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## **Austria: agreement between Caritas Styria and Raiffeisen Bank relaunches “We Help” social fund. Poverty on the rise**

People's need for financial support is greater than ever, and the need for aid for people at risk of poverty continues to increase, Caritas Steiermark said in a statement today. The humanitarian organization and the Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark will therefore continue their social fund “We Help – for social cohesion”, launched over a year ago. As the number of people at risk of poverty is on the rise according to Caritas, the fund will be strengthened with a special pre-Christmas campaign. In order to provide targeted support, Raiffeisen Steiermark will be collecting three euro cents from transactions made by customers until 24 December, Martin Schaller, general manager of Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark, announced. This includes cash withdrawals, mobile payments and debit card payments in shops. The money thus generated will flow into the “We Help” fund. The director of Caritas Steiermark, Nora Tödtling-Musenbichler, described the cooperation between Caritas and RLB Steiermark as “neighbourhood help in the best sense of the word”. Because both the donors and the people who will receive the aid are from Styria. “This is also a sign of great solidarity in our society. Due to high prices and stagnant incomes, many Styrians have been under pressure in recent months and have financial difficulties in managing their lives”, explained Tödtling-Musenbichler. According to Caritas, people with low pensions or incomes, families with more than one child and single parents are particularly affected. Since the beginning of the cooperation in autumn 2022, almost €400,000 have already been collected.

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