiaconia published <u>"Pioneering Change: Eurodiaconia Members Leading a Just and Green Transition"</u>, drawing on members best practices and offering a roadmap for environmental and social sustainable practices for service providers. In its advocacy efforts, to create an enabling framework and empower social service providers in greening their services and continuing to support the most vulnerable, Eurodiaconia published a policy paper on <u>"Ensuring a Socially Just Green Transition"</u>. In this publication, challenges for a just transition for vulnerable people and social service providers are brought to light and recommendations to member-states and EU Institutions are issued.

#### **CRISIS PREPAREDNESS**

In 2024, Eurodiaconia started to look at crisis preparedness, emphasising the vital role of diaconal organisations in emergency response and social recovery. Our members, deeply embedded in their communities, are often providing critical support to vulnerable populations affected by crises. Following extreme flooding in <u>Central Europe</u> and <u>Spain</u>, Eurodiaconia issued statements highlighting the urgent need for coordinated action, disaster relief, and long-term resilience-building efforts. Additionally, has started to map out members work in this area as we wanted to underscore the importance of proactive crisis planning, advocating for stronger collaboration between civil society and public authorities. These efforts reflect our dedication to preparing a more resilient Europe. By facilitating knowledge exchange, and advocating at the EU level, Eurodiaconia will continue to work to strengthen crisis response capacities across our network.



## PUBLICATIONS

POLICY PAPER: FUTURE OF SOCIAL SERVICES



<u>REPORT ON</u> DIGITALISATION IN SOCIAL SERVIES

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EURODIACONIA MEMBERS LEADING A JUST AND GREEN TRANSITION



POLICY PAPER: HOSUING EXCLUSION



<u>POLICY PAPER:</u> <u>TACKLING IN-WORK</u> <u>POVETRY ACROSS</u> <u>EUROPE</u>

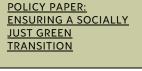


REPORT ON MIGRANT CARE WORKERS IN EUROPE



REPORT: FUNDING SOCIAL EUROPE







POLICY PAPER: PROMOTING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

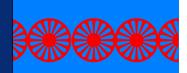


THE ROLE OF DIACONAL ORGANISATIONS IN ENHANCING EUROPE'S CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE





<u>NEW GUIDELINES TO</u> <u>TACKLE ANTI-ROMA</u> <u>RACISM</u>



## COMMUNICATING SOCIAL EUROPE

### COMMUNICATIONS

Eurodiaconia's communications has demonstrated significant progress in 2024, focusing on enhancing member engagement and expanding its digital footprint. In March of 2024, Eurodiaconia began the revamp of its website in collaboration with drench web design. The process of the revamp took the entirety of the year. As the original site was dense with information from its first publication in 2015, the newer site should see much improved user engagement as it will be easier to navigate and their will be fewer pages so that users will more easily find the page and information they came for.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Eurodiaconia used Meta sites, Facebook and Instagram, less frequently in 2024 than the previous year owing to a reduction in Communications staff. A total of 2.7K were made to our Facebook page in 2024 which is 31.3% increase on the same metric from 2023. With Instagram, there was a 8.9% decrease, indicating a slight decline in user activity. There is a noticeable spike in early April, suggesting a momentary surge in interest or traffic around the Annual General Meeting. As 2024 progressed, Eurodiaconia began using LinkedIn more frequently owing to the organisations uneasiness to actively contribute on the social media platform, X (formerly Twitter). With this, it was no surprise to see many improved metrics from 2023 on LinkedIn. Eurodiaconia's social media performance provides a comprehensive understanding of our digital presence. The data indicates that our content resonates with a dedicated audience, as reflected in consistent engagement rates and growing reach across multiple platforms.

#### CAMPAIGNS

"Strengthening Our Social Fabric: Eurodiaconia & The European Pillar of Social Rights" was targeted towards European policymakers, Eurodiaconia members and partners, and general public interested in social and human rights issues. Throughout this campaign, Eurodiaconia demonstrated its commitment to advancing social rights in Europe. The campaign highlighted the critical role of the EPSR in shaping a fair and inclusive European society on international days.

Through these strategic initiatives and a commitment to capacity building, Eurodiaconia's communications has effectively reinforced its role as a pivotal advocate for social justice and service excellence across Europe.



20 Principles throughout 2024





Strengthening Our Social Fabric: Eurodiaconia & The European Pillar of Social Rights.

## FUNDING SOCIAL EUROPE

### **FUNDING NETWORK**

For the first time, members of Eurodiaconia's Funding Network from Latvia, Finland, Spain, France, Serbia, Germany, Czech Republic, Romania, and Hungary gathered in Brussels on 14 November to discuss prospects for collaboration in transnational initiatives and projects and contribute their insights on what funding for a more social Europe should be for the next EU multi-annual financial framework. Speakers from Diakonie Deutschland and Diaconia España presented good practices in fundraising including accessing EU funds at the national or country level. Eurodiaconia also welcomed the presentations from the European Commission's DG EMPL Michael Grosse and DG Home Guido Castellano discussed the workings and future calls for proposals of the ESF+ and AMIF, respectively. Eurodiaconia members discussed their priorities and "Wish list" for the next EU budget on the themes of migrant integration and inclusion, material support, and crisis response.

### **MONITORING REPORT ON EU FINDS**

In 2024, we presented the monitoring report on: **The Relevance of EU Funds (ESF+ and Social Climate Fund) on Social Services**. The report presented the value added of the ESF+ in facilitating innovation and scaling-up in social services provision among the Eurodiaconia membership and identified recommendations to improve the funding programme. Additionally, the report examines the importance of the Social Climate Fund and the national Social Climate Plans (SCP) to social services providers and outlined five key principles to ensure that the fund addresses the social costs of green transition effectively.

Eurodiaconia also contributed to the European Commission's ESF+ Midterm Review where we forwarded our assessment of and recommendations on **1**) improving timeframe and administrative processes, **2**) strengthening capacity-building of social service providers, **3**) improving flexibility and adaptability of the fund to actual needs on the ground and access of smaller organisations, **4**) ensuring clear and timely communication and information dissemination, and **5**) conducting inclusive periodic review and stakeholder feedback. In addition, we

- continued to provide information and knowledge support to members on EU funding through the monthly Funding Newsletters, which has a dedicated readership, with over 200 recipients, where we highlighted 43 EU calls for proposals from key EU funding streams and programs (ESF+, AMIF, Erasmus+, Interreg, CERV and LIFE), grants for work with displaced people from Ukraine, and other funding opportunities from private foundations, multilateral institutions and public institutions.
- ensured spaces for mutual learning and partnerships through the Expert Group on EU Funding, which saw its membership grow to 31% over the past year and matchmaking initiatives/calls for partnerships for transnational calls for proposals on innovative solutions to long-term unemployment, supporting victims of human trafficking, and initiatives in peripheral and lagging areas.

## **FINANCES**

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

2024 saw reductions in income and expenditure yet a surplus at the end of the year. Income was lower due to the lack of additional grants received, however, due to the savings in salaries we were able to balance overall. Our main sources of income were our operating grant from the European Commission and membership fees and solidarity contributions from our members. We are very grateful for this support.

Activities were to budget but we spent more on administration and services than originally foreseen due to higher costs overall. We are currently looking at ways to reduce such costs going forward.

In 2024 our accountancy was carried out by AXYOM sprl. Our auditors were DGST sprl who delivered a positive report on their audit of both our grants in 2024 and our general accounts. Copies of our official accounts and our audit report has been made available to members and can also be requested from our office.

INCOME		GLOBAL BUDGET	ACTUAL END 2024	Variance to budget
General Income	Membership fees and solidarity contributions	170.000,00€	165.172,00€	- 4.828,00 €
	Conference fees	10.000,00€	13300	3.300,00€
subtotal		180.000,00€	178.472,00 €	- 1.528,00 €
Project Income	ESF+ SPARE	896.138,00€	896.088,00€	- 50,00€
	Other grants and donations to be found	50.000,00€	- €	- 50.000,00€
sub total		946.138,00€	896.088,00€	- 50.050,00€
				0€
Total Income		1.126.138,00 €	1.074.560,00€	- 51.578,00€
EXPENDITURE		GLOBAL BUDGET		
Staffing	Staff Costs	874.000,00€	767205	106.795,00€
sub total		874.000,00€	767205	106.795,00€
Activities		112.950,00€	102.925,00€	10.025,00€
sub total		112.950,00€	102.925,00 €	10.025,00€
Administation and services		146.230,00€	181.907,00 €	- 35.677,00€
sub total		146.230,00€	181.907,00€	- 35.677,00€
Total Expenditure		1.133.180,00 €	1.052.037,00 €	
surplus/deficit		- 7.042,00€	22.523,00€	

## **OUR TEAM**

#### BOARD



**Ollie Holmstrom** Chairperson

Alessandro Esposito



**Cristian Pavel** Vice-chairperson

Agnieszka Jelinek



**Rollaug Waaler** 

Malte Lindenthal



Alfredo Abad





Heather Roy Secretary General



Kewan Mildred Senior Policy and

Annika Sparrer Policy and Membership Development Officer









Glenis Balangue-Dalkiran Membership and **Capacity Building Officer** 









Andrea Witt • Head of Operations

Andrea Sánchez Caballero Policy and Membership Development Officer



Karina Smreková Policy Assisstant



João Verdelho Policy Assisstant



- Magdalena Bordagorry
- 😑 Giorgia Signoretto
- Alice Widerberg

FORMER STAFF

- Vera Nygard
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2024



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