

Fighting against causes of migration: A global challenge of our century

Kolping Europe calls itself and others to responsibility

Once again, after World War II, Europe witnesses the causes of migration and expulsion. The humanitarian crisis reveals that it is indispensable to fight against the causes of migration.

In 2015, the United Nations counted 65.3 Million people (1) worldwide who sought refuge for various reasons. 86% of them sought refuge within their countries or in neighbouring countries, most of them with similar deficits in development. A quarter of all refugees stay in countries that belong to the least developed countries in the world according to the UN. About 50% of all refugees worldwide are children and minors. Only a small number of refugees reach Europe because most of them do not have adequate financial resources in order to pass such a long way. Furthermore, bad and unsafe paths as well as impermeable borders make transits impossible. According to official numbers by the UNHCR, more than 5000 people have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2016 while attempting to reach Europe (2). The actual number is expected to be much higher.

Wars and conflicts for religious, economic and political reasons are the main causes of migration. Famines and discrimination, persecution and violation of human rights, social exclusion and displacement, misery and exploitation as well as the effects of climate change cause migration, too.

In his encyclical letter LAUDATO SI (2015), Pope Francis expresses his deep concern about our “common home” – our world – and provides in this context a greater and deeper view on the causes of migration and displacement. Responsible interaction amongst each other and with the environment is placed in the centre of his writing. He puts the human being as the image of God in the centre of environmentally-oriented actions and postulates a holistic perspective on ecology based on environmental, economic and social matters.

His concern about the common home is justified, among others, by the following negative developments:

- Advanced technology, detached from ethical concerns, which is used in order to dominate. Especially globally operating companies often use this technology in order to force people into dependency

- An economy focused on growth and a system of commercial relations and ownership that politics is submitted to
- A globalization of indifference combined with unrestrained consumption and a lifestyle combined with impoverishment and at the cost of the environment
- Wastefulness and a change of the environment – caused by a consumption-oriented and capitalist logic of exploitation
- An unrestricted exploitation of nature, representing a perversion of God’s mission as this kind of exploitation only serves a capitalist logic of exploitation

Live responsibly – act in solidarity

The principles of the Catholic social teaching – personality, subsidiarity and solidarity – provide guidance to a social system that corresponds to the Christian concept of man. These principles emphasise who has to assume responsibility at what time. On the basis of its principles, Kolping Europe calls itself and others to responsibility. It therefore calls on itself and others for action to fight against causes of migration.

Everyone’s responsibility

LAUDATO SI: *“14. [...] All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.”*

Everyone must call his consumer behaviour into question. Everyone can promote and support projects and activities which improve living conditions of endangered people in their home countries. Everyone can help the oppressed, the hungry und the persecuted to be heard. Everyone can publicly stand up for their interests.

Kolping’s responsibility

LAUDATO SI: *“38. [...] We cannot fail to praise the commitment of international agencies and civil society organizations which draw public attention to these issues and offer critical cooperation, employing legitimate means of pressure, to ensure that each government carries out its proper and inalienable responsibility to preserve its country’s environment and natural resources, without capitulating to spurious local or international interests.”*

As a worldwide committed Catholic social community, Kolping makes its contribution urging governments and postulating, again and again, a just global economy as well as a foreign policy that is exclusively devoted to humanitarian principles and committed to human rights.

Thanks to its commitment to matters of development policy and in the context of international cooperation and solidarity, the sections of Kolping Europe are promoted and supported worldwide while working for a just and human society. Only those who are aware of their rights as members of society, only those who are politically committed to themselves and others, only those who play an active part in committees and assume responsibility,

only those are less often victims to oppression and exploitation. As convinced Christians, these people help form a fair society and combat corruption and violation of human rights.

Responsibility of the Church

LAUDATO SI: *"188. [...] Here I would state once more that the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics. But I am concerned to encourage an honest and open debate so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good."*

The Church must serve as an example into society. Pope Francis emphasises, over and over, that migration flows must be seen as a structural reality of our times. Accordingly, it is imperative to find programs that fight against causes of migration and do not neglect changes in their home countries at the same time. This can be achieved, for example, by the direct development cooperation of the Church in the countries concerned.

The Church itself has to be committed to the implementation of just and democratic structures. Furthermore, it must take a stand for human rights and encourage Christians to act in the political spheres.

Responsibility of the economy

LAUDATO SI: *"109. The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economic and political life. The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings. Finance overwhelms the real economy. The lessons of the global financial crisis have not been assimilated, and we are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration."*

The economy must free itself from the dogma of a capitalist logic of exploitation and it must recognise and assume responsibility for the impacts of a thinking strictly focusing on permanent growth, the craving for more. It has to put the essential interests of man in the centre again. This starts by not regarding the treasures of nature as a free factor in the process of production. Endless resources ought to be used responsibly. Those are wrong who believe that the issues of mankind can be solved by the principle of a craving for more.

The poison that has led to the global financial crisis, was the poison of greed and craving for more. This poison has obviously become the benchmark of action in the real economy. Let's get rid of the notion that we are only most successful when we live at the expense of others!

Responsibility of the states

LAUDATO SI: *51. [...] "Inequity affects not only individuals but entire countries; it compels us to consider an ethics of international relations."*

It is the duty of every state to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consequently and immediately. Bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements must not be

exclusively oriented towards the primacy of a capitalist logic of exploitation. Instead, they have to respect human rights and the common good. Environmental, economic and trade policy as well as development policy have the task to secure fair trade, sanction unfair trade and save resources.

National development projects must exclusively meet the needs of the population in the recipient states. Development aid granted to governments must be in accordance with democratic and humanitarian criteria. Support for totalitarian and corrupt regimes must be consequently excluded.

People in developing and emerging countries must have the chance to participate in international value chains in order to prevent them from one-sided dependency on the export of raw materials. The promotion of direct investments in these regions must always suffice the requirements of humane working conditions and real and broad effects for development. It must help build a civil society.

Responsibility of the European Union

LAUDATO SI: 178. [...] *“True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good.”*

The European Union has a special responsibility when it comes to reaction to and prevention of global causes of migration. As a union of democratic states with a common basis of values, its member states have a great interest in preventing causes of migration commonly. As the world's largest economy, the European Union as a whole can act more powerful than each member state on its own.

It should be the goal of a common foreign and security policy to prevent causes of migration in Europe's neighbouring regions, Africa and the Middle East. A common development policy is required. In this context, the principle of subsidiarity must be respected. The current refugee crisis at Europe's borders has made clear, that a sustainable and wise settlement of regional conflicts can only succeed when the European Union assumes responsibility as a strong international actor. The European Union must regard itself as a peaceful power and act accordingly.

This also requires an in-depth analysis of the extent to which nationally organized development projects can be coordinated at the European level and brought together in the long-term whenever a higher degree of effectiveness is expected. An international foreign policy can only be based on a peaceful settlement of conflicts. Any act of war must be sanctioned by the international community. Arms deals with crisis-ridden areas must be stopped.

If you show courage, you spread courage!

Causes of migration can only be prevented by long-term strategies. It is essential to recognise that mankind is responsible for its actions. Causes of migration are not made by God. However, they are an outcome of human behaviour and action. Hence, everyone carries responsibility for the state of the world.

We call ourselves and others to responsibility and encourage to live and act responsibly and to show courage when it comes to conquer causes of migration.

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- (1) UNHCR 2016: Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015, S.2.
- (2) <http://www.unhcr.de/archiv/nachrichten/artikel/a851bc875878543a9caec36c59de8565/5000-menschen-ertranken-dieses-jahr-im-mittelmeer-1.html>