

*Statement of Justice and Peace Europe on the occasion of Human Rights Day (10 December):*

## **Regaining trust and countering fear**

### **Human Rights as a tool against transgression and populism**

We live in a world full of unrests in many areas, be it politics, the economy, society or culture. More and more people feel insecure and are convinced that their concerns are not being taken seriously. Accepting transgressions of some public actors risks opening the door to intolerance or even hate crimes.

Unrests produce fears. We must take these fears seriously and listen carefully to those who express them. Fears strengthen the inclination towards populism, racism and intolerance. It is important to analyse and understand the reasons for those fears.

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, Justice and Peace Europe wishes to draw attention to the fact that we have an important set of tools to counter these unrests and fears: namely, Human Rights.

Instead of questioning Human Rights, we should advocate with the utmost vigour that the commitment to Human Rights be reflected in all our actions at both the private and public level and be present in all spheres of society. Human Rights should become an integral part of education, from an early age on to university and vocational training. We should strive for a genuine Human Rights culture where there is a widespread commitment in society to come to the defence of those whose rights are violated.

In the context of these restless times, we especially want to raise awareness of the Human Rights which we outline below:

We advocate the worldwide abolition of the death penalty; the right to liberty and security; the right to freedom of expression and religion; the right to migration and asylum as well as protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition; respect for cultural and religious diversity; and sustainable integral development.

We commit ourselves to countering discrimination, in particular multiple discrimination, modern slavery, all forms of racism and hate speech, especially in the social media.

We pay special attention to the indivisibility of human rights, including social human rights, which are of particular importance in situations of growing social precarity and unmet social needs.

The Justice and Peace Europe network is committed to the respect and promotion of Human Rights in order to enable each person and each community to live a life in dignity. We draw our strength from our common Christian faith as well as from our cooperation and solidarity with all organisations and institutions that cherish the same goals and defend the same values. Non-violent conflict transformation is our method.

Human Rights are not given and guaranteed for all time; they have to be fought for every day. This is our duty. The current climate of fear demands that we carry our commitments further.

Paris, 4-5 December 2016

The Executive Committee of Justice and Peace Europe

The Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions (Justice and Peace Europe) is a European network of 31 national Justice and Peace Commissions, working for the promotion of justice, peace, respect for human dignity and the care of creation. It contributes to raising awareness of the Catholic social doctrine in the European societies and the European institutions.

The Executive Committee of Justice and Peace Europe is composed of 9 elected members and its President is Mgr. Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg.

Contact: [secretary@jupax-europa.org](mailto:secretary@jupax-europa.org)

<http://www.juspax-eu.org>