

**Official handover between
the outgoing Secretary general Marius Wanders
and the incoming Secretary general Jorge Nuño Mayer**

Dear Marius,
Dear Jorge,
Dear Guests and friends of Caritas in Europe,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you for this official handover between our outgoing Secretary general Marius Wanders and the incoming Secretary general Jorge Nuño Mayer, who will take office officially on October 1st 2010. I am happy to welcome so many good old friends of Caritas. Let me just mention and specifically welcome some of them:

Denis Vienot, the former President of Caritas Europa and the first boss of Marius, who was instrumental hiring and guiding Marius in his first steps, Cristina Loghin, who Marius knew for many years as Vice-president and who was serving as President of Caritas Europa for nearly 2 years.

One of the former jobs of Marius was to be **a sailor on big tankers**. I think he loved to be a sailor and will continue loving this job which made him a lifelong captain. He often used pictures from that time to make people understand his views and understandings of Caritas Europa. Dear Marius, in this sense I will **use the picture of a harbour** for your today's farewell. As a captain you brought your beloved ship Caritas Europa in a new harbour. Today we are far away from the harbour you started your journey of Caritas Europa. And as you know better than we do, harbours are places to land, to decompress and to relax, to prepare and to restart again. The most natural way to change staff or even captains is in a harbour. Changing the captain in the open sea normally would mean that the ship-owner has to manage a serious crisis by exchanging its captain, or an illness or disease would prevent the captain to continue his journey. I am happy that we are in that very first situation of a calm transfer of power in a well prepared harbour. You have done a great job and you leave our ship in a good shape.

One year ago it was not foreseen and not foreseeable that you would leave Caritas Europa in this harbour. But as we know we are not the masters of history and time. We had envisaged changing captains in Rome next year after the General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis. When the board took its decision to elect Jorge as your successor, you did not want to become a liability to that organisation into which you had invested so much. And so it was providential that you were called to serve on another ship for the next stage of your working life. And so we are grateful to Jorge who was willing **to fly into this harbour** and to take over far away from the harbour he was supposed to take over next year.

Our last board meeting took place in Oslo, the home town of our Vice-president Kari-Mette. As a special gift to you Marius, she organised a **boat trip out in the fjords** of Oslo. As board members we wanted to be with you at least for some time all together on the same boat laughing, eating and drinking, sharing our lives and our stories. This was a wonderful moment which will remain in our memories. Now you are going to change your boat. You leave Caritas Europa as a professional. You leave the people who have served Caritas Europa together with you as a professional, and for some as a friend. We know that Caritas Europa has changed your heart and your mind and it is good to know that you will leave us as you turned it as a better person. Marius, go ahead and use all your strength and capabilities to continuously serve people in need on a different ship and with a different carrier. We keep your memory as a loyal and honest professional, transforming the ship Caritas Europa into a storm-proved and future-minded building.

Dear Jorge,

Are you now in a disadvantaged position because you were not trained as a skipper or captain? Certainly not! And that's why I have chosen the picture of a harbour for this handover ceremony and not the picture of a ship. You like to walk and to bike. You are a pilgrimer. On my trip around the world this year, I was visiting four important pacific harbours: the harbour of Vancouver, the harbour of San Francisco, the harbour of Auckland and the harbour of Sydney. What impressed me most in all those harbours was their specific location. You can't build a harbour in the open sea. For transitions and trade, you need **calm waters**. For those building harbours it was important to find places where the open sea and the land met in a unique way. Calm waters needed to meet a piece of earth where cities and roads could be built. This will of building and constructing around the water finds its beautiful expression in all the famous bridges built in harbours. The Golden Gate Bridge or the Sydney Harbour Bridge are symbols of its own, they show what else is possible in a harbour.

Dear Jorge, the board invited you not to rush on the ship and to immediately leave again in the **open sea**. It is time for a new pilgrimage. **It's time to build bridges**. As a board we have invited our network to enter a face of sabbatical reflection. Before re-entering the high sea we need to make some fundamental **decisions where to go and what vessel or whatever other means of transportation we need**. But before all that, we need to rebuild our common projects and our common community. Our project and our community cannot be divided. We need to intensively meet as people of God to plan our journey. We do this as members of the whole human family and together as the whole human family. Caritas should not and will not isolate itself because its ministry by definition is to serve the common good of all people specifically those in need. That purpose will guide you as the new architect for bridges in our actual harbour.

As I already mentioned we are very grateful to you Jorge, that you were willing, together with your family and partly on their costs, to start your new work in a harbour and at a time not planned when we recruited you. Once again I want to express our gratitude to you and to your family for your flexibility and for your professional answer to the new challenge. The same gratitude goes to your home organisation Caritas Española and his Secretary general Sebastián Mora Rosado.

It is now **time to build projects and bridges** for the future together with all our stakeholders here in Brussels. And as you Jorge know, the best way to make people building a new ship or a new vessel or another new way of transportation, lies not first in the capacity to technically screw and hammer but to dream together about a new future. I sincerely hope and wish that you will be able to build our new strategy 2020 together with all of us in the next couple of months. I am eager to see your bridges and your plans. You are at once a trans-cultural person in yourself. Having a German mother makes you understand order, norms and rules. Having a Spanish father makes you understand that progress and dynamics do not lie in norms and in rules but more in ambitions and the willingness to fight for your dreams. Being married to a Polish artist brings a new harmony and equilibrium in your life. Being the father of two adult children reminds you how to manage responsibility in a family where humility is the key factor of integration and life in community.

Dear Jorge, we are happy to welcome you as a *Sozialpädagoge* (social worker) and new leader of Caritas in Europa here in Brussels. Start building bridges.

Erny Gillen
Brussels, 28.9.2010