

**RELIGIOUS NGOS – EU PARTENERS IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF SOCIAL POLICIES.  
CASE STUDY: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS NGOS AS EU  
PARTENERS IN PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
EU POLICIES IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT AND  
HUMANITARIAN AID GRANTED TO MIGRANTS**

**Dragoş-Ioan ŞAMŞUDEAN<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:**

*THE BACKGROUND FOR THIS RESEARCH IS REPRESENTED BY THE MIGRANT CRISIS AND THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS NGOS AS WORKING PARTNERS FOR EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, I PROPOSED AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY REGARDING THE ACTIVITY OF RELIGIOUS NGOS AS EU PARTNERS IN PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EU POLICIES IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID GRANTED TO MIGRANTS. STARTING FROM FOLLOWING RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE MOST RELEVANT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS REGARDING SOCIAL COHESION IN THE CONTEXT OF INSURANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID POLICIES GRANTED TO MIGRANTS BY EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RELIGIOUS NGOS? I TRIED TO LINK THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS WITH THE DATA IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE BACKGROUND AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THESE TYPES OF NGOS AS EU PARTNERS I THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES REGARDING THE MIGRANTS CRISIS. FROM METHODOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW, I USED THE INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS. THE CONCLUSION REVEAL THAT A COMPLEX PROBLEM SUCH AS MIGRANT CRISIS REQUIRES AN INTERVENTION FROM A WIDE RANGE OF ACTORS, INCLUDING THE RELIGIOUS NGOS WHO ARE THE MOST PREPARED ACTORS TO MANAGE THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PROBLEMS OF THE MIGRANTS CRISIS DUE TO THE SPECIFIC FEATURES COMING FROM THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE.*

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**KEYWORDS:** MIGRANTS CRISIS, EUROPEAN UNION, RELIGIOUS NGOS, HUMANITARIAN AID, CHARITY, SOCIAL COHESION

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<sup>1</sup> MA student, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, e-mail: samsudean.dragos@yahoo.com

## **INTRODUCTION**

The background for this research is represented by the Migrant crisis and the role of religious NGOs as working partners for European Institutions. The religious demographic map of the world will change in the next century, and the number of people for whom religion is an important part of identity will increase. In this context, it is important to understand the relation between religious actors within the EU and the European institutions and how this particular type of actors can be involved in promoting policies and even managing crises at regional level in cooperation with EU.

Regarding the research problem, I focused on The network of non-governmental religious actors working in collaboration with the (secular) institutions of the European Union to manage issues in the socio-cultural sphere. Due to the fact that there are a multitude of non-governmental religious actors at EU level, for this research my focus goes on the catholic NGOs because the migrant crises is an issue that affects all the states of the European Union and catholicism is the only religion that is equally present in all the EU member states. Even though there are a lot of research on the relation between European institutions and NGOs in the implementation of European policies in the sphere of development and humanitarian aid, there are few research on the relation between European institutions and religious NGOs, and even fewer research on the relation between European institutions and religious NGOs in the context of migrant crisis because of the fact that The European Union has a secular character, there are a multitude of religious actors at EU level, and the migrants crisis is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Starting from what I previously presented my research question is: What are the most relevant conceptual frameworks regarding social cohesion in the context of insurance and implementation of development and humanitarian aid policies granted to migrants by European institutions in partnership with religious NGOs? According to the European Commission In 2015, over 1 million people have made their way to the EU, escaping from conflict in their country in search for better economic prospects. So, the migrant crisis is a major crisis which from the point of view of the *Regional security complex theory* developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, requires cooperation between a wide range of actors like supranational ones as EU, traditional ones as the state and non-governmental actors, secular and religious.

From the point of view of the structure of this article, for a better understanding of the topic discussed, I made a brief revision on the specialized literature resuming the debates of the most relevant authors for the chosen theme. Further I have presented the main conceptual frameworks, the methodology, the case study and last but not least the conclusions. The conclusion is that a complex problem such as migrants crisis requires an intervention from a wide range of actors, including the religious NGOs who are the most prepared actors to manage the socio-cultural problems of the crisis due to the specific features coming from the religious sphere.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE - PROBLEMS AND DEBATES.**

In order to provide a starting point for understanding the topic we have discussed, we have the debates of the most relevant specialists on the topic of this article. Thus, I introduced the main concepts with which I will later work, while aiming to create a context of debate on the relationship between European institutions and religious NGOs in ensuring and implementing development policies and humanitarian aid to migrants.

One of the most important conceptual frameworks for our research is social cohesion, whose definition, origins and evolution are found in Justine Burns's, George Hull's, Kate

Lefko-Everett's and Lindokuhle Njozela's, article *Defining Social Cohesion*. They describe the reality covered by this concept as one of the most challenging and important challenges to political decision-makers, especially in groups / zones / areas whose social structure is a mosaic.<sup>2</sup>At European Union level, from the perspective of relations between European institutions and religious NGOs, social cohesion is addressed from the perspective of two concepts specific to each actor involved: humanitarian aid and charity. Regarding the concept of humanitarian aid, the first author who defines this concept and offers a perspective on the humanitarian aid architecture at the international level is Annika Billing. It defines humanitarian aid as one of the most effective means by which to manage and reduce the effects of a war, a natural disaster and any situation that threatens the lives and safety of some people.<sup>3</sup>More specifically, a perspective of what humanitarian aid means at EU level is outlined by Charlotte Dany. The author presents an assessment of the policies developed by the European Commission in the field of humanitarian aid, as "the largest contributor to humanitarian aid globally".<sup>4</sup>

With regard to the concept of charity, it is defined and explained by Bruce Friedman in the paper "Two Concepts of Charity and Their Relationship to Social Work Practice". According to the author, charity whose origins are found in the New Testament is one of the main values of Christendom, and an important factor in the assurance of elements derived from social welfare state policies.<sup>5</sup>At the level of the European Union, Tiberiu Brăileanu and Aurelian-Petrus Ploeanu present an analysis of the social mission of the Catholic Church. The authors analyze the social and charitable implications of the Catholic Church in Europe from the nineteenth century to the present. They also reveal certain similarities regarding the values on behalf of which both the EU Institutions and Catholic Church through religious NGOs, are socially active.<sup>6</sup>

Last but not least, the concept of social welfare is defined and analyzed by the author Paul Spicker whose research starts from the individual and the values that contribute to the assurance of personal well-being and ends with the idea of state welfare<sup>7</sup> while the concept of the papal encyclical is explained by Anne Fremantle who presents an analysis of official papers issued by the Holy Father in which papal encyclicals are presented as the Vatican's

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<sup>2</sup> Justine Burns et. al., "Defining social cohesion", *SALDRU Working Paper*, 216 (2018): 1-3. Accessed January 22, 2017. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/26f3/86a874b140dccb842b7e29e49e5cb03c5673.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Annika Billing, "Humanitarian Assistance. An introduction to humanitarian assistance and the policy for Sweden's humanitarian aid", *Perspectives*, 17 (2010): 4. Accessed May 13, 2017. [https://globalstudies.gu.se/digitalAssets/1324/1324730\\_17humassistance.pdf](https://globalstudies.gu.se/digitalAssets/1324/1324730_17humassistance.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Charlotte Dany, "Politicization of Humanitarian Aid in the European Union", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 3 (2015): 419. Accessed February 6, 2018. [https://www.academia.edu/16981055/Politicization\\_of\\_Humanitarian\\_Aid\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Union\\_European\\_Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Review\\_2015](https://www.academia.edu/16981055/Politicization_of_Humanitarian_Aid_in_the_European_Union_European_Foreign_Affairs_Review_2015).

<sup>5</sup> Bruce D. Friedman, "Two concepts of charity and their relationship to social work practice", *Social Thought*, 21(2002): 8. Accessed February 6, 2018. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233306772\\_Two\\_Concepts\\_of\\_Charity\\_and\\_Their\\_Relationship\\_to\\_Social\\_Work\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233306772_Two_Concepts_of_Charity_and_Their_Relationship_to_Social_Work_Practice).

<sup>6</sup> Tiberiu Brăileanu and Aurelian-Petrus Ploeanu, "Catholic social teaching and the origins of European Union", *CES Working Papers*, 2 (2014):16. Accessed June 21, 2018. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267452210\\_CATHOLIC\\_SOCIAL\\_TEACHING\\_AND\\_THE\\_ORIGINS\\_OF\\_EUROPEAN\\_UNION](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267452210_CATHOLIC_SOCIAL_TEACHING_AND_THE_ORIGINS_OF_EUROPEAN_UNION).

<sup>7</sup> Paul Spicker, *Principles of social welfare. An introduction to thinking about the welfare state* (San Paolo: Routledge, 1988) 8. Accessed June 6, 2018. <http://www.spicker.uk/books/Paul%20Spicker%20-%20Principles%20of%20Social%20Welfare.pdf>.

action strategies at different time points on issues in various sectors.<sup>8</sup>These latter two concepts need to be explained because they are directly related to the main data and conceptual frameworks analyzed. The debate surrounding the question of research includes discussions on the moral values on which the European Union has built up, values which in the great majority send to the Christian dogmas of help, understanding, communion, thus establishing a connection between European Union and the Catholic Church as a representative of the Christian world, a link that, despite the secular character of the EU, transcends European areas and policies such as development and humanitarian aid.

### **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.**

One of the authors who investigate and analyze the theories of international relations from the religious perspective of their radar is Daniel Philpott. He points out that the theories of international relations have a secular character, incorporating a set of historical events and features taken over from 1500-1700 such as the transfer of power and authority from religious institutions to sovereign states and the subordination of state religious actors to the state on state territory, Hobbes, Machiavelli, JJ Rousseau and Kant not only describe the world in which religious actors have lost power, but even encouraging the separation of the State from the Church and the political practice. The historical event with the greatest impact on the relationship between the state and the Church was the Protestant Reform that led to the development of three factors that facilitated the transfer of power and authority to the state. The first factor is the development of theology and theological thinking which led to the delegitimization of the prerogatives of the Catholic Church and the legitimation and enhancement of the prerogatives of the king or the prince. The second factor is the attraction of a large part of the population to Protestantism, which led to the weakening of the Catholic Church. The last factor is the fact that Protestants were placed under the protection of kings and princes, demonstrating that religious actors can not act independently in the international system.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that religious authorities have lost to secular power is understood to mean that the Pope's transnational political authority has disappeared, Papal authority being strictly a spiritual one. Religious authorities are also subordinated to state political authority. Catholic theologian Henri de Lubac in his work *Corpus Mysticum* develops a theory called *The Migration of the Holy*, which presents the Church as a body of individuals who migrated to the political body, namely the secular state.<sup>10</sup>Realists like Hobbes, Machiavelli and Rousseau and liberals such as Kant, Locke and Smith described international relations as if the ecclesial authorities had little control, evoked and supported the loss of power by the Church, which they sometimes even ignored and more than that, they supported the existence of a morality of international relations, independent of the authority and teaching of the Church. Niccolo Machiavelli claimed that the Church itself is more than just a political actor (religious component) and involved in manipulations and other political behaviors similar to Italian-state cities. Thomas Hobbes, in his *Leviathan ...* did not ignore religion, but imagined his political authority without the influence of the bishops in particular. Hans Morgenthau said that it is impossible to be a successful politician and a good Christian. Last but not least,

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<sup>8</sup> Anne Fremantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in their historical context*, (New York :The New American Library, 1956), 21.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations", *World Politics*, 52 (2000):76-77. Accessed march 7, 2018. <https://people.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/migrated/Pol272/Philpott.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations", 77-80.

coming from a theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, is the idea that moral norms should not or should govern political behavior in an absolute sense.<sup>11</sup>

There is a close relationship between a supranational entity such as the European Union and the Catholic Church. The EU has its roots in Catholicism and its social dogma. Several traditions of political Catholicism have stimulated the vocation of the new European construction after the Second World War. One of them was based on the European continental orientation of political Catholicism antagonizing socialist ideology and Stalinist centralization. If in the Middle Ages the Catholic Church provided the means necessary for the struggle against the Ottomans, in the twentieth century it provided the democratic values necessary for the fight against communism.<sup>12</sup> The visible link between religion and politics at the level of the European Union is represented by the Christian Democratic parties. The role of the Christian-democratic European parties in the realization of the European Union was an important one because of the formal and informal co-operation ties established by them, which contributed to the creation of a capital transnational social and trust in a European political project. The Christian Democrats have tried to build a Catholic Europe, a decentralized federation based on the Catholic principle of subsidiarity.<sup>13</sup>

As regards the research problem of this article, the most relevant concept is social cohesion. Social cohesion has generated an increased interest from international organizations, government institutions, states, and decision-makers since the 1980s. The interest in this concept was often due to divisions and divisions within societies, divisions related to economic factors, tensions associated with migration and ethnic or cultural conflicts.<sup>14</sup> The European Council defined social cohesion as "the ability of society to ensure the long-term well-being of all its members, including fair access to available resources, respect for human dignity, respect for diversity, personal and collective autonomy and responsible participation within that society".<sup>15</sup>

These definitions are often practice-oriented and relate to programs and policies implemented in particular by governments, international actors and NGOs.<sup>16</sup> In order to implement such projects and policies, the European Union collaborates with religious NGOs on the basis of humanitarian aid and charity concepts thus ensuring social cohesion for migrants in this case.

Humanitarian aid means all efforts to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in need who are or are at risk of armed conflict or are affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or other disaster situations, which are serious impediments to the supply and survival of populations or of a whole community. In the case of armed conflict, the main beneficiary group is the civilian, the population, but also members of the armed forces that are no longer engaged in hostilities, such as injured and sick soldiers.<sup>17</sup> With regard to humanitarian aid, the European Union seeks to provide assistance and individual assistance to all third-country nationals who are victims of natural or man-made disasters in order to respond to the humanitarian needs resulting from these

<sup>11</sup> Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations", 80-84.

<sup>12</sup> Brăileanu and Ploeanu, "Catholic social teaching and the origins of European Union", 27-28.

<sup>13</sup> Brăileanu and Ploeanu, "Catholic social teaching and the origins of European Union", 28.

<sup>14</sup> Burns et. al., "Defining social cohesion", 2.

<sup>15</sup> The European Council official page, accessed on March 22, 2019. [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council\\_ro](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council_ro).

<sup>16</sup> Burns et. al., "Defining social cohesion", 4.

<sup>17</sup> Billing, "Humanitarian Assistance. An introduction to humanitarian assistance and the policy for Sweden's humanitarian aid", 5.

different situations as stated in Article.143 TFEU.<sup>18</sup> The EU is the largest contributor to humanitarian aid worldwide, given its contributions as a supranational organization, as well as the bilateral aid granted by the Member States. The European Commission spends more than 1 billion euros annually in the humanitarian aid sector.<sup>19</sup>The EU involves a large number of NGOs as partners in the implementation and formulation of humanitarian aid policies. Most of the contributions to the negotiations are transmitted through the Voluntary Organizations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), a network of over 80 NGOs based in Brussels, including religious NGOs.<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the concept of charity, it comes from Latin word *caritas*, and according to Christian doctrine it has the meaning of giving up some of its own assets to help your neighbor. In other words, through charity, we understand any aid action that ensures a decent level of living or at least the survival of some people. As practice in Christian churches, charity is often attributed to Saints, most notably St. Francis of Assisi. These people not only provide material but also spiritual, moral support. This concept has evolved with society and the world, and today it has been taken over from Christian dogma, into state and even supranational policies of the EU in the form of social welfare.<sup>21</sup>Social well-being is defined as the sum of the welfare of all individuals in a society that in turn means the ability to assure all primary needs.<sup>22</sup>At the level of the European Union, Papal Encyclicals of Papal Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francisc urge both European leaders and citizens to understanding, mutual aid and communion. The Papal Encyclical is a pastoral letter or an apostolic letter, universal in character for all people, through which the Holy Father expresses points of view and provides advice on major issues on the international relations arena. For the Vatican and the Catholic Church, these papal encyclicals are the equivalent of presidential decrees, the equivalent of action strategies in various fields.<sup>23</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The specialized literature that has been consulted identifies, as primary sources, the following documents: Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, My Region, My Europe, Our Future. Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion and Papal Encyclicals: The Populorum Progressio encyclical of Pope Paul VI, The Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* of Pope John Paul II, The Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* of Pope Benedict al XVI-lea and The Encyclical *Laudato Si* of Pope Francisc.Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth was launched in 2010 and proposes five EU action areas with targets to be achieved by 2020 that will lead the Union's process and actions and will also be translated into national targets of the Member States. These areas cover jobs, research and innovation, climate change and energy, education and the fight against poverty. In essence, this strategy represents the European leadership's response to problems within the Union, proposing to create more jobs, raising the standard of living for citizens and ensuring a safe social climate in all respects by

<sup>18</sup> “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union”. Accessed on march 22, 2019.[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9e8d52e1-2c70-11e6-b49701aa75ed71a1.0006.01/DOC\\_3&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9e8d52e1-2c70-11e6-b49701aa75ed71a1.0006.01/DOC_3&format=PDF).

<sup>19</sup> Dany,” Politicization of Humanitarian Aid in the European Union”, 419-420.

<sup>20</sup> Dany,” Politicization of Humanitarian Aid in the European Union”, 422.

<sup>21</sup> Friedman, “Two concepts of charity and their relationship to social work practice”, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Spicker, *Principles of social welfare. An introduction to thinking about the welfare state* ,12.

<sup>23</sup> Fremantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in their historical context* ,21.

delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive development policies.<sup>24</sup>To better understand the projection of these strategies in the European Union, including a look at the wave of migrants facing the EU, we identified the European Commission's report My Region, My Europe, Our Future. Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion that provides insight into what has been achieved and what has not been achieved within the EU by the year 2017 in relation to the strategy adopted in 2010.<sup>25</sup>

From the perspective of the Catholic Church, the main data was gathered following the revision of Papal Encyclicals, which I will shortly present in chronological order. The *Populorum Progressio* encyclical of Pope Paul VI was issued by the Holy Father in 1967. Despite the fact that they have been around 60 years since then, her exhortations are more current than ever. Paul VI emphasizes the need for the communion and the cooperation of the European leaders at that time to achieve the well-being of all people, the need for understanding and tolerance.<sup>26</sup>Commitment to cohesion, understanding and friendship is continued by Pope John Paul II in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, while stressing the importance of the social mission of the Catholic Church and the need for collaboration between the Church and political bodies to cope with contemporary social needs by ensuring prosperity and the good development of all people.<sup>27</sup> The most recent and clear of the encyclicals studied – regarding the charitable mission of the Catholic Church and the need for interinstitutional cooperation between secular and religious institutions in promoting and implementing social aid policies; is the The Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* of Pope Benedict XVI. The Holy Father emphasizes that the charity of the Church, alongside with Christian moral and social values must be more present than ever in the formulation of development and social aid policies, while promoting tolerance, understanding and equal opportunities.<sup>28</sup> Last but not least, in the Encyclical *Laudato Si*, although the main topics covered are global warming, environmental issues and the degradation of the planet, social issues such as poverty, discrimination and conflicts are not neglected. Francis joins his predecessors in the social discourse, highlighting the importance of charity, the need for understanding and tolerance, especially in the context of the wave of migrants, peace and cooperation in the context of the Crimean crisis and cooperation between political leaders in order to ensure the stability and welfare of citizens.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the conceptual projection of social cohesion through humanitarian aid is found at European Union level in the Europe 2020 Strategy. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. So, in terms of development and humanitarian aid, the "European Platform Against Poverty", whose purpose is to ensure territorial, economic and social cohesion, combating poverty and social exclusion, raising awareness, recognizing and respecting rights fundamental principles of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and ensuring them a dignified life with active participation in European society. All this

<sup>24</sup> "Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", The European Commission, Accessed on march 13,2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/index\\_ro](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/index_ro).

<sup>25</sup> "My Region, My Europe, Our Future. Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion", The European Commission. Accessed on march 13,2019. [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/information/cohesion-report/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/cohesion-report/).

<sup>26</sup> "Populorum Progressio. Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the development of peoples", The Holy See. Accessed on march 15,2019. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.

<sup>27</sup> "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis", The Holy See. Accessed on march 15,2019. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.

<sup>28</sup> "Caritas in Veritate", The Holy See. Accessed on march 17,2019. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.

<sup>29</sup> "Laudato Si. On care for our common home", The Holy See, Accessed on march 17,2019. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.

involves collaboration between the European institutions, Member State governments and non-governmental organizations.<sup>30</sup>The research method used is the institutional discourse analysis for documents issued by the European Commission, in this case, Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, My Region, My Europe, Our Future. Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion and documents issued by the Holy See, namely the Papal Encyclical: The Populorum Progressio encyclical of Pope Paul VI, The Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis of Pope John Paul II, The Encyclical Caritas in Veritate of Pope Benedict al XVI-lea and The Encyclical Laudato Si of Pope Francisc.

### **CASE STUDY: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS NGOS AS EU PARTENERS IN PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EU POLICIES IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID GRANTED TO MIGRANTS.**

The bind of the cooperation between the institutions of the European Union and the religious institutions, especially the Catholic ones, in the field of development and humanitarian aid granted to migrants is realized and is implemented by religious NGOs. From a conceptual point of view, the activity of this type of non-governmental organizations is found at the border between secular and religious, their actions relying on the concept of humanitarian aid found in EU official documents as well as on the concept of dogma charity Christian religion. At the practical level, what distinguishes the activity of religious NGOs from the work of other types of NGOs is represented by this reference to moral and Christian values and the support of the Churches, which facilitates the implementation of projects taking into account the capacity of a large influence of religious institutions, the number of their followers who can easily provide the necessary volunteer staff and the deep-rooted spiritual-cultural ties in most societies, the clerical staff being constantly in the midst of the communities, knowing their needs and problems, and thus contribute to the effective formulation of policies in the social and humanitarian sphere.

In order to better understand the chosen case study, it is first necessary to define what religious NGOs mean. In recent literature and studies, non-state religious actors - in local, national, regional, international, and global contexts - are mentioned in various ways. These include: religious NGOs, non-profit based religious organizations and faith-based organizations. Religious NGOs are defined as formal organizations whose identity and mission are consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and operate according to a non-profit, independent, voluntary organization in order to provide services, both at national and international level.<sup>31</sup>Also, non-governmental religious organizations are characterized by missions rooted in religious and spiritual beliefs that rely on a variety of processes to achieve their goals. Processes such as networking, monitoring and providing information (propaganda) are common to most NGOs, while others, including spiritual guidance, prayer and modeling, are a unique feature of religious NGO operations.<sup>32</sup>

In today's international context, the work of religious NGOs includes, in particular, actions in the sphere of the social sector, humanitarian actions and the support of various development programs, both in infrastructure (construction of hospitals, schools) and in the

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<sup>30</sup> "Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", The European Commission, Accessed on march 13,2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/index\\_ro](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/index_ro).

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey Haynes, "Faith-based Organisations at the United Nations", *EUI Working Paper*, 70 (2013):2. Accessed on march 4,2019.

[https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28119/RSCAS\\_2013\\_70.pdf?sequence=1](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28119/RSCAS_2013_70.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>32</sup> Haynes, "Faith-based Organisations at the United Nations", 3.



training of specialized personnel (medical assistance, social assistance, teachers, etc.) Religious non-governmental organizations are also involved in programs of rehabilitation and social inclusion of disadvantaged and integrative people at the level of small communities (eg cities), especially in the current European context, integration of migrants. Thus, through priests and pastors, as well as the Church as an institution, religious NGOs provide both the specialized assistance necessary for the persons mentioned in the above programs and spiritual assistance, the purpose of these NGOs being to assist individuals and give them the necessary framework to build their own lives.<sup>33</sup>Based on the concepts of humanitarian aid and charity to ensure social cohesion for migrants and on the basis of shared values shared by the European Institutions and the Catholic Church, as a major religious institution at European Union level, non-governmental religious organizations are integrated into the Governance process of EU through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EPDDO). It was set up in 2007 with a total budget of EUR 1.3 billion for the period 2014-2020, with a view to implementing projects from civil society through NGOs, projects selected following application and implementation their analysis. Religious non-governmental organizations as part of civil society are encouraged to apply for EU funding to implement human rights, development and humanitarian projects within the framework of human development and humanitarian aid granted to migrants.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the commitment to values such as democracy, human rights and humanitarian aid, member states in the European Union, with some exceptions (Germany and Sweden), have failed to address the effective management of the migrants' crisis, EU leaders being incapable of provide a common and coherent response to managing migratory flows. Moreover, at some Member States, a tough, even extremist rhetoric was addressed to migrants, promoting exclusionary measures and making asylum difficult.<sup>35</sup>In the context of the migrants 'crisis and the lack of response from the European Union, NGOs' activities of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian aid to migrants are an important part of the actions and projects of non-governmental religious organizations. Based on the relations established with the EU institutions and projects started and supported by European funds presented in the previous subchapter at the level of the member states, they ensured the transition and the integration of the migrants in the society. Against the backdrop of an attitude of social exclusion, racism and xenophobia, and in the absence of European integration policies, the work of religious NGOs, congregations, parishes and Christian-social missionary organizations has become much more important and visible, including the High Commissioner for UN refugees recognizing the importance of the work of religious NGOs.<sup>36</sup>At the European Union level, this activity was manifested in the context of the migrants' crisis through the lobby of non-governmental religious organizations alongside the national governments of the EU member states in order to intensify asylum procedures for

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<sup>33</sup> Candice N. Watson, "Faith-based Organizations and Their Contributions to Society", *Research Papers: Open SIUC*, 323(2012): 8. Accessed on march 4,2019.

[https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1397&context=gs\\_rp](https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1397&context=gs_rp).

<sup>34</sup> Philippe Perchoc, *Religion and the EU's external policies*, European Parliament Think Thank. Accessed on december 12,2018.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_IDA%282017%29614612](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_IDA%282017%29614612).

<sup>35</sup> Luca Mavelli, Erin K. Wilson, *The Refugee Crisis and Religion: Secularism, Security and Hospitality in Question*, Ed. Rowman & Littlefield, New York, 2017, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Christine Goodall, "Shouting towards the Sky: the role of religious individuals, communities, organisations and institutions in support for refugees and asylum seekers", *New issues in refugee research*, 275(2015):3-4. Accessed on december 12,2018. <https://www.unhcr.org/554764b49.pdf>.

applicants, respect for human rights and the environment socio-economic integration of migrants. An example of this comes from the UK where the bishops of the Anglican Church criticized the government for making asylum procedures difficult for migrants.<sup>37</sup> Another example is the Protestant clergy in Germany who, along with non-governmental religious organizations, have asked German political leaders to step up migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Last but not least, the Conference of European Churches and the Dutch charity Church in Action called for the Dutch government to provide asylum seekers with much better living conditions throughout the proceedings.<sup>38</sup> Also, religious NGOs provide access to information and shelter for migrants. Following a high-level meeting of the European Commission and following the call by Pope Francis for accepting, protecting and integrating migrants in European society, Catholic religious NGOs, along with local churches, provided migrant churches with temporary shelters. Thus, through the action of non-governmental religious organizations, the resources needed to provide the basic needs for migrants were provided. Also, through religious NGOs, migrants also have access to information on asylum procedures and the social and cultural structure of the European Union.<sup>39</sup>

Last but not least, these non-governmental religious organizations ensure the development and implementation of long-term projects, integration into European societies and labor market access for migrants.<sup>40</sup> Since there are many religious NGOs at EU level and the article does not allow for an analysis of the work of all in the field of development and humanitarian aid to migrants, I chose to exemplify and support the theoretical and methodological aspects, the presentation of the activity in the mentioned field of NGOs religious organization Caritas Europa, an NGO working under the direction of the Catholic Church. In order for the topic to be topical, Caritas Europe's work as an EU partner in development and humanitarian aid to migrants will be presented in the context of a project that is in progress, the period being between October 2017 and September 2020. Caritas Europe is one of the 12 Caritas organizations from 11 European countries participating in a three-year project that aims to raise awareness of the links between migration and development. The start of the project, 2017, coincides with the presentation of the European Commission report My Region, My Europe, Our Future. Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, which draws attention to a major new issue at EU level: migration and integration of migrants. Thus, in the Caritas Europe project, each year, Caritas will focus on a specific topic that covers the evolution of the migratory process and the situation of migrants, starting from identifying the causes of forced migration, integration and steps to create societies that ensure social inclusion of migrants and, last but not least, ensuring integration in European societies by identifying the most effective ways in which migrants can benefit those societies so that they can be assured that human dignity and decent living, objectives also pursued by the Europe 2020 Strategy A European strategy for smart,

<sup>37</sup> Goodall, "Shouting towards the Sky: the role of religious individuals, communities, organisations and institutions in support for refugees and asylum seekers", 16.

<sup>38</sup> Goodall, "Shouting towards the Sky: the role of religious individuals, communities, organisations and institutions in support for refugees and asylum seekers", 16.

<sup>39</sup> Martina Prpic, *Religion and human rights*, European Parliament Think Thank. Accessed on december 12, 2018. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/religious-and-non-confessional-dialogue/events/en-20181204-eprs-briefing-religion-and-human-rights.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> Darrell Jackson and Alessia Passarelli, "Mapping migration, mapping Churches response in Europe", *World Council of Churches Publications*, 1(2016):101. Accessed on november 21, 2018. [https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2016-01-08-Mapping\\_Migration\\_2015\\_Online\\_lo-res\\_\\_2\\_.pdf](https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2016-01-08-Mapping_Migration_2015_Online_lo-res__2_.pdf).

sustainable and inclusive growth. The project is titled "Migration.Interconnectivity. Development "(MIND) and is co-funded by the European Commission through the Directorate-General for International Development and Cooperation.<sup>41</sup>

The MIND project is structured on three pillars as follows: 1. Cases of forced migration, 2. Preparing European societies for receiving, accepting and integrating migrants, and 3. Migrants as development actors for European communities. This project seeks to raise awareness of the relationship between sustainable development and migration and the role of the EU in development cooperation. Overall, the objective of Caritas Europe in this project is to encourage the acceptance and inclusion of migrants in the societies of the EU Member States and, on the other hand, to ensure that EU and Member States' development aid is used exclusively to reduce and eradicate poverty and improve people's lives.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, through the meetings organized by this religious NGO with representatives of national governments, corporations and the international business community as well as members of civil society, Caritas Europe also tries to identify possible jobs, so that at the end of the project , MIND to leave behind not only changed mentalities regarding migrants but also a social situation that allows them to ensure human dignity and decent living. The religious NGO Caritas wants a Europe that receives, protects, promotes, integrates and leaves no one behind.<sup>43</sup>

European Union financial support for the project implemented by Caritas Europe underlines the trust the EU attaches to this religious NGO, along with the recognition of common values in whose behalf these actors operate, values such as aid and charity, freedom and cooperation, understanding and tolerance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Looking at the relationship between religion and social progress, it can be argued that social development must not necessarily be associated with secularization and that religious NGOs along with other non-governmental organizations and with governments and institutions of the European Union can make special progress in the area of health systems, education and service provision and development, and in the event of crisis situations such as the wave of migrants, ensuring their transition, accommodation and integration into the new societies.<sup>44</sup>

As far as the results of this research are concerned, we have identified that the concept of social cohesion in the provision and implementation of development policies and humanitarian aid to migrants promoted by the European institutions in partnership with religious NGOs actually includes two other concepts and namely humanitarian aid from the perspective of the European Union and charity from the perspective of religious non-governmental organizations. Thus, social cohesion is seen as a key objective in both the European Union's strategy for action, Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and in the Papal Encyclicals issued by the Holy See,

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<sup>41</sup> "Migration and development matter!", Caritas Europa. Accessed on november 10, 2018.  
<https://www.caritas.eu/migration-and-development-matter/>.

<sup>42</sup> "MIND.Migration.Interconnectedness.Development", Caritas Europa. Accessed on november 10, 2018.  
<https://www.caritas.eu/mind/>.

<sup>43</sup> "MIND.Migration.Interconnectedness.Development", Caritas Europa. Accessed on november 10, 2018.  
<https://www.caritas.eu/mind/>.

<sup>44</sup> Nora Milotay, *Faith-based actors and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights*, European Parliament Think Thank. Accessed on december 12,2018.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623549/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)623549\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623549/EPRS_BRI(2018)623549_EN.pdf).

encyclicals governing the work of the Catholic Church and NGOs Catholic religious cults. At the practical level in ensuring and implementing development policies and humanitarian aid to migrants, social cohesion from the EU perspective takes the form of humanitarian aid, while from the perspective of the Catholic religious NGOs of the Union takes the form of charity. Despite the fact that the European Union has a secular character, far from a religious affiliation, the relationship between the European Union Institutions and religious NGOs is grounded in the existence of common issues taken over by the EU in its religious formation process. Starting from the principle of subsidiarity taken from the organization of the Catholic Church and up to values such as human dignity, freedom, equality and human rights, the EU has more points to share with religion than it is to be believed. What is to be borne in mind with religious NGOs in European Construction is that, despite specific features from the religious sphere, these types of non-governmental organizations are effective and trustworthy partners for the European Institutions, being involved in both the EU governance governance (policy formulation, assistance with specialized personnel in different areas of expertise) and fieldwork in the context of this article to promote and implement EU development and humanitarian aid policies for migrants.

As there is a multitude of non-governmental religious actors at the level of the European Union, we chose to present the work of the Caritas Europe religious NGO in the case study on its involvement in humanitarian development and humanitarian aid for migrants. Thus, the presented theoretical and methodological framework finds its projection in the implementation of the MIND project by Caritas Europe in the period 2017-2020. Migration. Interconnectedness. Development. In partnership with the European Commission - the Directorate-General for International Development and Cooperation, in line with the 2020 strategy objectives. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the 2017 Commission report My Region, My Europe, Our Future. The seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, as well as the Christian charity and the objectives mentioned in the Papal Encyclical, especially the Benedict XVI Encyclical Caritas in Verity, Caritas Europe has set the foundations of the MIND project, EU awareness of migrants' issues, identification of the causes of forced migration, preparation of EU Member States' companies for the reception of migrants and, last but not least, the integration of migrants and their preparation for integration into the labor market.

Last but not least, as I have already said, the migrants crisis is a complex one requiring an equally complex response from a wide variety of actors. At regional level, the most effective partners for European institutions in managing socio-cultural issues in the context of migrants' crisis are religious NGOs. These types of NGOs, due to the characteristics from the religious sphere, can ensure the most effective integration of migrants into the new societies of the EU member states. What is to be borne in mind by this article is that social development and integration must not necessarily be associated with secularization. In partnership with the European Institutions and national governments as well as with other non-governmental organizations, religious NGOs succeed at the level of the European Union to collaborate and provide the necessary resources to improve the standard of living of European citizens. Moreover, as can be seen from the case study, religious non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with EU institutions, can provide expert expertise and can act in the direction of crisis management.

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