



**European Forum** of National Laity Committees  
**Forum Européen** des Comités Nationaux des Laïcs  
**Europäisches Forum** der Nationalen Laienkomitees

## **Human Rights and Catholic Social Teaching**

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the European Laity Forum made up of 18 countries met in Lisbon/Portugal on the topic of Human Rights, Christian values and Catholic Social Teaching

Through inspiring presentations on foodbanks, refugees, media and peace we were confirmed that a way of life and activities, following the Gospels and Christian Social Teaching also contributes to the realisation of Human Rights. That is what Christians can bring, and should bring to the public sphere.

We as individuals and organisations recognise that it is our responsibility to stand for Human Rights in all situations and for all human beings.

We stand for Religious freedom in our own countries and world wide. All religions have the potential for peace and should not be part of the problem but part of the solution. It should not be confined to the private sphere but Christians must bring their views and beliefs to the public square. Dialogue is essential in order to assist one another in the quest for the truth in the culture of mutual respect.

We, as individuals and christian organisations, must respond to the crisis of hospitality and lack of solidarity for all those in need and excluded from society. This includes refugees and those on the periphery of society.

We must raise the awareness in our society and criticize the subtle and open persecution of christians in many countries in the world and call upon our governments to act and to guarantee the dignity of all human beings.

Freedom of expression also means we must make space for everyone to say what they have to say. That also applies to access to the media and includes mutual respect in dialogue.

Concern with Human Rights does not only demand dialogue with other denominations and religions but we also have to learn from the world because God is already in the world.

In this dialogue we have to be clear on what we stand for and risk being different.

Lay people work “as human beings of the church in the middle of the world and as human beings of the world within the church”. (Puebla nr. 786)

*Statement of the participants of the Study Assembly of the European Forum of National Laity Committees, 15-17 of June 2018, in Lisboa/Portugal.*