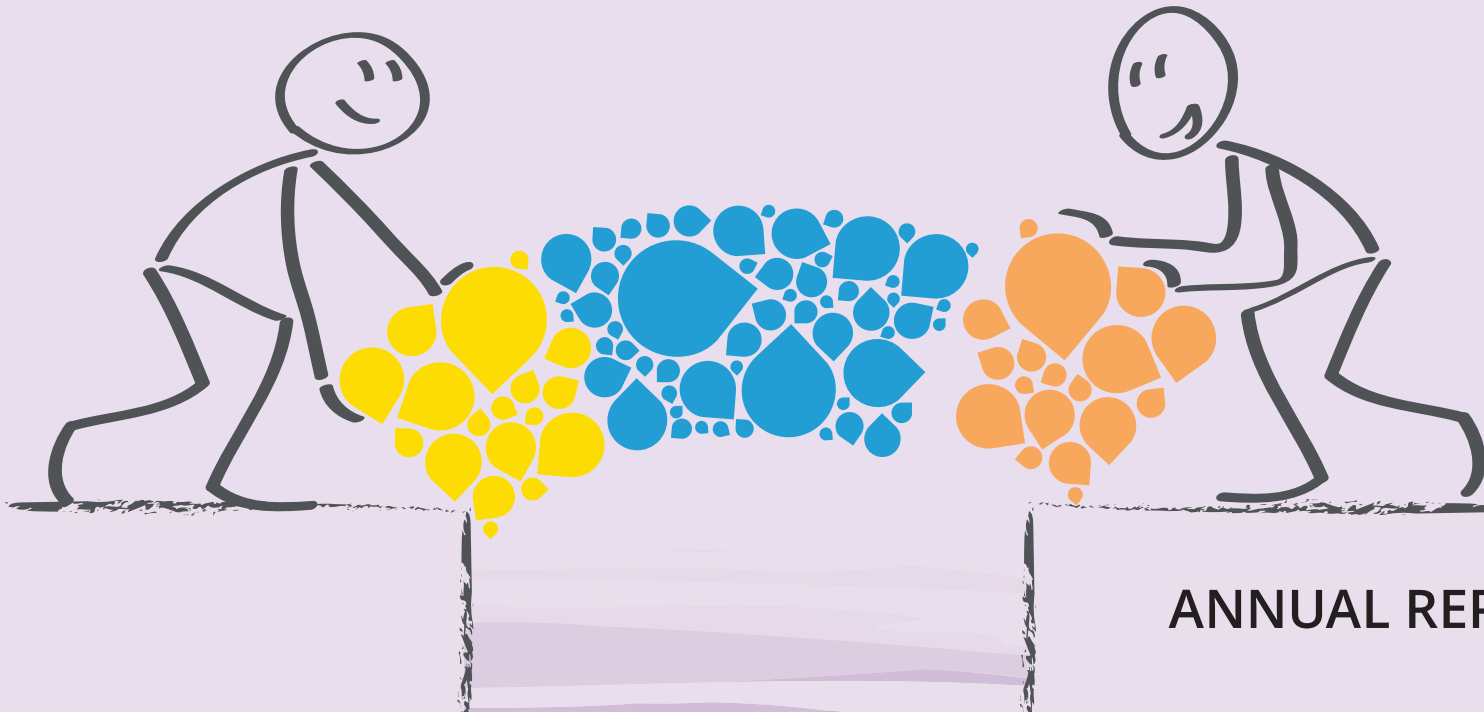


Bringing hope for a Social Europe



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Welcome to the Annual Report 2015

If it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. ROMANS 12:8

Welcome to our 2015 Annual Report. This provides you with a summary of the work of Eurodiaconia over the year. This publication is probably one of the best occasions for our organisation to reflect upon what has been accomplished, as well as what could have been done better in order to identify and shape our future strategies.

Hope and dignity have been at the core of most of Eurodiaconia's work: the hope and dignity that together with the right changes, policies and services can lead to a civilization of solidarity. That means an advanced state of society, in which a high level of non-profitable services along with culture, technology, and government can be reached. In doing so, we attempt to promote a cultural change—we fight for what does not really generate any tangible profit on its own, but it is an essential part of a strategic plan for improving the wellbeing of our societies.

Europe is changing, and we are perfectly aware that sometimes reality can be shocking. We

have seen many people come to Europe looking for refuge, as well as situations of exclusion and violence. At institutional level, we struggled to see positive developments when it came to social support. Our social protection systems seemed to be increasingly hostile to those who are perceived as not contributing to economic growth.

Diaconal social services across Europe have, therefore, responded to that and assumed a gap-filling role because we believe contributing to society is not limited to the economic contribution once can bring. In this context, our organisation are partial—or completely replacing the longed role of governments and local authorities in providing social assistance. As new main service providers we therefore act as innovators, critics, advocates and policy partners. With our work we respond to new social challenges in order to elicit change against a backdrop of austerity and lack of major social investment.

In 2015, our organisation continued to play a leading role in trying to reconnect the policy discussions at European level and the realities they struggle to address. Through our job we contributed to move the discussion around the analysis of needs from “what should happen” to

“how that should happen”, bringing our members' expertise and the voice of millions of people in need to the main political actors.

As a thriving and dynamic network of social service providers involved in a fairer Europe, Eurodiaconia continued to foster the participation of its members in the European Semester, a process that evaluates the implementation of the EU2020 Strategy in Member States. We also successfully developed our advocacy on the integration of migrants and asylum seekers, Roma and vulnerable groups, as well as on child poverty and long term unemployment.

Eurodiaconia also exists to support our members. In 2015, we continued to play an important role in sharing information among and about members. This has been achieved via network meetings, study visits, Eurodiaconia newsletters, regular briefings on current issues and the official new website. Last but not least, our membership increased, and we were delighted to welcome Diaconía España as a new member in 2015. Each new member brings the promise of furthering our activity to extend goodwill around Europe with joy and comprehension.

We also think about the annual report as a good opportunity to remember and celebrate the efforts of thousands people across Europe, spending their time and energy to tackle extreme poverty and inequality. Most of the time they do it for free or they get little pay from their jobs. They do it with passion and joy, because they know they are contributing to a fairer and more peaceful society.

This is Diaconia—and there is a sense of pride in showing what is possible when people work together. Today more than ever, Europe is in need of breaking down the walls of exclusion, covering hate with hope, changing apathy to powerful hospitality. Until then, diaconal organisations will continue to act locally and nationally, putting people and their needs first and ensuring that everyone can live in dignity and with appropriate care and social services.



Carla van der Vlist
Chairperson



Heather Roy
Secretary General



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Eurodiaconia is a federation of 47 social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice.



Eurodiaconia is a registered aisbl in Belgium and receives financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “EaSi” (2014 – 2020).



Who we are

Eurodiaconia is a European federation of social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice. Together our membership represents the needs and unique experiences of 47 national and regional organisations in 32 countries. Our overall objective is to build a Europe of solidarity, equality and justice. To achieve this goal, we develop three means:

1. Foster dialogue and partnership between members;
2. Address policy statements and recommendations to EU decision makers in the field of social and health policies;
3. And engage the wider public through communication campaigns.

How we work

As the leading diaconal network in Europe, Eurodiaconia links its member organisations to examine social needs, develop ideas and influence policies impacting poverty and social exclusion, social and health care services and the future of social Europe.

We work for positive change in three ways:

Advocacy

Through networking with partners, giving voice to the perspectives of our membership throughout Europe, and engaging with decision makers in the European institutions, Eurodiaconia aims to advocate for inclusion, care, and empowerment of the most vulnerable and excluded and ensure dignity for all.

Praxis

Eurodiaconia encourages members to engage with other organisations across Europe by facilitating networks, meetings, member partnerships, and best practice sharing. Members are also provided with the tools they need to better understand and engage with social policy at the European level and support their work at national level.

Identity and Values

Eurodiaconia uses physical network meetings as well as online platforms to bring together experts on European Diaconia from all over the continent. Their shared goals are the further development of practical approaches, identity, and community in Christian social care today.

To be able to work in these three directions, networks are one of our main tools. Through our networks, we bring together the expertise of our members, partners and external experts, equipping our members so they can impact social policies and develop their services. Our networks cover different policy areas, such as marginalisation and social exclusion, healthy ageing and elderly care, Roma inclusion, etc. We also provide opportunities for reflection on the role of diaconia and christian social practice in Europe today.

2015 in figures

+1
new member

1016 people receiving our newsletter including
 **70** new subscribers


Total Eurodiaconia events **13**
2 events in the



5 
press releases


Briefings & Reports **15**

3 assistants 

Study visits **12** 

 **700**
Twitter followers

 **554**
members of our Facebook page

505 
participants at Eurodiaconia events

Membership in 2015

45 members active in 32 countries, regions and territories.

Organisation

Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation
Diakonie Österreich
Diakonia of the Evangelical Church of the Church Brethren (DECCB)
Slezska Diakonie
Dansk Diakoniråd
Kofoeds Skole
The Free Churches Group
Kirkkopalvelut (Church Resource Agency)
Kirkon Diakonia
Helsinki Deaconess Institute
Oulu Deaconess Institute
Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante
Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung eV – Diakonie Deutschland
Kaiserswerther Generalkonferenz
Verband Evangelischer Diakonen - Diakoninnen und Diakonatsgemeinschaften in
Deutschland e.V. (VEDD)
Diakonie Düsseldorf
Diakonie Michaelshoven
Johanniter GmbH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary
Hungarian Reformed Church
Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA)
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

Country

Republic of Armenia
Austria
Czech Republic
Czech Republic
Denmark
Denmark
England and Wales
Finland
Finland
Finland
Finland
France
Germany
Europe/World Wide
Germany

Germany
Germany
Germany
Hungary
Hungary
Hungary
Hungary
Iceland

Contact

www.roundtable-act.am
www.diakonie.at
www.diakonie.cz
www.slezskadiakonie.cz
www.danskdiakoni.dk
www.kofoedsskole.dk
www.freechurches.org.uk
www.kirkkopalvelut.fi
www.evl.fi/EVLen.nsf
www.hdl.fi
www.odl.fi
www.fep.asso.fr
www.diakonie.de
www.kaiserswerther-generalkonferenz.org
www.vedd.de

www.diakonie-duesseldorf.de
www.diakonie-michaelshoven.de
www.johanniter.de
www.evangelikus.hu
www.reformatus.hu
www.hia.hu
www.kirkjan.is

Organisation

Diaconia Valdese
Diakonie Kosova
Diacona Centre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL)
Vsi "Liuteronu diakonija"
Kerk in Actie
Church City Mission Oslo
Diakonhemmet
Kirkeradet (Church of Norway)
Diaconia Kosciola Ewangelicko-Augsburgskiego w RP
Episcopia Reformata Din Ardeal
Church of Scotland
Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation
Evanjelicka diakonia ECAV na Slovensku
Spanish Evangelical Church/Iglesia Evangélica Española (IEE)
Diaconía España
Church of Sweden
Association of Diaconia Institutions in Sweden (ADIS)
The Ecumenical EU Office
The National Association for City Missions in Sweden
Europäischer Verband Freikirchlicher Diakoniewerke
The Salvation Army Europe Region
Diakonie.ch
Stiftung Diakoniewerk Neumünster – Schweizerische Pflegerinnenschule

Country

Italy
Kosovo
Latvia
Lithuania
Netherlands
Norway
Norway
Norway
Poland
Romania
Scotland
Serbia
Slovakia
Spain
Spain
Sweden
Sweden
Europe/International
Sweden
Europe/International
Europe
Switzerland
Switzerland

Contact

www.diaconiavaldese.org
www.diakoniekosova.org
www.diakonija.lv
www.ldiakonija.puslapiai.lt
www.kerkinactie.nl
www.bymisjon.no
www.diakonhemmet.no
www.kirken.no
www.diakonia.org.pl
www.reformatus.ro
www.crossreach.org.uk
www.ehons.org
www.diakonia.sk
www.iee-es.org
www.diaconia.es
www.svenskakyrkan.se
www.samariterhemmet.se
www.ekumeniskaeukontoret.se
www.sverigesstadsmissioner.se
www.evfdiakonie.org
www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/europe
www.punktdiakonie.ch
www.diakoniewerk-neumuenster.ch

New member in 2015

Eurodiaconia is delighted to have welcomed a new member in 2015. Our members are at the heart of what we do, and our new member has enriched the organisation by bringing in its expertise and commitment.

Diaconia España

Diaconia Spain was formed in 1997 by the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE) with the aim of creating networks and supporting churches and institutions in their diaconal work.

Their core values include Social Engagement, Excellence, Honesty, Consistency, and Plurality.

They comprise over 100 diaconal institutions—representing over 4600 volunteer workers—working in a broad range of services including schools work, the provision of care to migrants and child migrants, volunteer training, health-care, and child sponsorship. They work through a series of projects as well as providing management advice and services to its institutions. Diaconia España looks forward to broadening its international horizons through membership of Eurodiaconia.

Diaconía

Our team

2015 Supervisory Board



Jarmo Kökkö (*Chairperson until June 2015*)
Helsinki Deaconess Institute, Finland



Carla van der Vlist (*Chairperson from June 2015*)
Kerk in Actie, Netherlands



Maria Loheide (*Vice-Chairperson*)
Diakonie Deutschland, Germany



Romana Bélová
Silesian Diaconia, Czech Republic



Davide Rosso (*until June 2015*)
Diaconia Valdese, Italy



Victoria Munsey (*from June 2015*)
Diaconia Valdese, Italy



Damir Krkobabić
Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation, Serbia



Anna Österberg
Association of Diaconal Institutions in Sweden
[ADIS], Sweden



Helle Christiansen (*from June 2015*)
Council of Danish Diaconia, Denmark

Eurodiaconia Secretariat (2015)



Heather Roy
Secretary General



Joelle Dubois
Finance Officer

In 2015, Eurodiaconia's work was supported
by 3 assistants:



Laura Jones (until April)
*Senior Policy and
Membership Officer*



Stephan Burger
*Policy and Membership
Officer*



Bailey Douqué
Policy Assistant



Catherine Mallet
*Policy and Membership
Officer*



Theresa Schlage
*Policy, Projects and
Research Officer*



Lea Schumacher
Policy Assistant



Clotilde Clark-Foulquier
*Policy and Membership
Officer*



Alexander Elu (from April)
*Policy and Membership
Development Officer*



Antonio La Mantia
*Communications and Policy
Assistant*



Patricia Willems
Administration Officer



Nicolas Derobert
*Communications and
Membership Officer*

Governance

The highest decision-making body of Eurodiaconia is the Annual General Meeting. This is hosted by alternate member organisations across Europe, and in 2015 it was hosted by the Spanish Reformed Church in Barcelona, Spain. Each year our members decide on the strategy and work plan for the coming year and discuss any other pressing issues.

This year the meeting focused on filling gaps and bringing hope in Europe. In particular, the 90 delegates analysed how we respond to increasing social inequalities, how we engage users of our services, migrants and people experiencing poverty in our work, and how we respond to the migrants' fundamental needs across the Continent.

In 2015, the Annual General Meeting elected four new members of our Supervisory Board and said goodbye to Davide Rosso who had been on our Board for 4 years, and also to Jarmo Kökkö who had been our chairperson for 6.5 years. It was an emotional moment to say goodbye but also a moment to congratulate Carla van der Vlist from Kerk in Actie who has been elected as the new Chairperson.

Finances

As in 2014, 2015 saw our finances remain stable thanks to our income from membership fees, solidarity contributions, the European Commission and other grants. We would like to thank all our members for their continuing financial contribution to the network and to the European Commission, the Otto Per Mille Fund and the Ekklesia company for their financial support. The funds from the European Commission under the PROGRESS access of the E@SI programme support both oper-

ating costs and engagement in EU advocacy on social policy issues. This grant is slightly less than budgeted as we only receive what we spend. The support from Otto Per Mille enabled us to carry out a study visit to Brazil to meet partners engaged in Diaconia at national and local level, in diaconal communities and in academic institutions. With the support of Ekklesia and with our members Diakonie Deutschland we have been able to commission a report on qualifications of care staff and how

transportable they are across the EU.

Expenditure was also stable although with some underspends in staffing and activities. However, we countered this to some extent by planned overspends in areas such as publications and translations. As a result, we ended the year with a slightly higher surplus than planned which has been added to our reserves.

Eurodiaconia accounts for 2015

INCOME	2015			2014
	Budget	Actual at Year End	Variance	Actual
<i>Solidarity Contributions and membership fees</i>	149,580 €	152,460 €	2,880 €	147,167 €
Sub total	149,580 €	152,460 €	2,880 €	147,167 €
<i>Conference Fees</i>	10,000 €	12,000 €	2,000 €	7,880 €
<i>Other Income</i>	19,160 €	8,595 €	-10,565 €	6,025 €
<i>Otto Per Mille Project Grant</i>	11,600 €	10,326 €	-1,274 €	15,367 €
Sub total	40,760 €	30,921 €	-9,839 €	29,272 €
<i>European Commission PROGRESS Grant</i>	516,215 €	483,471 €	-32,744 €	443,431 €
Sub total	516,215 €	483,471 €	-32,744 €	443,431 €
Total	706,555 €	666,852 €	-39,703 €	619,870 €

EXPENDITURE	2015			2014
	Budget	Actual at Year End	Variance	Actual
<i>Staff Costs</i>	443,904 €	424,740 €	-19,164 €	381,576 €
Sub total	443,904 €	424,740 €	-19,164 €	381,576 €
<i>Travel, Accommodation and Activities</i>	150,220 €	97,086 €	-53,134 €	90,578 €
Sub total	150,220 €	97,086 €	-53,134 €	90,578 €
<i>Services</i>	44,130 €	61,083 €	16,953 €	60,166 €
Sub total	44,130 €	61,083 €	16,953 €	60,166 €
<i>Administration</i>	46,021 €	47,173 €	1,152 €	61,294 €
Subtotal	46,021 €	47,173 €	1,152 €	61,294 €
Total	684,275 €	630,082 €	-54,193 €	593,614 €
Surplus / Deficit	22,280 €	36,770 €	14,490 €	26,256 €

The 2015 accounts were successfully audited by DGST and Partners, Réviseurs d'entreprise as appointed by the Annual General Meeting 2014 for the period 2014 – 2017. Copies of the audit report may be requested from the Secretariat.

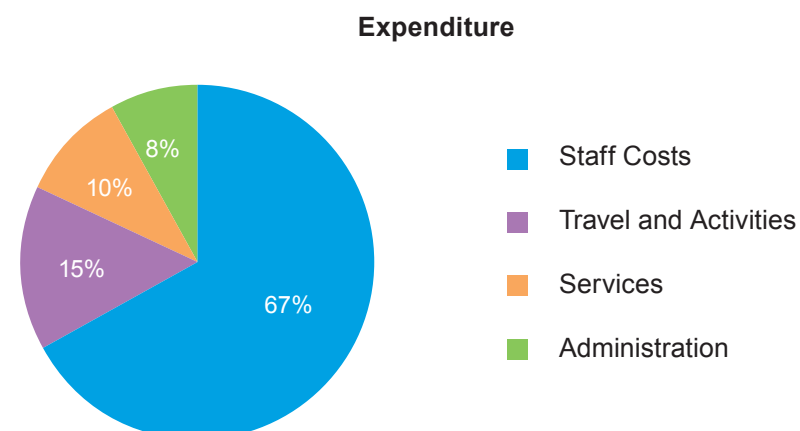
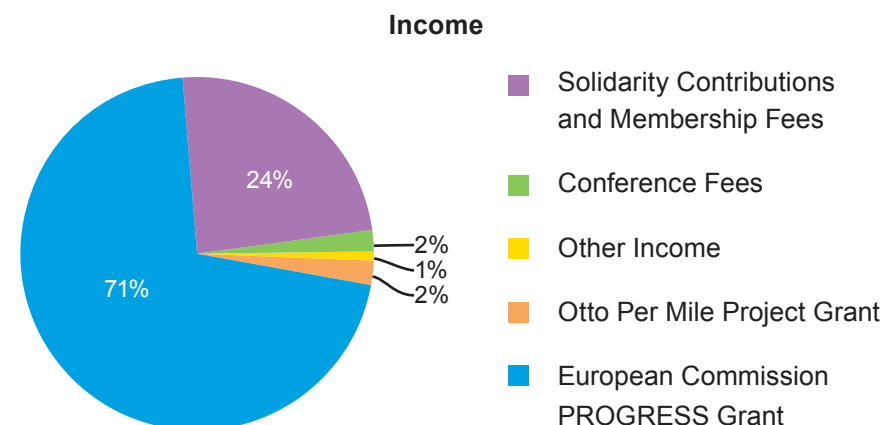




Photo credit: Evangelische Gesellschaft Stuttgart, Germany

Strengthening social policies

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Engagement in the Fund for European Aid to the most deprived

The EU's new food aid programme has been launched in 2014. This programme, called "Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived" (FEAD), seeks not only to provide immediate material assistance to those in need throughout Europe through food aid, but also to foster social inclusion. Eurodiaconia has been working on the establishment of this new fund from the start. In 2015 Eurodiaconia continued to provide regular information about it to its members for them to be involved at national level, and kept informing the European

Commission with feedback from members on the implementation of the programme at local level.

In December 2015, Eurodiaconia wrote a report on the use of FEAD by Eurodiaconia members, which provided the European Commission with a picture of Eurodiaconia members' experience in implementing the 2014 Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. It highlighted the new aspects of the FEAD compared to its predecessor and the reality of

NGOs and social service providers' experience in trying to access it.

In November 2015, Eurodiaconia took part in the FEAD Stakeholder Meeting organised by the European Commission where feedback from members in applying for and implementing the fund was directly discussed with decision-makers of the European Commission in a roundtable debate.

Bringing child poverty back on the EU agenda

In 2015, our networks along with the other members of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children, has supported a European Parliament written declaration aiming at promoting child well-being across Europe. It calls on the Commission to take child well-being into account, introducing specific indicators on children at risk of poverty and urges the 28 Member States to use EU funding to implement the Commission recommendation "*Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*".

The declaration was signed by more than 400 MEPs and therefore adopted and forwarded to the European Commission and Council of the European Union, thereby bringing child poverty back on the agenda.

In the last quarter of 2015, Eurodiaconia produced a Concept note on child well-being from a diaconal perspective. The note looks at the work of Eurodiaconia and its members on the topic of child wellbeing, examining the

added value of the diaconal approach in the fight against child poverty and discussing potential future cooperation on child well-being in a EU context.

Facilitating NGO's contributions to the European Semester and EU2020

In 2015, Eurodiaconia has kept monitoring and engaging in the political framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and the European Semester, striving to bring social policies as a cornerstone of the EU political agenda. In order to do so, Eurodiaconia has developed various tools to support members in getting engaged in the European Semester, facilitating their contribution to the process.

In November 2015, Eurodiaconia organised a

training for members on Europe 2020 and the European Semester in the Czech Republic to provide targeted relevant information and assist members in engaging at a national level. Eurodiaconia also launched an online Social policy processes training module, to help members to get a better general understanding of the role of the EU in social policies and how to impact it. Eurodiaconia has kept regularly informing members of the policies developments linked to the European semester

by providing throughout the year information on the European Commission country profiles, Country Specific Recommendations and the Annual Growth Survey. Last but not least, Eurodiaconia has collected members' experience of the 2015 European Semester and presented it through a report to the European Commission and European Parliament with key messages and recommendations for improvement.

Working together on over indebtedness and financial inclusion

On 14-15 September 2015, the marginalisation and exclusion network met in London, bringing together 19 participants to discuss over indebtedness and how Eurodiaconia members can develop their work on debt counselling including debt restructuring and credit unions. The meeting provided a forum for members to share experiences and good practice, identify the challenges they face, as well as discuss potential solutions and opportunities

for development, looking at both the national situation and the European Union framework for action. The meeting included a study visit to the Community Money advice project. The main conclusions were the common problem of lack of resources, including funding and qualified volunteers. Members highlighted the need for a holistic approach to help people in debt, looking at all areas related to over-indebtedness, such as legal, economic, social and

health effects. They finally agreed on a call for stronger regulation of creditor companies with regard to the fees and interest rates they can charge, the selling of bills and the relationship to political actors. These conclusions were forwarded after the meeting to the European Commission together with an updated policy position on household over-indebtedness in the European Union.



Gathering cross party support to address poverty

On 23 September 2015, Eurodiaconia held its 2nd Annual Cross-Party meeting in the European Parliament, bringing together MEPs from all major political groups of the European Parliament to discuss what the parliament can do to fight poverty. The event was attended by Eurodiaconia's member and partner organisations, as well as other MEPs and external visitors. MEPs from different political groups underlined their willingness to work together in the European Parliament for social policies and to encourage member states to acknowledge the importance of social investment. They also underlined the importance of the refugees and migrant situation that Europe is facing. The conclusion pointed to the need for a structural change bringing social policies back as a European priority.

Photo credit: Hungarian Reformed Church, Hungary

Assisting migrants and refugees

Many of the people landing in Europe after arduous and dangerous sea crossings have no possessions other than the clothes they are wearing. Most of our members provided them with food, water, milk, winter clothing, hygiene supplies and nappies (diapers), along with simple children's toys.

On 30 October 2015, Eurodiaconia co-signed a call on European Council to consider children in migration policies. Along with other 58 organisations working in the fields of human rights, child rights, health and social inclusion, including UNICEF, OHCHR and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, Eurodiaconia highlighted the necessity of implementing a rights-based approach to protect all migrant children, regardless of whether they are seeking asylum, are documented, undocumented, trafficked, accompanied or unaccompanied.

In the last quarter of 2015, Eurodiaconia was invited to speak at a strategic dialogue meeting organised by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission to discuss the impact of migration and the refugee crisis on social protection systems. Our Secretary General consulted our members across Europe and compiled their experiences and opinions in the presentation she gave.

On 30 June 2015, our organisations sent a response to the consultation on the Labour Mobility Package launched by DG EMPL of the European Commission. Eurodiaconia's response to this consultation reports some concrete barriers faced by users supported by Eurodiaconia members, and focuses on recommendations (applicable to the revision of the social security coordination Regulations) to prevent destitution of vulnerable EU mobile citizens.

In January 2015, Eurodiaconia and CCME (Churches Commission of Migrants in Europe) co-hosted a training seminar on the concept of freedom of movement for European citizens. Through the training, several Eurodiaconia members as well as CCME members had the opportunity to listen to and learn from experts from the European Commission, key European migration law professors and immigration lawyers specialising in EU mobile citizens. These experts explained key concepts within EU law concerning the free movement of persons and the free movement of labour that can help members when working with intra-EU mobile citizens back in their home countries.

Fostering Roma integration

Roma inclusion continued to be one of the major pillars that underpinned our work in 2015. Eurodiaconia members renewed their commitment to foster Roma people's social inclusion through material aid, education, language courses, vocational training, health services and advocacy work towards local and national public authorities. In 2015, various members pointed out a rise in hostility, exclusion and violence against Roma and Sinti in the context of the economic crisis.

2015 has been characterized by two major developments: updating our first survey of members' projects in the field of Roma inclusion, and producing guidelines for diaconal (and other) organisations who are developing or re-evaluating existing projects with Roma communities.

In December 2015, Eurodiaconia published the updated "[Diaconal work with Roma among Eurodiaconia members](#)". The purpose of the report is to provide a better overview of the types of activities our members are involved

in, and to enable our members to exchange project details and contact information across national borders. The mapping document represents a useful tool for those looking for ideas to develop new projects, for those looking for projects partners, or generally those interested in learning more about the broad range of projects and services offered by diaconal actors across Europe.

In 2015, Eurodiaconia also released guidelines for diaconal organisations on Roma participation. The document is intended to be a flexible resource, proposing some starting points for reflection on how to ensure participation and empowerment of Roma communities and individuals. This document is based on discussions held by Eurodiaconia members at the 2014 Roma Network meeting in Novi Sad, Serbia. It provides guidelines, which come directly from representatives of diaconal and church-related organisations working with Roma communities.

On 19-20 October 2015, Eurodiaconia held its 7th annual Roma network meeting in Brussels. More than 20 representatives from member organisations spread out across Europe came together to exchange their experiences and to reflect on the future direction of the Network. Thematically, discussions focused on subjects such as the impact of the refugee crisis on the inclusion process, the added value of incorporating a 'spiritual dimension' into Roma inclusion, and ways to meet the specific needs of Roma migrants who resettled in the wake of the EU's enlargement.

On 21 October 2015, Eurodiaconia organised a hearing in the European Economic and Social Committee in partnership with the European Roma Information Office. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness about the particularly vulnerable position of Roma women, who face discrimination on multiple levels and are confronted with even greater obstacles when it comes to education, employment, and political participation than their male counterparts.



Active inclusion and minimum income

In 2015, Eurodiaconia released a policy paper calling for the implementation of Adequate Minimum Income schemes across the EU and emphasising the need for a stronger coordinating role of the EU in setting minimum standards. The policy paper combines a social and rights-based perspective with economic arguments and outlines key recommendations to the EU institutions and to Member States.

Along with the policy paper, Eurodiaconia published two briefings to provide members with further information on the topic. The first briefing discusses why Eurodiaconia deems the implementation of AMI schemes necessary. It summarises four key barriers which currently impede the effectiveness of MI schemes at a national level: lack of adequacy, insufficient coverage, lack of an integrated approach and non-take-up. The second briefing explores the potential of reference budgets and summarises the outcomes of a European Commission pilot project to make reference budgets more comparable across Member States.

Photo credit: Diaconia ECCB, Czech Republic



Photo credit: Kofoeds Skole, Denmark

Supporting diaconal services

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Promoting quality integrated care system

The protection of ageing populations in the EU constitutes a major challenge which is only expected to grow in the light of increasing dependency ratios. This context is compounded by tighter public budgets in a majority of EU countries.

Eurodiaconia has continued promoting the need for quality staffing in the care sector; for instance as a partner of the European project ForQuality!

In April 2015, Eurodiaconia produced a brochure with good practice from our members on supporting persons with dementia and their families. The document presents comprehensive information from our members on a cross-section of services and initiatives relating to persons with dementia.

We have also strengthened our advocacy efforts and Eurodiaconia is now leading a coalition of Brussels-based NGOs working on long-term care and with specific emphasis on integrated care. Our stress on integrated care follows upon our Recommendations on Integrated Care, published early in the year.

On 14-15 October 2015, The Healthy Ageing and Long-term Care Network met to discuss these issues and the way ahead for Eurodiaconia's work on the topic. Over fifteen participants gathered in Prague, hosted by the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren and Slezská Diakonie, to share challenges faced in care practice, in relation to both national and EU policy contexts.

*Photo credit: Evangelisches Diakoniewerk
Gallneukirchen, Austria*

Funding of social services

The profound changes operated in the EU during the last years have transformed dramatically the scenario in which social services are run, giving them a yet more central role in helping vulnerable persons but also facing challenges of financing and staffing.

In December 2015, Eurodiaconia published an updated version of the “*Quality principles for diaconal social services: a renewed commitment and call for action*”. This document aims to constitute a reflection on the principles that should guide the provision of quality social services. Once again, only when the dimension of quality is fully integrated into the organization, financing and provision of social services, the positive impact of these services on people can be released.

A service is a tool to enable the user to make use of those resources, and empowering the individual to fulfil their potential. Service quality also improves as a better understanding of the users' wishes, capabilities and needs is gained and services are more tailor-made to the individual. Participation can thus be seen as a pre-condition of empowerment and, following this, higher quality outcomes. For this reason, in 2015 Eurodiaconia also produced a new Toolkit for User Participation and Empowerment.

Inclusive labour markets

Eurodiaconia members have a long experience in the provision of work integration and social inclusion services for unemployed people. Therefore, we have been following closely the last EU initiatives regarding the integration of the Long-term Unemployed, and produced a response to the European Commission's proposal for a council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

On 18-19 May 2015, Eurodiaconia held a seminar on Work Integration Social Enterprises in Brussels with the participation of some members working in the field. The event highlighted the important role played by WISE to incorporate socially excluded people, as well as people with mental or physical disabilities, into society, through adapted work.

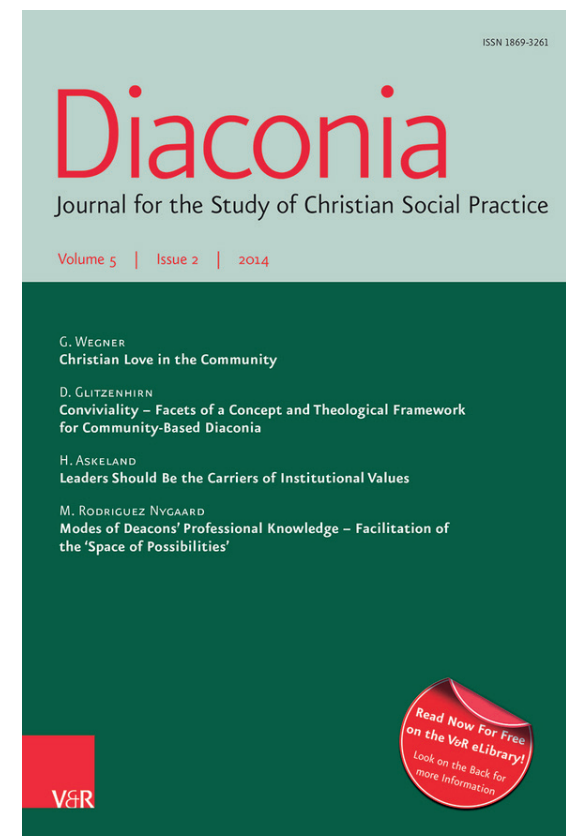
Stimulating research and innovation for diaconia

Eurodiaconia believes research and development play a critical role in the innovation process of the diaconal field. In 2015, research was a fundamental part of our annual activity by providing an important basis for the development of new solutions and prospective to analyse our complex societies.

On 9-10 November 2015, Eurodiaconia held an exploratory meeting on the challenges of diaconia in urban areas. The meeting was hosted by Diakonie Düsseldorf and took place in Düsseldorf, Germany. More than 15 members from different European countries attended the meeting to present their work in urban settings and the difficulties they are facing, to exchange best practices and to discuss potential future cooperation in this field. A majority of them stressed the usefulness of exchanging knowledge on the situation in different European countries, especially on the systems and strategies in handling social services in urban areas.

On 17-18 March 2015, we organised for the first time a Working Group Meeting on Research and Practice in Diaconia in cooperation with the Institute for the Study of Christian Social Service Heidelberg (DWI), City Mission Oslo, Norway School of Theology and DIAK in Finland. The meeting brought together our members and researchers with the aim to promote an equal dialogue between research and practice. One of the themes of this event was research and practice in diaconia as tripartite collaboration. Participants discussed the relation between researchers, practitioners, and service users. Also, they agreed to establish the working group in the framework of the International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconia and Christian Social Practice (ReDi). A report of the meeting was published on the Eurodiaconia website.

In addition, Eurodiaconia continued to be member of the managing and the editorial board of Diaconia: Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice, and contributed to the publication with scientific articles and reports.



2015 Eurodiaconia Award

In the last quarter of 2015, Eurodiaconia launched its Annual Award. That focused on integrated projects and services that promote social inclusion by offering holistic support to vulnerable individuals. In the wake of the financial crisis, the number of persons experiencing poverty and social exclusion continues to rise across Europe. Many individuals and families are depending on social services, ranging from elementary food programmes and debt aid to psychological counselling and employment training, to break the cycle of disadvantage which shapes their daily lives. The two finalists of the 2015 edition of the Award were Kofoeds Skole (Denmark) and Stockholms Stadsmission (Sweden).

The awarding ceremony takes place each year in the European Parliament and it is for Eurodiaconia not only a way to publicly recognise its members' achievements, but also a significant moment to honor all the staff and volunteers who show outstanding commitment with a spirit of sacrifice and Christian service. People—without whom diaconal organisations in our countries would be unable to run.

The Eurodiaconia Award was established in 2007 to recognise the best practices in diaconal social work. The Award aims to shed light on the innovative and the enterprising role of the diaconal organisations as well as encouraging good practice sharing across Europe, and building connections among all the stakeholders.



2015 Eurodiaconia Award Ceremony in the European Parliament, Brussels



Visits to and from members

In 2015, Eurodiaconia organised 12 study visits, three of which in Brussels and the rest of them taking place in other EU countries and in Brazil.

From 16-20 November 2015, our Secretary General participated in a study visit jointly organised by Eurodiaconia, the Evangelic Lutheran Church of Brazil and the Protestant Theological Faculty in and around Porto Alegre, Brazil. The purpose of the visit was to develop ecumenical co-operation in Europe and Brazil, and to learn how social services, social justice and diaconal identity were being addressed in the country. That was the first time Eurodiaconia worked outside of Europe and presented a significant step in the way Eurodiaconia works and sees itself in the global ecumenical community.

On 18 March 2015, a delegation of 6 deacons from the Church of Sweden came to Brussels for a three-day study visit to learn about the

between local, national and European policy and the ways Churches and social organisations can influence EU policy. A discussion on how Churches can support refugees and migrants in Europe, particularly at the parish level, was also part of the programme.

On 25-26 February 2015, a group of four diaconal representatives from our member organisation based in Kosovo (Diakonie Kosova) visited Brussels. The purpose of the visit was to discuss better ways to tackle poverty, particularly childhood poverty, in Kosovo and how to access funding for social activities. To achieve this goal, the delegation met with members of the European Commission and European Parliament to learn and negotiate EU funding opportunities for social and health policies.

On 25 and 26 February, two representatives from the Diaconal Centre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) came

over to Brussels in the context of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU. For six months (from the beginning of January until the end of June), ministers from Latvia chaired the different configurations of the Council, including the meetings of all national ministers for social affairs and employment. Our Latvian members were informed about EU funding opportunities and shared their observations and recommendations on poverty reduction and social inclusion with various Latvian Members of the European Parliament and with representatives of other social networks.

Over the year, our Policy Officers also participated to a series of study visits held by our members across Europe. The visits have taken place in Denmark, Germany, Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Photo credit: Diakonie Kosova, Kosovo

Our partners

In order to better impact the EU decision-making process in the field of social and health care policies, Eurodiaconia continues to engage in partnerships with other organisations.

The European Anti-Poverty Network

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) brings together national networks and European organisations fighting poverty and social exclusion. As a member, Eurodiaconia contributes to its work in both the Executive Committee and the European Strategies for Inclusion Group.



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

The Social Platform

We continued to be active in Social Platform with our Secretary General, Heather Roy, continuing as President of the organisation until April 2015.



Social Services Europe

Social Services Europe is a network of not-for-profit social and health care service providers aimed at strengthening the profile and position of social services, and to promote the role of not-for-profit social service providers throughout Europe. Social Services Europe is a key partner organisation for Eurodiaconia, particularly in ensuring that there is an enabling framework at European level for not-for-profit organisations.



The EU Semester Alliance

“EU Semester Alliance” is a broad coalition bringing together major European civil-society organisations and trade unions, representing thousands of member organisations on the ground at European, national and local levels. The aim of the alliance is to support progress towards a more social and sustainable European Semester process, and to strengthen civil society engagement at national and EU level. Eurodiaconia was a lead partner in the EU Alliance for a democratic, social and sustainable European Semester.



The EU alliance for investing in children

In 2015, Eurodiaconia was also an active partner of the EU Alliance for investing in children. The alliance brings together over 20 European networks sharing a commitment to end child poverty and to promote child well-being across Europe. Eurodiaconia was an active partner of the alliance.



European Financial Inclusion Network (EFIN)

EFIN is a coalition of European stakeholders (institutions and individuals) involved in financial inclusion. The aim of the present project is to create a network of wider scope both in terms of membership (including financial institution and associations, public institutions, government representatives, NGOs trade unions, consumer organisations,...) and in terms of objectives (promoting all measures and actions favouring financial inclusion in general).



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Photo credits: Photos taken by Eurodiaconia, its members and the European Commission.



Photo credit: Stockholm City Mission, Sweden

*If it is to encourage, then give encouragement;
if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to
lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do
it cheerfully.*

ROMANS 12:8


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