
Austria: Mgr. Landau (Caritas), “abolition of minimum income was a mistake that had dramatic consequences for many people”

Caritas Austria makes an assessment of the basic social welfare law that is currently being reviewed by the Federal Government. As announced in a statement, Caritas welcomes the plans announced by the Federal Government yesterday to review the basic social protection law, but considers that these remedial actions come late, after the old minimum income was abolished in the previous legislature – an action that had widely called into question social assistance as the last safety net for people. “The abolition of the minimum income was a mistake and sometimes had dramatic consequences for the people affected”, said Caritas President, Mgr. Michael Landau. Any further improvement in social assistance must be welcomed. The problem, according to Landau, is that “even these redressals cannot replace a comprehensive reform of social assistance”. More and more people who benefit from the new social assistance or minimum social security are turning to Caritas social counselling offices for help, Landau said: “This shows a structural problem in the conception of the new social assistance. As a matter of fact: more and more people do not know how to make ends meet”. Families with many children are particularly affected, but also single parents and minimum pensioners who have to choose between heating and eating.

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