



FRANCE

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

PRE-SESSION, 4 APRIL 2023

PRESENTATION BY GENEVIEVE COLAS

STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE - CARITAS FRANCE AND ITS PARTNERS

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- **POVERTY**
- **THE CARE PROVIDED TO MIGRANTS**
- **UNACCOMPANIED MINORS**
- **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION**



Secours Catholique - Caritas France, an association fighting against poverty and discrimination, has 60,000 volunteers throughout France.

Secours Catholique is a member of the Caritas network which is present in 200 countries.

Our recommendations are based on our field expertise.

POVERTY

Our alternative

Make the fight against poverty, with the people concerned, at the heart of every public policy.

France is committed to the UN to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030.

At the time of the previous Universal Periodic Review, 4 recommendations dealt with the subject of poverty and 7 dealt with housing.

Our findings

Secours Catholique observes an impoverishment of the poorest whose living expenses are deteriorating, due to inflation, but also to the adoption of laws that plunge people into extreme poverty (on unemployment insurance or housing benefits, for example).

Government promises are not being kept.



9
million
people in a
situation of
financial
Poverty
in 2020,
i.e. 14.3% of
the
population

POVERTY



Recommendations

- Move from a short-term approach to poverty (energy allowance, food vouchers) to a structured approach comprising of social investment.
- Invest in society by guaranteeing everyone access to decent accommodation or housing.
- Make the ecological transition an opportunity to fight poverty by financing the thermal renovation of housing for low-income households, by making clean mobility and the choice of healthy and sustainable food accessible to everyone.



THE CARE PROVIDED TO MIGRANTS

Our alternative :
To conduct a migration policy based on reception, hospitality and solidarity, respect for the rights and dignity of people, and laws that offer protective measures for foreigners.

The political climate regarding migrant and poor people is extremely violent.

In the previous Universal Periodic Review, 38 recommendations were concerned with migrants and 21 recommendations were concerned with asylum seekers.

Our findings:

More than 20 laws over a period of 40 years in France on asylum and immigration... And the repression against foreigners is only getting tougher; administrative precariousness, restricted access to health care, difficulties in accessing French language learning. Secours Catholique notes that the status of these people is becoming increasingly fragile.



THE CARE PROVIDED TO MIGRANTS



Recommendations

- Broaden access to residence permits by issuing a multi-annual card for all regularisations. Take into account a promise of employment or proof of past work and extend the list of occupations in short supply to include professional sectors. Extend the possibilities of regularisation to reasons related to private and family situations.
- Promote unconditional access to French language training for all foreigners present in France (without introducing the mastering of the French language (with oral and written certification) in order to obtain a multi-annual residence permit).
- Maintain the principle of collegiality at the National Asylum Court (CNDA) for all asylum seekers.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Our alternative :
Take strong measures to reform the care of unaccompanied minors and respect the rights of all children on all French territory (Metropolitan France and overseas).

At the time of the previous Universal Periodic Review, among the 52 recommendations concerning children, some 15 specifically concerned unaccompanied minors.

Our findings :

For years, our associations have been testifying to the numerous violations of the rights of unaccompanied minors arriving on French territory: non-respect of the principles of presumption of minority and of the best interests of the child, illegal refoulements at the borders, compromised access to schooling, to asylum and to guardianship. A logic of constant suspicion is in place. To protect them, a change of policy is needed.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS



Recommendations

- Child protection must guarantee the principles of non-discrimination, presumption of minority and ensure the right to participation for all children, in metropolitan and overseas France.
- Whatever the pathway of unaccompanied minors, guarantee fundamental freedoms and in particular the right to education, asylum and health.
- Welcome unaccompanied minors at the borders, do not turn them back.
- Prohibit administrative detention of all minors.
- Reform the system of initial reception of unaccompanied minors to enable a shift from a logic of suspicion and control to one of danger, assessment and protection, under the authority of the children's judge. Guarantee that every child has a legal guardian as soon as they arrive in France.
- Improve the care of minors in care in dignified conditions. Assist minors in reconstituting their civil status.
- Strengthen the legal framework to secure the path of young people when they reach the age of majority, and issue them with a residence permit in their own right.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

Our alternative :

Make the prevention of and fight against and the fight against trafficking in human beings a policy in its own right, with the necessary resources.



In the previous Universal Periodic Review, 14 recommendations concerned human trafficking.

Our findings:

The lack of political leadership and human resources dedicated to the fight against human trafficking has not allowed for action that is commensurate with the challenges. The inability of the public authorities to set up a real national mechanism for identifying and guiding victims is worrying: this is a violation of the international conventions ratified by France, particularly in terms of information and protection of victims. Awareness-raising and support for victims lacks resources and training for all those in contact with potential victims is inadequate.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION



Recommendations

- Establish a National Victim Identification System and referral of victims.
- Create and implement - in consultation with institutions and civil society - a multi-year strategy for the prevention and fight against trafficking and a working plan to translate the rhetoric into action by applying the consequent legislative system.
- Strengthen the inter-ministerial dimension of the mission which is in charge of the fight against trafficking in human beings, increase its means and ensure that it also deals with all forms of trafficking in human beings (sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic slavery, forced begging, coercion to commit crimes, organ trafficking, sale of babies, forced marriages...).
- Create and support awareness-raising campaigns and promote training for professionals in contact with potential victims of exploitation and trafficking (police, justice, health, education, sports, leisure...).