



## **COMECE Statement on the Agreement reached on the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum**

**22 December 2023**

The agreement reached by the Parliament and the Council on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum manifests the capacity of the European Union to deliver, also on divisive issues. It also recognises that migration is a common challenge for all the EU and no Member State can be left alone.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to deliver well, in line with EU's identity and values. Many entities that work first hand with migrants and asylum seekers, some of them Catholic, have expressed their deep concerns on this agreement.

The danger is that this new Pact will increase the suffering of migrants and asylum seekers, producing massive detentions at our borders, even of families and small children, and the deportation of people to third countries that are not as 'safe' as often depicted. There is the real risk that with this Pact on Migration and Asylum the EU will fail to protect the right to asylum and other human rights.

We call the EU to be courageous in facing this epochal challenge of people on the move who seek a safer and better life for themselves and their dear ones. The EU has already demonstrated its ability to do so with Ukrainians fleeing the war.

The fear of people coming with different cultural or religious backgrounds, who may challenge our “European way of life”, as well as the fear of populism and of losing elections, cannot be the guiding principles of our asylum and migration policies.

Instead, we strongly believe that solidarity and the respect for the dignity of every person must be the guiding values of such policies. Europe’s vocation is to work for a more just and fraternal world for all, not only for Europeans.

These days we will celebrate Christmas, commemorating the birth of Jesus, who we recognise as the only begotten Son of God, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace.

He was laid by his mother Mary in a manger, “because there was no place for them in the inn” (Lk 2:7). “Some days after, they had to escape to Egypt to get away from the persecution of Herod” (Mt 2:13-15).

That is why, beyond laws and policies, the Church will always be on the side of the most vulnerable, of those people forced to move in search of a dignified life.

May the Nativity of Christ illuminate our minds and move our hearts to take the right decisions for the good of all!