Institutional Advocacy

Study of Caritas practices in strengthening relations with governments
Researched and written by Marius Wanders, owner and founder of Promoting People Consult (Rosmalen, The Netherlands).
For more information: http://www.propeopleconsult.eu

Edited by Shannon Pfohman and Antonio Fantasia of Caritas Europa’s Secretariat, along with the members of the Institution Advocacy Action Group (IA AG).

Contributions to this publication were made by (in alphabetical order):

Caritas Armenia: Tigran Petrosyan (IA AG Member)
Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sanja Horvat (IA AG Member)
Caritas France (Secours Catholique): Daniel Verger
Caritas Georgia: Anahit Mkhoyan
Caritas Germany: Dr. Thomas Becker
Caritas Ireland (Social Justice Ireland): Fr Seán Healy
Caritas Italy: Laura Stopponi (IA AG Member and chair)
Caritas Malta: André Bonello (IA AG Member)
Caritas Serbia: Darko Tot
Caritas Slovakia: Erich Hulman
Caritas Sweden: Fr Henrik Alberius and George Joseph
Caritas Ukraine: Rostyslav Kis (IA AG Member)

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What is Institutional Advocacy? What is different from the normal advocacy we are used to in Caritas? What? Why? How? So many questions...

Let us start from the beginning: It was back in September 2015 that more than 40 Caritas leaders, from all around Europe, gathered at Caritas Europa’s Strategic Discussion Forum. Some Caritas directors, especially from Eastern European Caritas expressed the following rationale:

until recently we received our main financial support from Caritas organisations and other private donors from Western Europe, but in recent years these funds have clearly been decreasing. We know that we have to engage more with our governments so that they assume an increasing responsibility for financing the social services we are offering. We have started engaging with national governments, but for various reasons it is proving really difficult. Can’t we share experiences and information, learning from each other, in order to shape with more success those relationships with our governments?

This challenge for the sustainability of the Caritas organisations was integrated in the Strategic Framework 2020. The challenge is strongly linked with the concrete environment in which Caritas organisations are manoeuvring. In a context where governments are not stable and the welfare systems are still developing,
and where non-governmental and faith based actors are not consulted, the ability of Caritas to partner with their national governments is extremely challenging. But for the sake of the poor whom Caritas is serving, this relationship has to be shaped and developed with the aim of strengthening Caritas and its action.

Caritas Germany uses, for this type of relationship with the national, regional and local Governments, the expression “verbandliche Lobbyarbeit”, i.e. the advocacy that strengthens the institution, in other words, “Institutional Advocacy”. That’s how we are coining this challenge.

Caritas organisations want to cooperate strategically with their governments on the political, legislative and budgetary processes that can have an impact on the sustainability of the organisation.

Considering the variety of the contexts in which Caritas Europa Member Organisations work, and the richness of their experiences throughout Europe, we have started (as we usually do) by collecting data on successful experiences. The Institutional Advocacy Action Group, with the external support of my predecessor, Marius Wanders, has developed a roadmap to share experiences and to stimulate and encourage discussion within and among Caritas organisations. It consciously does not offer a top-down definition, nor a one-stop-shop model for all organisations.

A big thank you to all who contributed to this publication! We hope it is just one step further for much-needed Institutional Advocacy. In order to have stronger and sustainable Caritas organisations. In order to better serve the poor.

Jorge Nuño Mayer
Secretary General
1. About this study

1.1. Purpose

In line with the strategic goal of Caritas Europa that national governments in European countries establish strong partnerships with national Caritas member organisations, this study aims to contribute towards identifying the necessary criteria, methods and steps for creating an enabling environment by which this can happen. With the aim of each Caritas organisation in Europe to be recognised by their national governments as a reliable interlocutor, three dimensions of influence and engagement have been identified, namely the legislative, financial, and political contexts.

Institutional Advocacy (IA) is a topic recently introduced at European level within the Caritas network. The present study is meant for the network to better understand this concept and to assess the steps by which to achieve the above goal, based on analysis of experiences shared by Caritas Europa member organisations.

This study, firstly, explores the meaning and definition of “Institutional Advocacy”, as also seen through the lens of different social welfare systems in Europe. It then presents and analyses existing examples of good practices of Institutional Advocacy in a number of countries, grouped according to one of the three dimensions: the legislative dimension, the financial dimension or the political and policy dimension. These examples can serve to inspire, to build confidence and to teach, as well as to be (adapted and) replicated in other countries, depending on the context.

The main goal of this study is to facilitate the sharing of experiences and information, to stimulate and encourage discussion among CE MOs, rather than to give a top-down definition or to suggest one unique model for all the organisations to adhere to. The study builds on the Institutional Advocacy Forum, which took place on 16-17 January 2017 in Bratislava, Slovakia. It also forms part of the Institutional Advocacy “Roadmap”, which foresees, inter alia, a series of related study visits and tools, by 2020, to support Caritas Europa member organisations at being better recognised by their national governments.
1.2. Scope of the present study

This study presents input and examples of inspiring Caritas practices and models in eleven countries. These have been selected to ensure as wide a diversity of coverage as possible in terms of prevailing social welfare systems, historic and current political developments, and the history and capacity of Caritas in the selected countries. The countries selected are: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden and the Ukraine.
The ultimate goal of Caritas is to eradicate poverty and to fight social exclusion. In order to achieve this goal, Caritas organisations must be healthy, sustainable and well-functioning. This implies a number of preconditions, however.

For one, this implies that the organisation has a recognised legal status that conforms with national law and is able to carry out its mission. Caritas Europa, for instance, conforms with Belgian law, and is recognised as an AISBL. Belgium recognises two forms of associations with a non-profit purpose: a non-profit association (ASBL) and an international non-profit association (AISBL). Because the work of Caritas Europa aims to be useful beyond the Belgian territory, this means practically, according to Belgian law, that Caritas Europa has an international character, and thus is an AISBL. This legal status has implications on the setting up of the content of its Articles of Association, the number of founding members, the functioning of the bodies of the AISBL, the make-up of its Board members, the membership rights and obligations, among others. In short, the legal status of a Caritas organisation influences greatly its tax status, its eligibility to apply for public funding, to request donations, to carry out political advocacy, and so on.

Other preconditions for a healthy, sustainable and well-functioning organisation include having sufficient staff members, with highly professional skills and also possibilities for further training. This requires, of course, having the necessary funding.
to pay the salaries not only of the professional staff members but also for the activities the organisation intends to carry out. These activities should be in line with a clear strategy for the organisation’s way forward, i.e. consistent with the mission and policy objective of eradicating poverty and fighting social exclusion and inequality.

Some Caritas organisations have indicated a general difficulty of ensuring the sustainability of their organisations due, for instance, to limited access to State funding, limited understanding of the legal possibilities, and/or limited opportunities to engage with national governments. Often these challenges are not the fault of the Caritas organisation, but are rather of a structural nature, meaning that the environment in which they are manoeuvring is not always conducive to success. For example, many organisations have identified the sense of a “shrinking civil society space”. In a context where governments limit public funding or fail to really consult non-governmental actors, the ability of Caritas to partner with their national governments, to propose solutions to today’s social challenges, and to advocate for effective structural changes have become more difficult. As such, many Caritas organisations are not “enabled” to establish strong partnerships with their national governments.

Considering this challenge, Caritas Europa has started to work on the concept of “Institutional Advocacy” with the aim of coining a term to define the above context. In so doing, the intention is to help its member organisations address these difficulties by, first, becoming conscious of this challenge; second, finding a common way of describing this challenge across the network and, hence, coming up with actions steps by which to address this collectively.

With this intention, the aim is ultimately for each Caritas organisation to be empowered to strengthen their relationship with the relevant state authorities and to be recognised as reliable interlocutors and important actors in the national welfare system. The recognition of Caritas by a range of stakeholders, including most notably the national governments, ultimately would enable Caritas to play a stronger and more decisive role towards ensuring quality, accessible and affordable social service provision and implementation of social policies.

When perceived by government actors as a pivotal interlocutor, Caritas organisations would be better placed to influence the authorities’ legislative, financial and/or policy decision-making processes that have a direct impact not only on the situation of the very people Caritas aims to serve, but also on the sustainability of the Caritas organisation itself.

Against this backdrop, Caritas Europa therefore relies on the following revised working definition of Institutional Advocacy, knowing that this may not be a final definition. Rather, the intention is to have a basis on which the network can continue to reflect and to define the steps toward creating a more enabling environment for Caritas organisations to become valued interlocutors and partners with their national governments.

“Institutional Advocacy is the effort of Caritas to establish a structured relationship with government in order to strengthen the organisation’s own sustainability.”

Caritas can establish such relationships by:

• being involved with governments as reliable interlocutors in dialogue concerning legislative, financial and political contexts
• being recognised by governments as reliable social service providers, and/or
• being recognised as competent advocates of the poor, able to propose solutions to address the injustices and disempowerment of the very people Caritas organisations serve

The first bullet point speaks clearly to the issue of Institutional Advocacy, while the last two bullet points encompass also the mission of the Caritas organisation. For the purposes of this study and the future roadmap, the first bullet point should be the basis.
2.1. The three dimensions of Institutional Advocacy

Caritas Europa has identified three distinctive dimensions relevant for Institutional Advocacy, namely the legislative, financial and political dimensions.

The legislative dimension:
With the legislative dimension, Caritas Europa refers to the legislative conditions that enable Caritas to work and prosper as a non-profit, faith-based organisation. The following questions should support reflection among the organisations to assess how enabling the environment may be for them to manoeuvre within:

• What legal status does Caritas have in the country?

• Is there legislation in the country that recognises the work of NGOs, faith based organisations, etc.?

• Is there a culture/climate in the country that favours structured civil dialogue between government and NGOs? And how does Caritas fit into such structured civil dialogue?

• Is delivery of certain social services delegated or mandated by the government to civil society? And in the affirmative case, are such civil society service providers able to also influence policy and decision-making processes related to the services they deliver with a government mandate?
The financial dimension:
With the financial dimension, Caritas Europa is referring to the financial conditions that enable a Caritas organisation to receive public funding or financing from governments for the specific social services provided. Questions for reflection include:

- Are there fiscal incentives and/or financial conditions that could favour NGOs or faith based organisations? For instance:
  - Are certain percentages of taxes reserved for NGOs?
  - Do NGOs enjoy a VAT-exempt regime?
  - Are there fiscal incentives for private donors who donate to NGOs?
- Are there direct state-NGO partnership agreements to deliver state-financed social services?
- Are there so-called ‘social clauses’ in public procurement procedures?
- Do NGOs receiving state funds (for instance, for providing social services) have difficulty expressing an independent voice in advocating for policy changes?

The political dimension:
With the political dimension, Caritas Europa is referring to the conditions that enable a Caritas organisation to engage with the government on policy processes and successfully achieve structural change. Questions for reflection include:

- Does Caritas systematically collect data and information from its work at the grass-roots level? Is this data analysed scientifically and used as a tool and input for advocacy, i.e. for achieving structural change?
- Is Caritas invited to participate in formally established State consultative bodies relating to policies/legislation that impact the very people Caritas serves?
- Is Caritas involved in occasional, informal and ad hoc consultations by the government relating to policies/legislation that impact the very people Caritas serves?
- Is Caritas able to pressure the government to include the former’s recommendations and policy proposals relating to national policy development and its implementation that also impacts the very people Caritas serves?
- Does Caritas work in strategic partnership or alliances (coalitions) with local, national or international NGOs to improve the situation of the very people Caritas serves?
2.2. Distinction between Advocacy and Institutional Advocacy

The notion of advocacy is known across the network and is understood to be when Caritas advocates for people in need, i.e. advocating to bring about structural and behavioural changes to improve the situation of the very people Caritas serves. Institutional Advocacy, in contrast, is when Caritas advocates for the organisation itself. The main difference is relative to the intended purpose or recipient of the advocacy effort.

With Institutional Advocacy, Caritas seeks to influence governments to create an enabling environment, which contributes directly or indirectly to improved sustainability of the Caritas organisation itself.

With advocacy, Caritas seeks to tackle the root causes of a problem, such as poverty, and to influence policies, practices and behaviours that contribute to achieving structural changes to improve the situation of the people in need. Such advocacy has always been important for Caritas in Europe in its effort to tackle the root causes of disempowerment, disadvantage, and injustice. Tackling poverty, for instance, is one concern that unites the Caritas network. Caritas organisations perceive themselves to be the “heart which sees”, and acts and advocates both with people in poverty as well as on their behalf, building on the strength of the network to speak with policy makers at national and EU levels.

The following example aims to elucidate the distinction between Institutional Advocacy and advocacy in general:

- Advocacy for the people: Caritas advocates to government so that lonely, poor and elderly people have the enforceable right to receive adequate and affordable home care services financed by the State.

- Institutional Advocacy: Caritas seeks to ensure that their own home care services are adequately financed by the State.
Clearly interlinked, scenarios can be imagined where only one of the targets is achieved or even where both targets may even conflict with each other. (More on this is described in Chapter 8 under the “advocacy paradox”). Either way, it is vital for the Caritas organisation to have a clear strategy defining what it wants and what the focus needs to be. An example from the European level may provide additional clarity between these two types of advocacy.

- Social Services Europe® (SSE) aims to strengthen the profile and position of social services and to promote the role of not-for-profit social service providers in Europe. Composed of different European networks (including Caritas Europa), SSE seeks to ensure that the specificity of not-for-profit social and healthcare service providers working in the SSE organisations be recognised by both European and national governments, and that economic, social and legal conditions exist to guarantee quality, affordable and accessible social and healthcare services. This is an example of Institutional Advocacy.

- Within the Caritas Network, the Caritas Europa Secretariat (CE-S) has been tasked with being the main interlocutor with the EU/CoE (Council of Europe) institutions for the network on migration, asylum, social and development policies and humanitarian aid. To provide evidence of the realities on the ground in the different countries within Europe, the CE-S is dependent on the Caritas member organisations to provide their evidence-based data in accordance with the methodology: “See/Listen, Judge/Analyse, Act/Accompany”. This methodology is described in the social teaching of the Catholic Church and is vital for steering the advocacy strategies of the Caritas network. Based on these realities, the CE-S is able to engage with different EU CoE institution stakeholders to advocate that European policies promote sustainable economic, social and human integral development of the very people Caritas member organisations serve. With a focus on putting people at the centre of all EU/CoE policies, this is an example of advocacy in general.

### 2.3. Interconnection of Institutional Advocacy and Advocacy

Institutional Advocacy and advocacy in general, though different, are nonetheless interconnected. In order to influence policies and laws that contribute to structural changes, Caritas has to be recognised as a reliable interlocutor by national governments. Caritas’ efforts to be involved and listened to in structured dialogues and consultations regarding (social) policy reforms and their implementation reflects the political dimension of Institutional Advocacy (see paragraph 3.1. above regarding the three dimensions of Institutional Advocacy).

Carrying out effective advocacy actions for people in need might also have an indirect effect on the legislative and financial dimensions of Institutional Advocacy. As an example, Caritas could advocate for a new policy framework that ensures better access to services for people with disabilities. By doing so, it pushes the government to foresee, for example, an increase in the State budget for social service providers that can also have a direct impact on the funding that Caritas might receive for providing services (the financial dimension), or an opening to not-for-profit organisations in delivering specific social services previously managed only by State authorities, that can enable Caritas to start new projects and open new fields of service provision (the legislative dimension).

Vice versa, being able to influence the budgetary decision processes related to social services (the financial dimension) may have an increase in State funding for Caritas itself as a direct result, but it may also have an indirect impact on the people in need, who will have the opportunity to better access quality services as a result.
3. Social welfare systems in Europe

Realistic options for organisations in the voluntary non-profit sector to engage in structured dialogue with their national governments on policy development and implementation largely depend on the social welfare system in the country, as well as on the extent to which an ‘enabling environment’ exists that can facilitate such engagement.

A good understanding of the national social welfare context and the role played by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), faith-based organisations and social service providers is of high relevance for Caritas organisations in order to identify the necessary steps to strengthen the relationships with governments and ensure organisational sustainability.

It is difficult to agree on the meaning of the frequently used term ‘social services’ in a European context, particularly when including countries as diverse and numerous as those within the membership of the Council of Europe. At times, terms such as social services, social welfare, social protection, social assistance, social care and social work are used interchangeably as having almost the same meaning and as referring to the same services. The term ‘personalised social services’ (PSS) is used in this chapter to emphasise personalised services, designed to meet an individual user’s needs, as opposed to social services designed to benefit categories of population groups.
The five sectors involved in providing ‘personalised social services’ are:

**The informal sector:**
Social care, which is provided freely – but not necessarily willingly – by families, friends, neighbours, or colleagues. This is difficult to quantify but remains a main source of social care in all countries. In some countries, it is a formal legal requirement, e.g. family care for elderly parents in France.

**The voluntary, non-profit sector:**
The range of provision is considerable including: self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous; NGOs both large and small, using both paid and unpaid resources; volunteers working within and outside formal schemes. *Caritas organisations are part of this sector.*

**The State sector:**
This includes services provided by central, regional and local governments. PSS may be provided by separate PSS departments and/or as part of a larger department, e.g. health, social security, education.

**The for-profit sector:**
This is growing in size and importance in some countries, e.g. the UK. It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between organisations in this sector and the voluntary non-profit sector. The criterion normally used for it to be ‘for-profit’ is the use made from any annual surplus in the budget.

**The philanthropic sector:**
The philanthropic sector: This includes foundations and individuals who sponsor services, projects and research that answer essential social needs that might otherwise go unanswered. While this may not yet be a reality for Europe, this sector is growing in size, especially in the USA.
In order to better understand linkages between social policies, social service provision and social advocacy in any given country in Europe, it is important to consider the wide diversity of social welfare systems or regimes that can be identified in Europe, and how these have evolved over time. This publication distinguishes between the following types of welfare systems, models or regimes in Europe:

The classic conservative, corporatist “Bismarck” system is found in countries like Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and with some atypical variations, also France.

Typical features are the traditional role of the family, the ‘male breadwinner model’, and social security having been organised as an insurance system, covering the breadwinner and his/her whole family. The right to social transfers is based on contributions and whether or not the covered person belongs to a certain stratum or professional group.

The Bismarck system is characterised by the following three points:

- The persons covered are employees or gainfully employed;
- The financing is via contributions, graduated according to income;
- The contributions to be paid are based on wages or salaries.

Hence, the Bismarck Model’s prime objective is not income redistribution, but risk management, insureing against risks for all who contribute. Everybody who pays in must be able also to get something out of the system. Therefore, Bismarck systems are universalistic (even if ceilings are used to limit the relation between income and benefits).

Another important feature of Bismarck social security systems is that civil society not only plays a role in administering the system (by the trade unions and the employers’ associations), but also in organising care. Faith based organisations, among others, have been very active in setting up care facilities. The subsidiarity principle is especially strong in Germany and the Netherlands where services are provided mainly by NGOs; in Germany, by a relatively small number of very large and long-established NGOs, and in the Netherlands by many often church-based NGOs. In Germany, civil society holds a constitutional priority to set up and run health care and social welfare facilities. The state plays a major role in financing the NGOs involved. The family also has a strong primary responsibility.

The classic liberal “Beveridge” system is dominated by poor social security systems as well as rather small social transfers. Typical features are modest coverage and national health system insurance, together with graduated child benefits. Typical examples of countries where social welfare is organised along these principles are the United Kingdom and Ireland. It is named after William Henry Beveridge, who in 1942 presented a comprehensive report to the British
Parliament on social policy. The Beveridge report contained concrete proposals for the creation of a comprehensive social insurance system, which included the integration of social insurance forms, the creation of a general health service including workplace accident insurance, the introduction of family assistance, the maintenance of a high and stable employment rate, as well as protection against mass unemployment. These proposals were the foundation for the post-war British social insurance scheme.

The Beveridge system is marked by the following:

- It provides coverage for the entire population (though requiring legal residence status in order to be eligible);
- It is primarily financed from the State budget;
- It calls for uniform, lump-sum contributions.

In countries with a ‘Beveridge’ inspired social welfare model, the State increasingly withdraws from any traditional role of direct service provision. Instead the State enters into contracts with providers from other sectors, and targets services on ‘problem cases’, the most dependent service users, and on people with limited income. For-profit service providers play an increasingly more important role in the system, as do NGOs. Privatisation is applied to this model because of the use of for-profit organisations, e.g. in residential care for elderly people.

The classic social-democratic Scandinavian (or Nordic) regime relies on ruling principles of universalism, social rights for all, and equality. Typical examples of countries with a Scandinavian style social welfare model are Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

The Nordic model places emphasis on maximising labour force participation, promoting equality between men and women, and egalitarian and extensive benefit levels. In this model, there is a large magnitude of income redistribution and liberal use of expansionary fiscal policy. The high standard of social transfers opened the system up to not only disadvantaged classes (like the Beveridge system did), but also offered incentives to middle classes and farmers too.

This model has been based on the principle of universalism, with services for groups such as children at risk, people with disabilities, and elderly people readily available and paid for from general taxation. Local government plays a key role in the production and planning of Personalised Social Services (PSS), with limited contributions by NGOs and a minimal role for for-profit organisations. This model has been admired as having strong advantages for service users; a good range and quantity of services; sensitivity to equal opportunities; and a closer attention to users’ rights than other models. However, this Scandinavian – or more correctly, ‘Nordic’ – model has been modified in recent years because of economic and political factors. Universalism is meanwhile less readily accepted and a growing NGO service sector has become part of a policy to increase ‘welfare pluralism’.
In addition to the three main models of classic social welfare systems, two other types of social welfare systems should be considered, reflecting the contexts of Caritas organisations in Europe:

The “Mediterranean model” (also known as “The family care model”) is to a certain extent oriented on the continental Bismarck model, but benefits are less generous and not all branches of social insurance are equally developed. This, consequently, puts a larger burden on the family to ensure social well-being. The social welfare systems in countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece belong to this group.

Here, there is limited State provision of services with more emphasis on the Catholic tradition of families’ responsibility for care, together with that of often well-established NGOs, such as Caritas or the Red Cross. Wealthier people tend to use commercial services. In Italy, there has been a greater supply of State services and fewer for-profit services than in other countries in this model. There is a strong feminist critique of this model because of its reliance on women as carers, and the limited availability of child care services for mothers wishing to enter the labour market. Moreover, the rights of service users are not so well established.

Emerging mixed “Central and Eastern European Systems” are evident in a large group of countries that changed their entire political and social system drastically after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence from 1989 onwards. Thirteen of these countries have meanwhile joined the European Union with obvious connotations; some others are current candidate countries for EU accession; and some have an association agreement with the EU or are covered by the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy.
The countries in this latter grouping are very heterogeneous but what they have in common is that none have fully opted for one of the existing social welfare models. Instead, they have ended up with some kind of mix, using varied components from several of the above described welfare systems.

A number of ‘sub-groups’ can be identified, in terms of the welfare system that is in place or under development:

• **Model of the Former USSR** – this is similar to the conservative, corporatist “Bismarck” model with respect to total State spending. The greatest differences lie in the quality of life and the level of confidence in the public system. (Examples include: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine).

• **Model of Post-Communist Europe** – this depicts the quality of life as better than in the previous model and the system as being more egalitarian. This model also presents more moderate levels of economic growth and inflation than in countries associated with the previous model. (Examples include: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia).

• **Welfare State models in a process of development** – this relates to countries that are still in the process of maturing their Welfare States. The State aid programmes and quality of life indicators are lower than those in the previously mentioned groups. Their high levels of infant mortality and low life expectancies reflect the difficult social situations found in these countries. (Examples include: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia)\(^{10}\).
4. Case studies of Institutional Advocacy

4.1. Introduction to the case studies

In this chapter, at least one case study of successful Institutional Advocacy is presented, based on the experiences of Caritas member organisations.

In a network as large and diverse as Caritas Europa, with member organisations in every European country, many more examples of successful engagement with national governments can still be promoted across the network. For practical purposes, however, this study was limited to twelve case studies from eleven selected countries, indicating the diversity of European welfare models and the Caritas organisations manoeuvring therein.

To facilitate the understanding of the concept of Institutional Advocacy, the twelve case studies have been clustered into subchapters according to one of the afore-mentioned three dimensions: legislative, financial and political.
4.2. Institutional Advocacy with a legislative dimension

4.2.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Advocacy for Adult Education laws

Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina was in strategic dialogue with the government for three years relating to new laws on adult education. Thanks to this successful engagement Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina managed to secure opportunities for Caritas to develop new services in the field of adult education that are financed by the State, cantonal and local authorities under the new legislation.
Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study

During three years (2014-2016), a number of concrete activities were undertaken by Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in cooperation with Caritas Austria and with the financial assistance of the Government of the Republic of Austria. The aim of ensuring that appropriate laws on adult education were accepted throughout the country, the available education programmes for social professions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were publicly launched.

The key Institutional Advocacy result achieved in this case study was that adult education laws are now in place in all ten cantons of the Federation and in the Republika Srpska entity. They have all adopted adult education laws and legal acts that regulate this area in detail. These are legal prerequisites for implementing publicly available adult education programmes.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

To combat high unemployment in the country, Caritas had already been implementing activities and professional training, over a long period, that support long term unemployed people in finding employment, and thus reducing poverty. Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina considered adult education as one of the main tools to reduce poverty, engaging persons in poverty, enabling them to raise their own capacities, giving them the possibility for education (if possible with a State recognised diploma) and creating better employment possibilities.

Politically speaking, Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two political entities and one district. One of the entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), is further divided into ten cantons. The educational system is governed at the cantonal level. There is no relevant national legislation and no separate Ministry for Education at national level. There is only the national Ministry of Civil Affairs, which covers all civil sector actions: health, social policies, education, sports, internal affairs etc. Their role is mostly coordination. Legislation is hardly ever initiated at national level, due to the State’s fragmentation and other governmental level responsibility.

The complexity and political fragmentation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a huge obstacle for active and effective advocacy. To achieve change for a specific area, such as education, it was necessary to work with all relevant Ministries at different levels, meaning, to work with 14 Ministries to achieve some change.

An exceptionally big problem is addressing the lack of knowledge of the responsible institutional representatives (State correspondent and partners) in the respective areas. For instance, more than two years of active work was spent on helping them to understand key concepts, such as the difference between adult education and lifelong learning, formal and informal education, workshops and training, etc.

The Republika Srpska entity already had legislation in place on adult education, but in the Federation none of the cantons had any, and no legislation existed at national level either. Caritas engaged in dialogue with ten different cantonal governments, with great diversity in population, areas of interest, predominant religion, etc. So the task was large.

The steps and stages Caritas followed were:

- Caritas partnered with DVV International, a German organisation working internationally, dealing exclusively with adult education. In the past, DVV had organised many training programmes of trainers and succeeded in achieving changes to the adult education law in the Republika Srpska. DVV had their own funds and resources that could support the process.

- Caritas and DVV International jointly created the programme and obtained financial support for the process.

- Regular visits to each of the ten cantonal Ministries of Education took place twice a year at a minimum.

- Creation of an action group (consisting of the ten cantonal Ministries, and referral NGOs) with feedback every six months (mutual exchange and support at the action group level).
• Contribution to the creation of legislation by providing texts, organising consultations and/or public discussions.

• Support to the Ministries – this step was important for creating and setting up a new sector on adult education (technical support, office materials, computers, etc.).

• Organisation of meetings and training sessions for the Ministries.

• Organisation of study visits in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Austria and in Germany.

• Launching a mechanism for joint meetings and the exchange of information on adult education.

Caritas promoted adult education as an essential component of combating poverty, using the fragmented educational system in BiH as an argument that actually resulted in people with professional qualifications who had little or no possibility of finding employment-specific offers. Caritas advocated for people to be able to receive additional education or pre-qualification training, for the development of new professional curricula, and for better preparation of trained people for employment.

The political culture in the country requires civil society representatives to build and cultivate personal contacts with people responsible for, or influential in, political decision making, using both a formal and informal approach. It was a challenge to identify who were key decision makers at cantonal level, in order to target them directly by building up a relationship with them (professionally and privately). A complicating factor in this process is that elections take place every two years. So the personal relationships that Caritas built yesterday may suddenly turn out to be irrelevant tomorrow, because when an election takes place the entire cantonal government can change overnight. Another complicating factor is cultural sensitivity and differences. There was also a need to influence people in many different cantons, with a lot of time and cost spent on the travel involved in this kind of ‘informal lobbying’. This generates a lot of expenses that normally cannot be submitted to a Caritas financial department.

### Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

#### Externally:

• Choosing the right alliance partner in these campaigns is of crucial importance. The combination of practical experience, theoretical knowledge, and the joining of forces by a domestic (Caritas BiH) and an international (DVV) organisation were excellent prerequisites for quality Institutional Advocacy action.

• Spaces were created for discussions between NGOs and State authorities.

• Training was provided to the State’s authorities.

#### Internally:

• A person needed to be in charge of this process (a programme manager), who needed a “free hand” in some steps of building alliances.

• More travel, study visits, informal and formal meetings were needed than usual, as well as more work outside regular office hours.

• A specific budget was needed, taking account of the fact that many activities happened during informal meetings after-hours (not usually approved costs in a Caritas budget).

• Funding from the management of Caritas was crucial.
This case study describes how Caritas Georgia played an important and leading role in the development by the Government of Georgia of a Road Map on Ageing. Specifically, Caritas Georgia developed a home care educational module, which was included in the nursing education programme, and is now providing training to around 400 student nurses a year. Caritas Georgia is the exclusive provider of this educational programme in the system of vocational education in Georgia.

By partnering with the Ministries of Health, of Education and of Regional Development, Caritas Georgia has been able to provide knowledge as well as expertise for their staff, and knowledge sharing platforms about home care. In return, Caritas Georgia is able to provide more home care services to otherwise unprotected people, with the Government providing between 30% and 70% of the required funding.

**Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study**

In cooperation with the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement, of the Ministry of Education, Caritas Georgia developed a Home Care educational module, which was included in the nursing education programme. As the educational system did not have teachers to teach this subject, Caritas Georgia took on this obligation. In the framework of the Caritas Georgia Health Care programme, Caritas established the “Training and Consultancy Centre”, where nurses involved in home care service learnt teaching skills and were involved in the education of other nurses.

In cooperation with Georgia’s Ministry of Health, a working group was established to develop “Standards of Home Care Service” in order to legally regulate this activity. In June 2017, a first meeting took place with local bodies of governance for an exchange of experiences in the field of planning and management of care programmes for the population.
The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

In 2013, the Government of Georgia requested the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to develop a Road Map on Ageing for Georgia. An initial pre-mission had already taken place in 2012 and more systematic work was carried out between autumn 2013 and autumn 2014. This included a desk study as well as interviews and focus group discussions in the field with government and civil society organisations, including Caritas Georgia. In 2014, UNECE published the “Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing: Georgia”. Information about Caritas Georgia’s contribution in the development of home care is mentioned in that document (page 80, chapter “Home based care, day care centres”). It was important to convince the Government that there is potential in the country for the organisation of high quality services for the population, and the training of the necessary medical staff.

In 2015, the Parliament of Georgia established a “Multi-Sector Working Group on Ageing Policy and Action Plan Development”. Caritas Georgia was invited to the working group to develop recommendations for the policy paper and the draft of the Government of Georgia’s Action Plan on Ageing.

According to the Government “Action Plan”, the Ministry of Health and the local bodies of governance were to develop pilot home care projects in the regions and regulatory legal acts for their implementation. To support this process, Caritas Georgia provided recommendations to the local bodies of governance on the development and management of home care projects and contributed to the development of their capacity in the field of care. These recommendations were included in Parliament’s paper “Concept of the State Policy on Ageing” in 2016, while the “Action Plan on Ageing” was approved by the government in 2017. Caritas Georgia coordinated its actions closely with other NGOs, members of the working group, such as the Georgian Red Cross Society and the Georgian Platform on Care. The joint effort helped to preserve provisions about home care and other benefits for the population in the document.

Starting from 2019, Caritas Georgia will have its own “Institutional Advocacy” department. The organisation is already publicly recognised as a highly reliable and reputable provider of social services, but that public profile now also includes recognition as a strong advocate for the poor.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

From an organisational point of view, Caritas Georgia had to adapt to be able to:

- Review and adapt the objectives of our Home Care project.
- Create a Training and Consultancy Centre to conduct training within the structure of the Health Care Programme.
- Train medical professionals in pedagogical skills.
- Organise study visits to Germany and Romania to learn modern methods of care, management and nursing education.
- Organise a first conference on Dual Nursing Education, with the experience of Germany in this field and presented by German education experts.
- Establish and sign agreements with the Association of Private Colleges of Georgia and with 29 Vocational Education Centres.
- Establish partnership relations with the Ministries of Health, Education and Regional Development of Georgia.
- Establish partnership relations between the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Freiburg (Germany) and Saint King Tamar University of the Patriarchate of Georgia.
Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study
Within the political context in Germany, the principle of subsidiarity is implemented in social legislation:

- Tasks that can be taken care of by a community of a lower order should not be assumed by a community of a higher order.

- The community of a higher order should support the community of a lower order in fulfilling its tasks independently, also through financial support.

- The motto is: allow as much self-reliant responsibility (individual contribution) as possible and only as much responsibility (support) of community levels of a higher order as necessary.

The implementation of this principle of subsidiarity in the field of social services is guaranteed by a legal provision, which stipulates that non-governmental social service agencies will take precedence over governmental agencies, if their services are adequate and appropriate. The consequence is a freedom of choice for the individual citizen. Each individual may choose a specific social service provider that best suits his/her needs, in terms of professional concept, or religious or ideological outlook.
These services and facilities provided by non-governmental social welfare agencies are financed by drawing on their own funds, through fees paid by the social insurance institutions as well as by bodies responsible for social assistance or youth welfare in return for services provided, and through government grants, especially for investment purposes.

More than half the services offered in the field of social work in western Germany are provided by the non-governmental sector. If a certain civil society organisation wants to start providing a particular social service, they can inform the State, and the State in principle has to fund it.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

Given the subsidiary principle system that is applied in Germany, Caritas Germany has built up and maintains a prominent role as a service provider and interlocutor towards the State.

Caritas Germany has achieved and maintains that prominent role and profile towards the public and the Government and authorities, amongst others as follows:

1. Caritas Germany provides a wide variety and a high quality of services, thereby first and foremost gaining the trust and confidence of users and beneficiaries of such services.

2. Caritas Germany engages regularly and in a structured way with the Government and authorities on matters related to the conditions for service provision and on State funding of social services.

3. Caritas Germany regularly carries out and publishes extensive research and analysis about the incidence and trends of poverty in Germany and about the profiles of groups and individuals who need social assistance. One of the key recent findings from such research and analysis by Caritas Germany was discovering that for every four recipients of social assistance, there are three additional people living in “covert poverty” (even more in the east of Germany). Covert poverty in this case refers to people who have the right to receive subsistence support but who are not receiving it and are living below the guaranteed minimum level of existence.

4. Caritas Germany consistently strengthens its network of volunteers, thereby strengthening also its roots within German society in terms of absolute numbers and of plurality. An organisation that is thus deeply rooted within society has greater potential to be a credible voice in advocacy, and as a result a stronger influence in politics. Politicians understand that the experiences and stories of volunteers may influence at least 20-30 other people in each of their private networks, who are also voters. In this way, organisations relying strongly on volunteers, tend to have powerful advocacy voices. A large body of volunteers often also represents great plurality, further strengthening the potential for advocacy.

5. Caritas Germany works together closely with other civil society organisations, especially in terms of Institutional Advocacy as organisations providing social services on behalf of the Government, under the subsidiarity principle and in terms of financial conditions and tax revenues for NGOs.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

• It is important to work together with other civil society organisations.

• It is important to engage lawyers or people with political and legal competency to propose legal and political changes.

• An organisation with a large base of many volunteers should leverage this in order to gain access to structured dialogue or partnership with government and authorities.
4.2.4. Serbia

Mental Health Strategy

Caritas Serbia successfully engaged with the Government for the creation of a national Mental Health Strategy and for the adoption of new legislation in the field of mental healthcare. As a result, social services for people with mental health problems are no longer exclusively the domain of state-run mental health hospitals, but can now also be provided in community-based alternative mental health centres, managed by civil society organisations. This legislation has opened up new ways and channels for Caritas at diocesan and parish levels to provide services funded by the Government. This contributes to their institutional sustainability.
Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study
The most successful achievement of Caritas Serbia in terms of Institutional Advocacy was in the area of Mental Health. It resulted in a systematic, coordinated and improved approach to the challenges that people with mental health issues are facing in Serbia in everyday life. The new legislation introduced the concept of Mental Health Centres as a more humane and community based alternative to psychiatric hospitals.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved
The critical success factors that were identified were the continuous, long term (over 20 years) work of Caritas in this field and many study visits organised for key stakeholders, such as directors of psychiatric hospitals, members of the Government Working Group, etc.

In the campaign on mental health awareness, access to the institutional representatives was achieved mostly through bilateral meetings, study visits and round tables. The process was initiated in close partnership with other national Caritas organisations, most notably in Italy. On the issue of mental health, Caritas Serbia started to work at the grass-roots local level. The organisation brought over experts from Italy who held workshops and gave training to directors and staff of Serbian psychiatric institutions at local level. Based on these local successes, Caritas Serbia conducted a campaign, lasting at least ten years at national level, against the stigmatisation of people suffering mental health issues. For this they engaged the Archbishop and President of Caritas Serbia as well as the responsible Ministers. The national office also worked in close partnership with internal partners, like diocesan and parish Caritas organisations, and with external partners, like the responsible Ministries, local Social Welfare Centres, hospitals, associations of beneficiaries, etc. Overall, it was a long process with many ups and downs, especially considering that the people in charge were often changing roles institutionally, requiring new relationship-building actions.

In Serbia, a lot of decision making power about social programmes, but also about policies, is decentralised toward local municipalities and other local authorities. Therefore Institutional Advocacy not only takes place at national level but also very much at local level. Successfully engaging in advocacy requires continuous investment in the development of those people in charge. Securing the uninterrupted longer term financing of the positions of people in charge of (institutional) advocacy work remains a persistent challenge. It is essential to work continuously on increasing internal awareness of the importance of all advocacy work, including Institutional Advocacy, towards the leadership and towards the rank and file of the wider Caritas network in each country.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy
Caritas Serbia tries to ensure that in every programme or project that they propose to the EU for funding, there is an advocacy component integrated and written into the project proposal.

Caritas Serbia has relied on the following steps:

• Focus on a few issues for Institutional Advocacy on the basis of dedicated, long term work of the organisation and where Caritas can provide an expert and valuable contribution.

• Convince the leadership of the organisation about the essential need for advocacy in general, secure adequate funding for the key people to be involved, and invest in the development of their skills and know-how (Institutional Advocacy).

• Involve experts within the Caritas network.

• Involve diocesan and parish Caritas in strengthening their relations with local authorities.
In early 2017, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia approved new mechanisms for the accreditation of NGOs that are providing social services and wishing to apply for State financing or co-financing. The Ministry also created regulations for the organisation of tenders for the financing of social services. That was a real step forward because, until that time, the funding by the State of non-state social services in Armenia usually involved decision-making processes undertaken in ‘closed environments’, with inherent risks of corruption.

But the new regulations still had a lot of gaps, especially in terms of the quality standards and methodology of the services provided. A coalition of Caritas Armenia, Save the Children Armenia and the Armavir Development Centre conducted long and productive lobbying work with the Ministry on this issue. Eventually, the Ministry signed an agreement with this coalition, mandating them to support the development of new qualitative and quantitative standards for social care in Armenia and for creating e-tools that would ensure more transparent system in accessing State funds, which has a positive impact on the financial and organisational sustainability of Caritas Armenia.
The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

About 99% of the financial resources for the services provided by Caritas Armenia comes from international partners. Diversifying sources of funding, and particularly involving the State in funding the social services provided by Caritas, remains a huge challenge.

For more than 20 years already, Caritas Armenia has been one of the most important providers of social assistance and social services in Armenia, working at grassroots level and focusing mostly on overcoming key challenges faced by society. From the moment in 2014 when Caritas Armenia started its Institutional Advocacy activities, it has worked on fixing the gaps in State regulations of the social protection system, particularly in the fields of standards of care and co-financing mechanisms.

Caritas Armenia now also has an Advocacy and Communication Strategy (2016-2018) in place to adopt a more systematic approach in its daily work on policies for the social protection of vulnerable groups. For more than four years, the organisation has invested great effort into the creation of a solid base of evidence to support its advocacy, to build up strong partnership with the Government and other partners, to increase its visibility as well the visibility of the changes that transpire as a result of its projects, and finally, to mobilise society on ‘hot issues’ and long term solutions.

Furthermore, the European Union’s support to civil society organisations in Armenia has increased following the recent signing of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and this has enabled an important opportunity for Caritas to be able to access funds in primis, as currently three of its projects are financed by the EU. It has also enabled Caritas Armenia to use the cooperation with the EU as leverage for Caritas to engage strongly with the State authorities, since they are more committed to reaching the outcomes stated in the Partnership Agreement.

In Armenia, NGOs like Caritas must try to actively participate in monitoring existing policies and laws and in developing new ones. However, a few challenges complicate that process:

- Decision makers and State institutions often adopt an attitude of non-participation.
- NGOs generally have limited financial and human resources.
- NGOs that provide social services need to adopt more of a partnership towards policy implementing bodies. If they adopt a “watch dog” function, they risk marginalisation and conflicts of interest.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

- As the social wing of the Armenian Catholic Church, which is a minority church in the country, Caritas Armenia has to deal not only with the political, but also with the religious situation in the country.
- Caritas Armenia considers the existence of an Advocacy Strategy a key requirement for successful advocacy.
- Coalitions with other strong national NGOs having similar positions on specific topics is of key importance.
- It is important for civil society organisations to use the financial and political support of the EU to strengthen relations with the national Government in Armenia.
4.3.2. Ireland

Participating in National Economic Dialogue (NED)

This case study predominantly highlights the legislative dimension of Institutional Advocacy.

The membership of Social Justice Ireland (SJI) in the National Economic Dialogue provides it with an opportunity to be in structured dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and thus to lobby also for adequate financial resources in order to enable the work of civil society organisations, including its own organisation.
Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study

Social Justice Ireland is one of 6 organisations from the “pillar” of community and voluntary organisations that have been selected by the Government to be a full member of the National Economic Dialogue (NED). In this capacity, SJI can influence the budgetary decision process related to social policy and social services. This helps charitable and voluntary organisations to benefit from financial provisions made by the Government to enable their work.

The NED provides every member with the opportunity to present their analyses and proposals to Government and to the other members of the NED. It also provides an opportunity to meet with one of the Ministers for a prolonged meeting.

For example, at the latest NED meeting (June 2018), SJI was one of a small number of organisations who met with the Minister for Finance for three hours and discussed all aspects of government policy with a particular focus on the budget for 2019. SJI considers this kind of access to be a success in promoting its views. In recent years the Government has taken up at least one major proposal from this dialogue and made it a central component of its budgetary policy.

The document reflected on the Irish Government’s programme for government, and looked at issues to do with the sector itself, particularly around regulation, and about the role of the State. It concluded with some proposals on the NED itself.

Every year over the last ten years, SJI have always prepared a document for Government in the build-up to the budget. Each of the organisations in the voluntary sector contributes, and SJI writes it and submits it to the Government.

The political ‘targets’ in SJI’s advocacy work in the NED include the Prime Minister; five Government Ministers; eight Secretary Generals (top civil servants in a government department) and most local authorities.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

The basic model for the NED was established by the Irish government in 2014. It is based on the old social partnership model, of which SJI have been a part since the early ‘90s. It is attended by the Prime Minister and up to seven Government Ministers (out of a total Cabinet of 14 Ministers).

SJI works together closely with all 17 organisations and networks that make up the Community and Voluntary Pillar. They wrote the agreed background document for the Pillar, entitled “Harnessing Resources and Capacity to Build a Fairer Future for All”. The document opened up with a statement about the fact that Ireland is doing very well at one level, and that there is a need to make the most of the prevailing opportunities, but that there are serious infrastructure problems. Housing, health, education, and early childhood care were among the problem areas identified.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

Key steps that SJI believes have led to its success in Institutional Advocacy:

- Ensure that all social analysis offered is reliable and verifiable.
- Focus on identifying the causes of problems.
- Propose viable alternatives.
- Ensure that alternatives that are proposed are fully-costed.
- Engage effectively with media, both national and local.
4.3.3. Slovakia

Structured dialogue with the Ministry of Social Affairs

This case study predominantly highlights both the legislative and financial dimensions of Institutional Advocacy, in the sense that Caritas is one of the NGOs selected to be part of a structured dialogue (laid down in legislation) with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Caritas Slovakia provided the Ministry of Social Affairs input for amendments to existing legislation governing social services for elderly people. An important change achieved was that the responsibility for co-financing these social services for the elderly, which shifted from local government and municipalities (who often failed to meet their financial commitments), to the central national Government. Such Institutional Advocacy by Caritas Slovakia has contributed to a more sustainable financing of social services provided at grass-roots level.

Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study

When new legislation is under preparation in Slovakia, the Government is legally required to run a process of consultation to collect comments on the new
proposed legislation in preparation for its submission to Parliament. Listening to well-established advocacy organisations, representing a well-defined group of people affected by the new legislation, will have more weight and will be taken more seriously.

When legislation was passed about six years ago on social services for elderly people, its financing was fully dependent on the local government and on municipalities. That did not work because these local authorities often came up with a lot of excuses why they could not finance such services. Together with other stakeholders, Caritas Slovakia provided input for amendments to the legislation, in the sense that the central Government took responsibility for co-financing these social services.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

As a consequence of its historic track record of interacting with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Caritas Slovakia was formally nominated by the Ministry to join a group of stakeholders with whom the Ministry engages in structured dialogue and whose comments are taken seriously. In addition to Caritas, the group of stakeholders that are often consulted on legislative processes include other Ministries, the Council for the Elderly, representatives of local authorities and municipalities, other civil society organisations or their platform/umbrella organisations, Diaconia and others. In total, there are about 15 organisations or stakeholders involved in that structured consultative group.

Caritas Slovakia is a member of some civil society platforms, for instance the Platform of Slovak Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It uses these platforms to provide input to government strategies. Active participation in the work of such NGO platforms, coupled with patient, long-term lobbying of the Ministry, are key to building the profile of Caritas Slovakia.

One of the most important platforms is the so-called Association of Social Services Providers, which brings together and represents a significant portion of social service providers. But its membership also includes an employer’s union, private sector enterprises and the Chamber of Commerce as well. This platform is itself organised like an NGO. There is a general assembly once a year, where financial issues are decided and elections take place for the Board, which governs the work of the platform on a daily basis during the year. Caritas Slovakia and Diaconia work together to ensure that they are properly represented on the Board so that they can have a significant influence on what the association is doing.

In order to improve its Institutional Advocacy, Caritas Slovakia has planned to involve more of the diocesan Caritas because most of the practical know-how and field experience is there. Caritas Slovakia needs to invite colleagues from diocesan and local Caritas into the discussions about changing legislation on social services. However, it has been a challenge to engage people from diocesan or local Caritas branches, with the necessary practical experience, into Caritas Slovakia’s lobby and advocacy activities. This requires additional skills, and sometimes these people do not feel comfortable doing this. They also need to be able to invest time for preparation, so they need to be released from their normal duties as service providers.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

- Caritas Slovakia analysed the best solution for funding social services (State vs local authorities) and engaged with the government towards this.
- Caritas Slovakia identified the legal requirements of the Government to involve civil society organisations and take the consequent opportunities.
- Caritas Slovakia is part of several bigger civil society organisation platforms.
- Caritas Slovakia also cooperates with trade unions and the private sector within structured platforms.
4.3.4. Ukraine

National Social Policy and social service standards

This case study predominantly highlights both the legislative and financial dimensions of Institutional Advocacy

Caritas Ukraine uses the expertise and experience of its staff to feed into the development and adoption process of a new National Social Policy, including amongst others the introduction of minimum quality standards for different types of social services. This new package of legislation, with better regulated services, and with many administrative and financial obstacles removed, will allow more sustainable local level service provision by Caritas at grass-roots level in Ukraine, also thanks to the ongoing decentralisation of funding decisions for certain services to local councils.
Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study

Three different types of major reform are currently taking place in Ukraine:

• Social services reform – which has still been rather unsuccessful until now;

• Reform of medical first aid – which is being actively implemented and which can become a role model for social services reform; and finally

• Reform of decentralisation currently taking place at local level and allowing local councils to decide on their own funds.

All three areas of reform make up the modern environment in which Caritas currently works and which are of great importance for its network. Since 2012 the organisation has been closely involved in the design and adoption of the National Social Policy, and in lobbying for amendments to, and new drafts of, the Law on Social Services, Charity Law, Tax Code, Humanitarian Aid Law, etc.

Caritas has co-designed 17 National Social Service Standards, presented a vision of social reform to the Ministry of Social Policy and worked on its implementation at local level in the framework of decentralisation reform.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

Strategically speaking, Caritas Ukraine is lobbying the Government for the introduction in Ukraine of a social system inspired by the German social system, with a fully open market of social services, and freedom of choice for the beneficiary with regard to the provider of these services. This would ideally be paid for from a Government budget in accordance with the level of services required for that type of beneficiary and based on quality standards provided by the State.

In 2013, Caritas Ukraine became involved in an initiative taken by different groups of NGOs aimed at proposing amendments to the laws regarding social welfare system changes. Discussions within the Ministry on social legislation lacked the needed expertise and technical and professional input from social services providers, particularly among NGOs.

Around eight NGOs, including Caritas Ukraine, were invited to get involved in relevant hearings, to come up with an in-depth analysis of what should be done, how it should be done professionally, how beneficiaries and providers of social services should act, what procedures they should follow and what standards needed to be met.

Caritas contributed to the creation of minimum quality standards for different types of social services. These standards were set up as a model of conversation/interaction between each service provider and service receiver. Caritas Ukraine ran pilot projects at grass-roots level on standards for social services dealing with children, migrants, disability, home care, and daily assistance.
Caritas also strongly advocated for decision making to be at local level and payment systems to be automated. For medical services, a model is emerging where the patient decides whom he contacts to receive the necessary services and an automated system pays for that service.

This reform of social services and the process of decentralisation towards local level are gathering pace rapidly throughout Ukraine. NGOs will provide these services independently and receive funding sustainably and permanently regardless of the type of government in place or their activity and willingness to work with NGOs.

In Ukrainian political culture, influence is everything. Caritas is probably one of the few “change makers” in Ukraine who are involved in the process of changing social services.

A separate team for lobbying and advocacy needed to be dedicated to these activities. Supported by Caritas Germany since 2012, Caritas Ukraine now has a lobbying team that defines advocacy priorities and objectives. This team consists of two lawyers and one person who was formerly head of a department in the Ministry of Social Security. From time to time, experts in various social services are hired on an ad hoc basis.

One of the key issues is the need for new sources of funding, ultimately leading to more revenues from the State to fund social services provided through local Caritas, but also to a further diversification of funding sources, including for instance, funding by the Ukrainian diaspora abroad, wealthy citizens and relatives of people receiving social services.
Caritas Ukraine plans to work on a cross-border lobbying project with Caritas in Georgia and Armenia, countries that are also experiencing post-revolutionary movements, with governments and societies that are open to change.

### Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

The following Institutional Advocacy steps were necessary for Caritas Ukraine in this example:

- The organisation needed to have a precise view of the legislative changes required.

- There was a need for sufficient technical expertise (lawyers) within the organisation on legislation reforms and for input from experts in the field directly involved in social service provisions.

- Caritas Ukraine needed financial and strategic support from experts in the Caritas Europa network.

- Caritas Ukraine needed to network with other NGOs.

- The organisation needed to work on several types of reform at the same time, in order to be able to influence all of them and push them in the same direction, thereby aiming to make them also compatible with each other.
4.4. Institutional Advocacy with a political dimension

4.4.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Adoption of a Platform for Peace

Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina, working in close partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS)\textsuperscript{19}, was intensively involved in a campaign that lasted 15 months, from February 2017 until July 2018. It aimed to ensure that the Parliamentary Assembly in Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Platform for Peace. This advocacy campaign greatly boosted the institutional and public profile of Caritas in the country and across the political establishment.

The significance of this result is that the Platform for Peace is the first act initiated by the non governmental sector that has been adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Results achieved by Institutional Advocacy

On 5 July 2018, in its prolonged 62nd session, the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Platform for Peace. By adopting the Platform for Peace document, Members of the Parliamentary Assembly’s House of Representatives expressed their clear support for reconciliation initiatives in which those who were directly exposed to war atrocities, i.e. camp prisoners, played an important role.

The Platform for Peace is a document developed in the form of a Declaration, which specifies concrete activities to be implemented in order to facilitate the long-term process for peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The PRO Future project is financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented in 70 municipalities/cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in partnership with the Institute for Youth Development KULT, Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Forum of Tuzla Citizens, the Banja Luka Helsinki Citizen Assembly, the Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC), Mostar and the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Minister for Human Rights and Refugees has been essential for the initiative, especially for putting the Platform into parliamentary procedure. Her Ministry supported the Platform all the way from conception to adoption, and through partnership with the PRO-Future project. By operating at all levels – from local to the highest level – and working with different groups of citizens, this project successfully incorporated into the Platform for Peace; the will and intention of citizens of the country to contribute to the construction and preservation of peace in this once war-torn country. The Platform for Peace will now be presented for implementation in the lower levels of government, such as in cantons and municipalities. Up to 60 local municipalities have already joined and signed the Platform for Peace.

It is a great success that the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Platform for Peace, since it is rare that they are united in opinion and there are not many commonly agreed documents.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

In the first phase of the project, the Platform for Peace was developed as a document outlining a declaration of commitments and actions to be taken. Subsequently, an advocacy plan was designed to achieve the desired adoption of this document by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Several PRO-Future team members from CRS and Caritas were closely involved in implementing this plan.

A first step was to reach out to and connect with a few members in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who Caritas BiH had identified as potential allies, holding the same perspective. It was crucial to gain their trust and mobilise their support in order to form a critical mass in the Parliament for change.
Subsequently, multiple steps were taken to influence other parliamentarians as well as the public. Caritas BiH generated news articles promoting the importance of creating a safe and peaceful society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, took part in interviews, conducted e-mail correspondence, initiated and/or participated in political meetings. Furthermore, a major high profile public event was prepared in the form of an art exhibition with black and white portraits of war victims. This was presented in the hall of the Parliamentary Assembly and attracted a lot of media attention.

The main resource at their disposal, used throughout this entire process, was the ‘social capital’ of the people who were involved in the process. In addition, their knowledge and the knowledge of Caritas BiH about legislation, State law, and the rules of the Parliament of the country were applied and perceived as vital.

This whole process was done in partnership with CRS (Catholic Relief Services) as the main implementing partner of USAID in this project.

Important partners within the Government and the Parliament in this process were the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and three Parliamentary representatives. The PRO–Future project team had several meetings with them, on the basis of their fields of interests and their experience and expertise within the Parliamentary Assembly.

### Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

- Quality preparation, resources and knowledge were needed to work at the highest level of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament.

- Ensuring funds for such advocacy actions, with technical and financial support from CRS, a member of Caritas Internationalis.

- Being strategic in targeting Members of Parliament, starting from the allies and enlarging the consensus to others as well as relevant institutions (such as the competent Ministry for Human Rights).

- Creating a widespread network in the country that could overcome possible barriers between the different communities (i.e. the interreligious Council).
4.4.2. France

Advocacy on minimum income around elections

Making use of a key political moment in time (the 2017 Presidential and Parliamentary elections), Secours Catholique–Caritas France (SC-CF) joined forces with other civil society actors within a network called ALERTE, with a sustained campaign to push political candidates for changes to government policies, amongst others on minimum income. This campaign strengthened their already strong political and public profile, contributing to greater organisational sustainability. The case study also demonstrates the potential power of working in alliance with other civil society actors.
Two key issues were at the heart of the advocacy by SC-CF and the ALERTE network:

- In France, “Revenue de Solidarité Active” (Active Solidarity Income), or RSA for short, provides people without any other sources of income with a minimum subsistence level that varies according to the composition of the household. In accordance with the ALERTE manifesto, SC-CF advocated for an automatic and guaranteed minimum monthly income of 850 Euros (currently 535 Euros), which corresponds to the threshold of 50% of the median income, without any obligation to work.

- The “garantie jeune” (Youth Guarantee) is a mechanism initiated by the Government, that accompanies young people between the ages of 16 – 25 who are in precarious situations and who are neither employed, nor studying nor in training. The intensive support under this mechanism facilitates their full integration into society. SC-CF is lobbying to promote the legal status of this mechanism to be a basic right, laid down as such in the law.

Results achieved by Institutional Advocacy

ALERTE is a national platform of civil society organisations in France, working against poverty and for social inclusion, which assembles some 37 NGOs, associations and/or movements working at national level to combat poverty. SC-CF is a leading and active member within this platform.

The platform took the initiative to launch a campaign and a public debate on the occasion of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 2017, drawing up a manifesto that called the attention of all political candidates to the persistence of poverty and social exclusion in France, despite the national plan to fight poverty that had been in place since 2013. Three dimensions were highlighted: a guaranteed minimum income, enhanced support, and a decent work policy for all.

Internally, this political advocacy process encouraged the creation of synergies between NGOs and the elaboration of ALERTE’s common official position on the issue. Externally, the findings were presented to the Prime Minister and discussed with the Minister of Social Affairs. Advocacy on the above points started on the occasion of the 2017 elections, and is still ongoing.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

The advocacy strategy of Secours Catholique-Caritas France (SC-CF) is structured around four dimensions working in synergy with each other:

1. Observation (publication of annual reports on the evolution of poverty).
2. Building and maintaining institutional relations/political influence.
3. Networking/collective action (cooperation with other NGOs, real partnerships with people living in poverty and other organisations who work close to them).
4. Awareness raising campaigns.
In its strategic plan for 2016–2025, SC-CF defines its core mission as building a more just society. At an organisational level, it created in its national headquarters a new directorate called “Action and Advocacy in France and Europe”. This team consists of 23 people who are experts on topics such as social inclusion, labour market issues, housing, education, migration, etc. SC-CF links very closely its advocacy to its action at grass-roots level. They animate their advocacy actions via local networks and delegations, who in turn feed into the policy elaboration by the new directorate.

As a member of the ALERTE network, SC-CF played an active and important role in the elaboration of the manifesto prepared for the campaign around the 2017 elections; in its dissemination to the general public, media and political decision makers; and in political advocacy targeting candidates up for election or newly elected members of Parliament. Lobbying of candidates standing for election was mostly done by the local delegations of SC-CF throughout the country, in the districts of the candidates in question, prior to and after the elections.

Annually, SC-CF publishes a report analysing the situations of people living in poverty in France. In total 85,165 individual statistical sheets were analysed for the 2017 edition of the report. For several years, findings from these statistical files collected by SC-CF have provided valuable material for breaking down existing prejudices about people in precarious situations.

The 2017 report consisted of two parts: (1) Main characteristics of the households and persons met; and (2) Resources and living conditions. In each of these parts, and where relevant, some of the most persistent prejudices about poverty and precariousness were exposed and discussed.

**Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy**

- SC-CF believes the following lessons are important to share:

- SC-CF advocacy is rooted in SC-CF's actions and fosters the ability of people in precarious situations and in poverty to analyse their own situations.

- The annual statistical report that SC-CF creates is a real treasure chest to feed its advocacy.

- In advocacy campaigns, it is very useful to work with other organisations in collective action, while never losing SC-CF's own individuality and identity within that collective action.

- Dedicated financial and human resources were necessary to implement a comprehensive advocacy strategy.

- SC-CF used the opportunity provided by the political agenda (elections) to push Caritas’ own agenda on specific issues.
4.4.3. Italy

Creating the Alliance against Poverty

The case study demonstrates the importance of joining forces and working in alliance with other civil society actors with comparable capillary networks throughout the country. It also highlights the importance of collecting data on poverty through poverty observatories (CPOs) and thus having data and information that the government does not have. This greatly strengthens the institutional and public profile of Caritas and is important for its longer term sustainability.

Results achieved by Institutional Advocacy

The “Alleanza contro la povertà” (Alliance against Poverty) was created in Italy in July 2013 in response to the rapid growth of absolute poverty since the economic crisis began in 2007. The objective of the Alliance was to pressure political parties to deal with the issue of rapidly increasing poverty as a priority within political debate.

The main activities of the Alliance have been:

- Influencing public opinion on issues related to absolute poverty, in order to animate a debate and enhance continuous exchange of information at different political and social levels in the country, and to propose possible tools to be adopted in order to fight absolute poverty.
- A structured debate with local, national and European institutions through meetings involving members of the Alliance or between institutions and members, including Caritas.
- Definition of a detailed reform proposal to introduce the measure: Social Inclusion Income.

Key results achieved by the work of the Alliance have so far been:

- Approval of the law n.33 of 15 March 2017, which mandated the Government to adopt, within six months, legislative decrees aimed at reorganising and restructuring welfare provisions, and organically structuring care services for fighting poverty.
The law introduced a new measure into Italian legislation: a basic level of service to be universally guaranteed.

- Legislative decree of 15 September 2017, n.147 “Rules for the introduction of a national measure for fighting poverty”. This decree defined procedures for operationally applying law n.33 in the entire country. It also concretely defined a national measure against poverty, the Social Inclusion Income, to be provided to beneficiaries as of January 2018.

- Creation of several coordination tools introduced by the Decree, including a partnership working group, in order to monitor the impact of the measures.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved

The initiative to create the Alliance was taken on by two main organisations, Caritas Italiana and the ACLI, the Christian Association for Labour in Italy. The latter organisation has a long history of researching the labour market and helping people find employment. The ACIL also has a grassroots network well spread all over the country.

Together, the two networks launched what was called ‘an open pact against poverty’, calling on all social entities interested in fighting poverty to join in and support a concrete proposal for a new Social Inclusion Income measure. This proposal was the result of a double level of analysis.

A first, deep, comparative analysis, produced by experts on social policies from different Italian universities, on previous experiences of fighting poverty in Italy and in Europe became the basis for a second level of analysis: to make the proposal sustainable, feasible and immediately applicable. Apart from NGOs, other important groups of partners have meanwhile joined the Alliance. Trade unions knew and cared very much about the so-called “working poor”, people who were actually employed but under contracts that made their situations very precarious. Their inclusion in the alliance, with their specific expertise on these kinds of issues, was a big achievement in terms of partnership.

Another important group of partners were academic institutions, who contributed to forming the Group of Experts. This Group of Experts in the Alliance also published a report in 2015, entitled “After the Crisis to Build New Welfare”, a very scientific piece of work, which contained a detailed analysis on measures the Government had adopted in the past, analysing the added value thereof, and identifying what the added value would be of the measures that the Alliance was proposing.

The Alliance is currently made up of 35 organisations representing a wide variety of stakeholders in the fight against poverty. The unique feature of this network is the fact that it not only brings together civil society associations but also trade unions, plus representatives of municipalities and regions.

The next step forward, with having started this Alliance, is that now, more than ever before, Caritas shares a table with its Alliance partners and can discover more that can be done together. This ‘networking’ serves as a model for better integrating the work of all diocesan Caritas.

Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

- Establishing a very clear priority to focus on.

- Enhancing the ability to translate services provided to people in poverty into research and analysis of the problems they are facing.

- Working in partnership and alliance with organisations that are quite different from Caritas, resulting in a multi-disciplinary and integrated response, supported by all partners in the Alliance.
4.4.4. Sweden

Advocacy on migration at national/EU level

This example demonstrates that having a clear focus and profound expertise on one particular major policy area can be successfully leveraged to strengthen relationships with government officials, thus also contributing to the institutional sustainability of the organisation.

Institutional Advocacy results achieved in this case study
Thanks to its extensive and long term work on political advocacy on the issue of migration, not only at national level in Sweden but also through Caritas Europa at the EU level, Caritas Sweden is intensively involved in, and listened to by the Swedish Government, on issues related to the policy areas on migration. In spite of its small size and location in a predominantly Protestant country like Sweden, Caritas Sweden has a strong track record in successful and effective political advocacy and has thus gained a leading role among civil society organisations.

The process by which Institutional Advocacy results were achieved
Caritas Sweden has been engaged for almost 30 years in dialogue with all levels of authority in Sweden. Migration is the key issue on which it advocates.

The decades long experience of Caritas Sweden in successfully engaging with the Swedish Government on migration-related issues has also contributed considerably to the success of migration related advocacy at EU and European levels via Caritas Europa. Vice versa, the strong reputation that Caritas Europa has built up on migration-related advocacy in turn strengthens the recognition by the Swedish Government of Caritas in general as a reliable interlocutor and partner on policy development and implementation. In terms of the political dimension of Institutional Advocacy, this case study underlines the importance of the mutual reinforcement of Caritas engagement with authorities at national and at European levels and the essential component of presenting grass-roots expertise.

Caritas Sweden proactively monitors the development of new policies and legislation and seeks opportunities to discuss and influence them.
But the opposite is true as well. Because of the close relationship that has been established between Caritas Sweden and Government actors, the Ministry sometimes calls to inform Caritas Sweden of legislative processes that are ‘in the pipeline’ and asks for their comments and advice.

In the eyes of the Swedish government, Caritas is a large global and European network. They do not just look at the tiny size of Caritas in Sweden, but see the global coverage of Caritas and its vast experience and knowledge as a result. They sometimes look to see if Caritas Europa has already published a position paper on certain issues or will soon do so, and they ask Caritas Sweden about it. This further helps in identifying issues of concern from the point of view of the Government and alludes to the supportive role Caritas can play in delivering its grassroots knowledge and principled recommendations. All of this also affirms the importance of building strong relationships with the Government and proves the added value of doing so. Such a quality relationship takes many, many years to establish, but the result is that the Government eventually recognises and values the highly specialised expertise that exists within certain NGOs and is not shy to tap into that expertise.

The most important organisational requirement for successful Institutional Advocacy is that the organisation must be willing and able to invest time and energy into building up a respectful relationship with relevant authorities, based on mutual trust and confidence.

In Sweden, the Caritas staff are officially employed by the Church, so the costs of their salaries are part of the Church’s expenses, not of Caritas. This is possible because in Sweden the Government collects taxes from, for instance, registered Catholics and then gives this money to the Church.

But this is not only a resource issue; it is also an issue of prioritising advocacy as an integral component within all projects, programmes and services that Caritas runs and/or applies for funding for.

### Necessary steps taken for Institutional Advocacy

- Focus the advocacy action on a specific topic (in this case, the area of migration) to which the Caritas organisation can bring concrete and valuable expertise.

- “Use” the membership of Caritas Europa and Caritas Internationalis networks to strengthen advocacy at national level and make the case that the large size of this international network, and its capillary outreach into society in Europe and around the world, provides considerable legitimacy and credibility.

- Dedicate specific human, technical and financial resources to strengthen the relationship with governments.

- Integrate advocacy (including Institutional Advocacy) as a component of all projects and services of Caritas.
5. Role of the media in Institutional Advocacy

Both in policy related advocacy and in Institutional Advocacy, working with and through the media can give an important boost in increasing the visibility of the organisation, raising awareness of the issue being advocated, highlighting the expertise of certain staff members, etc. Smart use of the media may help Caritas organisations deliver their message to audiences that they would otherwise find much harder to reach, and to achieve greater impact. The media can also be useful channels to influence political decision makers and/or potential voters.

But the media landscape and media culture in European countries is as diverse as the countries themselves. What works well in one country may completely fail in another. Also, the identity of Caritas as an organisation closely linked to the Catholic Church may, in some countries, make their access to the media easier, while in other countries it may be the opposite.

During the interviews conducted in the framework of this study, respondents were asked to describe in what way (if any) they had engaged the media in the successful practices of Institutional Advocacy. In this chapter, some of the quite diverse feedback received from the interviewed respondents is brought together. This feedback also contains some clear recommendations, which have been integrated into the recommendations in chapter 6 of this report.

**Caritas France**

believes that using the media is an important tool for advocacy. Its annual statistical report, “State of Poverty in France”, attracts a lot of media attention, also because Caritas organises media events around the launch of its publications. However, Caritas France finds that on certain sensitive issues it is difficult to mobilise public opinion by means of the media. Being a well-known Catholic organisation with a strong public profile, Caritas France enjoys key alliances with certain Catholic-inspired media, such as La Croix or La Vie. Generally speaking, they find printed media more accessible for their messages than television. Caritas France uses social media like Facebook and Twitter with mixed progress, and is developing its skills to use video-based social media, like YouTube, more effectively.

**Caritas Georgia**

organised a workshop for representatives of the media on home care and its contribution to and importance for social protection. In Georgia, the media tend to be sometimes critical about the government but also about the work of NGOs. Caritas needs to positively counter this and improve its public profile. One way of doing this is to prepare a report on the face of growing poverty in the country, as an alternative to the government issued reports. This way Caritas can mobilise media to support their lobbying efforts for changes to the legislation.
Caritas Germany believes that advocating for the poor and mobilising support through the media, especially social media, go hand in hand. Caritas acts as a vendor in an “opinion market” when it comes to the traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television). Journalists working in the traditional media wish to maintain clear objectivity in their reporting, so Caritas does not cultivate personal ties with them. When Caritas Germany issues a press release, it will be picked up by the traditional media only when it is good in argumentation, so the quality of the message and argumentation count. On social media, Caritas Germany can better control what messages it does or does not post, but there is still a need for quality. On Facebook, for instance, posts need to be attractive, with video rather than text, and it needs to entertain. On Twitter, using hashtags allows initiation or participation in online conversations about a certain topic, engaging a large community of people interested in that topic. This includes many people who are normally not among Caritas’ regular followers. Using Twitter hashtags is therefore an excellent method to disseminate advocacy messages to a large audience.

Social Justice Ireland argues that there are basically three channels to successfully convey messages that call for change: (1) the education system; (2) religion; and (3) the media. These three channels are like the cardiovascular system through which changes take place in people’s perceptions in Ireland. While ‘third sector’ organisations like Caritas are usually quite comfortable in engaging with the education system and with religion, they are less at ease in engaging with traditional and/or social media. However, given that vast numbers of people who predominantly base their opinions on what they see, hear or read on TV, radio, newspapers and/or social media, Caritas needs to engage with these media in order to be able to influence and change the thinking of a substantial proportion of the population. Therefore, Caritas organisations must have an understanding of how the media operate, and must avoid being seen to be in an adversarial relationship with them. If Caritas gains credibility with the traditional media because its message makes sense, the media will come back more often for comment. The power of social media to spread good news, but also bad or even fake news, is both awesome and frightening.

Caritas Italiana finds the media very important in the work of the Alliance against Poverty. The media gave an amplified voice to what the Alliance was saying, especially with the poverty reports. The Alliance regularly organised press releases. It is interesting to note that in Italy the Bishop’s Conference is in some cases also a co-owner or shareholder of certain media channels.

Caritas Slovakia finds that publicity and access to the public media space is important for issues and policies that they like to influence, because the Government is quite sensitive to being looked upon favourably in public opinion polls. The media play an important role in affecting public opinion, so NGOs strive to have a good relationship with the media. In Slovakia it is easier to mobilise the media around certain happenings or events, rather than just providing press statements. Caritas Slovakia does not yet see social media campaigns having a major influence on policy development processes.

Caritas Sweden advises keeping a low public profile during the work of influencing new policies and not to send out premature press releases. There are civil society organisations who, all the time, appear in the media, boasting about how they are influencing the Government. This often frustrates political decision makers who perceive it as undue pressure. Caritas Sweden finds it more important to enjoy credibility and trust from political decision makers rather than having a strong media public profile when it comes specifically to influencing policy legislation.
6. Reflections/findings, recommendations

In addition to the Institutional Advocacy Forum of January 2017, the survey and interviews conducted in the course of this study have brought to light a number of reflections and/or conclusions, as well as a number of recommendations, which are presented in this chapter.
6.1. General reflections/findings

1. The ‘advocacy paradox’
To a certain extent, ‘Institutional Advocacy’ and ‘advocacy for the poor’ are – at least in theory – somewhat contradictory in terms of motivation and of possible long term outcomes.

‘Institutional Advocacy’ aims to secure more organisational stability for Caritas organisations in the medium or longer term, through its pursuit of structured dialogue on policy and/or strategic partnership on services with governments (including access to sustainable sources of institutional funding). The motivation for this is enhancing the options for a sustainable continuation of Caritas activities over the longer term. In a sense, it is advocacy that aims “to be able to keep doing in future what Caritas is doing today and might do tomorrow (in a short or medium term)”. Or, in some cases and depending on the context, it is securing the means to start doing what most Caritas organisations are already doing.

In accordance with the overarching mission of both the Church and of Caritas, ‘advocacy for the poor’ aims to ultimately eradicate poverty and injustice in the long term. The motivation for this implicitly includes making Caritas’ activities, and perhaps even the organisation itself, more or less obsolete in the long run. So, in a sense, it is advocacy that aims “to be able to stop doing in future what Caritas is doing today” because it has successfully contributed to ending inequality, eradicating poverty, ending the disenfranchisement of marginalised and vulnerable groups, and the need for its service provision has been eroded.

In practice, the two concepts are not contradictory at all, but rather they work in synergy: successful advocacy for the poor will ultimately lead to enhanced public and institutional profiling and strengthened relationships with governments, which in turn may contribute to more sustainable organisational stability. And vice versa: successful Institutional Advocacy will ultimately lead to addressing the root causes of poverty more effectively, thereby contributing to its eradication. Both are important and indispensables parts of the mission of Caritas.

2. Institutional Advocacy is as important as social services provided to the poor
Institutional Advocacy requires full, unequivocal support and commitment from the leadership of Caritas organisations, especially at the levels of governance and management. Institutional Advocacy contributes to ensuring that Caritas is able to assist people in need. Institutional Advocacy should therefore be an integral part of the strategy of Caritas organisations and should be properly resourced.

3. Volunteers are valuable, also in terms of Institutional Advocacy
Caritas organisations often rely on the personal commitment of large numbers of volunteers, who also often represent a great plurality within the population of a country. Volunteers have considerable personal networks that are positively influenced by their commitment to the poor.
These personal networks also comprise voters. Having large numbers of volunteers affiliated with the work of the Caritas organisation may therefore potentially add considerable power and weight to Caritas’ influence on governments and this should be leveraged more strategically.

4. Building relationships with government officials takes time, effort and resources

An important organisational requirement for successful Institutional Advocacy is the willingness and ability of the organisation to invest considerable time and energy into building respectful relationships with the relevant authorities, based on mutual trust and confidence. This takes years. It also takes substantial human, technical and financial resources. Hence, Caritas organisations need to plan for this.

5. There is no ‘one size fits all’ Institutional Advocacy

No single and universal model or methodology for Institutional Advocacy exists that applies to every country or context. Even within one country, there is often a need to switch from one technique or approach to another, in order to achieve the expected outcomes, depending on the issues and circumstances. Remember, the welfare state model further influences the approach taken, and every strategy should be contextualised for this reason.

6. Influencing EU policies and institutions also applies to non-EU Member States

Caritas Europa member organisations exist in EU and non-EU countries. EU policies have great political impact and weight on all of these countries, even well beyond the membership of the EU. Especially in non-EU countries in EU accession processes, civil society organisations can receive financial and political support from EU institutions, and this can be leveraged more consciously and deliberately in strengthening relationships with national governments and successfully implementing Caritas’ Institutional Advocacy strategies.
6.2. Specific recommendations to Caritas organisations

On strategy and planning

1. Strategically plan Institutional Advocacy:
Ensure that Institutional Advocacy is clearly defined as an integral part of the mission of the organisation in its overall strategic plan. Preferably, define this in further detail in a separate strategy.

2. Prioritise/select topics and moments:
The engagement in Institutional Advocacy should be focused on those topics where Caritas has valuable expertise and long experience. Where relevant, advantage should be taken of particular political moments (e.g. elections) to push Caritas’ own agenda forward. The availability of reliable Caritas research data and analyses should also be an important guiding factor in prioritising topics of expertise, which will help in raising the visibility of the organisation, and prove valuable for its Institutional Advocacy.

3. Conduct authentic research and analysis:
To the extent that this is possible from a resources and capacity point of view, conduct thorough research and analysis based on work done in the field. Invest in building capacity of one’s staff to conduct this research and analysis, or make resources available to subcontract this to academic institutions. Owning important, exclusive and first-hand data is key to ensuring Caritas’ own position towards governments.

On networking

4. Network within Caritas in the country:
Involve diocesan and local Caritas organisations to ensure that relationships are strengthened also with regional and local authorities. This will ensure the sustainability of diocesan Caritas and of the social services provided locally.

Staff and volunteers alike, at all levels, need awareness raising and skills training about “advocacy thinking”, meaning the development of a natural reflex to consistently explore the root causes behind the needs of the people they serve and what needs to change to address these effectively.

5. Network with others in the country:
Seek to work together – especially in the case of major, complex and protracted reforms – in alliance with others, like civil society organisations, with social partners like trade unions and business associations, with academics, think-tanks and other stakeholders. This will not only strengthen the collective voice of that partnership or alliance, but it will also allow each partner or ally to bring into the network their own very specific expertise, experience, data, analysis, concerns and proposals.
6. **Network with Caritas Europa:**
Integrate the work done nationally with that done at European level and cooperate with the Caritas Europa member organisation, which can often provide support and additional expertise. Invest time, effort and resources to feed into, and use, the tools and instruments available across the Caritas Europa network.

**On human, technical and financial resources and their acquisition**

7. **Advocacy staff:**
Ensure that the political advocacy staff members responsible for formulating policy proposals have adequate political/legal competencies, e.g. a law degree and/or relevant legal/legislative experience or expertise. Ensure that Institutional Advocacy staff members responsible for formulating structural proposals have a clear understanding of the reality, the needs, and the solutions the Caritas organisation seeks to put forward. Secure their function by committing adequate, longer-term uninterrupted funding to their positions – allowing them to build up strong relationships with government representatives – and invest in further development of their skills and know-how. Avoid overloading advocacy staff with additional missions/responsibilities. Allow them to use their skills as much as possible exclusively for advocacy related work, including research.

8. **Monitor funding opportunities:**
Consistently/systematically monitor funding opportunities, tax regulations, European funds/programmes, etc. in order to influence and to have access to public funds. Involve local authorities in co-financing proposals for EU funding, as appropriate funding is essential for the sustainability of the Caritas organisation.

9. **Integrate Institutional Advocacy in project/programme proposals:**
Include Institutional Advocacy and advocacy in general as fully integrated elements in every and all project proposals for social services submitted to potential institutional donors for funding, including the necessary human, technical and financial resources. In cases where this is not allowed, attempt to ‘negotiate’ on this issue with the donor in question. If unsuccessful, reserve part of the “general overhead” provisions in the project/programme budget to (partially) finance the advocacy functions.
On profile and style of Institutional Advocacy

10. Institutional Advocacy profile:
In representing Caritas to political counterparts, present Caritas as part of a global and European network, active at grass-roots, regional and national levels in virtually all countries of the world, with more than a century of historical experience serving the poor and defending their rights. Where relevant, explain how Caritas relies strongly on the commitments of large numbers of volunteers, representing considerable plurality. Involve Bishops/Church authorities to influence Catholic political decision makers.

11. Media profile:
Keep a low media profile before and during ongoing engagement with the government when it comes to influencing specific policy/legal changes. Never publicly claim credit for advocacy results achieved relating to legislative changes, unless this credit is given by government counterparts and unless it’s necessary for showcasing to donors the achievements of the work done. In media statements, avoid ‘judgment’ and ‘sensationalism’.

12. Advocacy style:
Conduct advocacy in a respectful, constructive and non-confrontational style. Remember to listen, listen, listen. Identify what the government may need from Caritas and try to meet those needs. Also avoid publicly disagreeing with positions expressed by policy makers or civil society colleagues, as this can damage relationships and distort trust. Instead, further clarify what is needed but perhaps more clearly and diplomatically.

13. Political neutrality:
Steer clear of ‘party politics’ when engaging with government. If another party comes into power, good relationships with the government must be able to continue without fear of being considered too ‘partisan’ vis à vis the previous governing party or the following governing party.

14. Policy positions:
Ensure that policy positions/statements are short and concise, analytical in approach, reflect realities on the ground and offer feasible solutions. Ensure that budgetary impact for the government of the solutions proposed have been considered and have been referred to in the positions.
6.3. Commitments by the Secretariat of Caritas Europa to foster Institutional Advocacy

In the course of this study, a number of expectations were expressed by member organisations with regard to Caritas Europa Secretariat’s role in fostering Institutional Advocacy.

In response to these expectations, and in order to achieve to its highest extent the Strategic Goal that “National governments establish stronger partnerships with Caritas organisations in Europe”\(^{23}\), the Secretary General of Caritas Europa (CE) expresses the following commitments:

1. **Guidelines:**
   the CE Secretariat will develop further guidelines and create clarity on Institutional Advocacy within and for the network. In order to support the network, the CE Secretariat will create specific tools and facilitate peer-to-peer support actions.

2. **Engaging member organisations’ leadership:**
   the CE’s Secretariat will explain to the leadership of member organisations (at governance and management levels), the essential need to make Institutional Advocacy a clear priority within their organisations’ strategic planning, and to devote appropriate and adequate human, financial and technical resources to this function. Leaders of Caritas member organisations will be encouraged to ‘own’, animate and support the Institutional Advocacy of their organisations.

3. **Disseminate successful practices:**
   the CE’s Secretariat will collect and disseminate promising practices (including those presented in this study), of successful Institutional Advocacy from member organisations.

4. **Respect members’ diversity:**
   the CE’s Secretariat will avoid offering “one size fits all” solutions to members’ problems or challenges (on advocacy as well as on other issues) and instead make due efforts to achieve tailor-made and context-appropriate individual solutions, taking into account the diversity and heterogeneity of the members of Caritas Europa.

5. **Advocate for members:**
   the CE’s Secretariat will assist member organisations in trying to access EU funding, especially in cases where such funding is rejected at EU delegation level for reasons that do not seem justifiable. In such cases, Caritas Europa will support the member organisation in questioning the appropriate EU institutions in Brussels, where appropriate appeals against the decisions taken at delegation level can transpire.
6. The CE’s Secretariat

will facilitate peer-to-peer interaction and other forms of experts’ exchanges between member organisations. Special attention will be given to members needing support with a particular Institutional Advocacy-related challenge, creating contact with other member organisations which can provide such support, use existing or new tools and instruments, with the aim of boosting members’ Institutional Advocacy capacity, energising them and building their confidence.

7. Sensitive issues and situations:

the CE’s Secretariat will provide general guidance to member organisations on how they might deal with Institutional Advocacy processes where sensitive or potentially controversial issues are at stake. Caritas Europa will also warn member organisations in a timely fashion on incidents involving civil society organisations, to the extent that this is possible, which may negatively impact on public perception or the NGO’s reputation, and brief members on how to react in the wake of such incidents, in order to mitigate negative impacts.
Annex: Methodology/process of the study

The study was carried out using the following methodology and process.

Caritas organisations in eleven selected countries were invited to participate in this study and to identify an appropriate and/or expert contact person, who could participate in the process of information and data gathering by, first, completing a standardised online survey, followed up some weeks later by an individual conversation with the author by telephone, with additional country-specific conversation topics and/or questions that aimed at deepening or clarifying some of the responses provided in the online survey.
In addition to the above interactions with experts in Caritas Europa member organisations, existing documentation and publications by Caritas Europa were provided, consulted, and complemented by various sources of information from the internet.

For the online survey, Google Forms was used as the platform for data gathering. The survey was divided into nine sections, each consisting of a number of questions:

1. Identification of the respondent organisation and person.
2. Definition and understanding of the concept of “Institutional Advocacy”.
3. Examples of successful practices of Institutional Advocacy by the respondent organisation.
4. Assessing the ‘Public Institutional Profile’ of the national Caritas organisation in respondent countries.
5. Assessing the (‘enabling’) environment for civil society engagement.
6. Assessment of resources for engagement in advocacy in the respondent countries.
7. Key areas of competence of the respondent organisation.
8. Needs or offers of ‘peer to peer’ support between Caritas member organisations.
9. Feedback on the survey itself (in order to learn for future similar survey exercises).

Following the receipt, review and analysis of the completed responses to the online survey, the author set up a time and date for a follow-up interview. In preparation for this, the author sent the contact person a list of talking points, which to some extent were based upon the responses given in the online survey, seeking further information or clarification. In addition, a number of country- or case-specific talking points were formulated.

Where this was technically possible, conversations took place by telephone, allowing a voice recording to be made of the conversation. In some cases (e.g. Georgia, Armenia) a voice recording was technically not possible and Skype was used, without a verbatim voice recording.

The interviews took between 60 and 90 minutes each. Based on the voice recordings and notes taken, summaries of the interviews were created of between four and six pages each. These were sent back to the interviewed person for feedback, modification and/or approval/sign-off. They are part of the documentation to be submitted by the author to Caritas Europa.
References

1. For more detailed information, please refer to the full report on the Institutional Advocacy Forum, published by Caritas Europa in Brussels in December 2017.


3. ‘Social clauses’ are clauses in public procurement procedures that limit who can tender for government contracts. For instance, a ‘social clause’ can reserve the right to tender exclusively to organisations that integrate disabled or disadvantaged people in the work to be done. Likewise, a ‘social clause’ can reserve the right to tender to organisations that deliver social, health and other services to persons, and which are registered as non-profit organisations and/or as social enterprises.


5. Social Services Europe is composed of Caritas Europa, Cedag, EASPD, EPR, Eurodiaconia, FEANTSA, The Red Cross and Solidar. To know more about it please visit https://www.socialserviceseurope.eu/

6. From “European Social Services: A map of characteristics and trends”, Report prepared for the Council of Europe by Brian Munday, University of Kent.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.


11. The information in this chapter has been drawn from online survey responses; telephone interviews; submitted documents by those interviewed; existing documents, such as the Institutional Advocacy Forum report, among others, in order to compile case studies.


16. In accordance with Pope Pius XI. In Quadragesimo Anno, 1931: http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html

17. While not formally a member organisation of Caritas Europa, Social Justice Ireland (SJI) is the advocacy partner of Caritas Europa on domestic social issues in Ireland. It is an independent think-tank, and a justice advocacy organisation. A lot of church organisations are members of SJI, including dioceses, bishops, religious congregations, individual clergy members and others.


19. CRS is a member in North America of the global Caritas Confederation.


I ask everyone with political responsibility to remember two things: human dignity and the common good.

Pope Francis, Twitter, 1 May 2014