

## Nataliia Lukach

Lviv Polytechnic National University (Ukraine)  
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5392-8991>

## Nadiia Rusko

Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas (Ukraine)  
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8962-6004>

## Halyna Lutsyshyn

Lviv Polytechnic National University (Ukraine)  
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8434-071X>

# The influence of Caritas charitable organizations on the development of religious diplomacy

**Streszczenie:** W artykule analizie poddano czynniki oddziaływania sieci organizacji charytatywnych Caritas w kontekście transformacji współczesnego systemu stosunków międzynarodowych. Pokazano skuteczność ich bezpośredniego wpływu na złożone procesy demokratyzacji społeczeństw, co świadczy o perspektywicznej roli w kształtowaniu nowej architektury porządku światowego, dalszego umacniania się dzięki narzędziom dyplomacji religijnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** organizacja pozarządowa, sieć organizacji charytatywnych, nowy podmiot ponadnarodowy, system światowy, dyplomacja religijna, społeczeństwo obywatelskie

*Theological approach is necessary both for understanding  
and solving modern problems in human society.*

*Centesimus annus<sup>1</sup>*

The urgency of the research topic is due to the state of transformation of the modern system of international relations, caused primarily by the challenges of globalization,

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul, *Centesimus Annus: Encyclical Letter Addressed by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to His Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, the Priests and Deacons, Families of Men and Women Religious, All the Christian Faithful and to All Men and Women of Good Will on the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum* [Quebec 1991, Print], [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html) (dostęp: 15 X 2021).

worldview, values and religious confrontations, the general crisis of the man-made civilization. One of the signs of the new age is the emergence and steady growth of the number of charitable non-governmental organizations involved in political processes, or so-called “actors outside sovereignty”. One of the key representatives of such organizations in the international arena is the network Caritas Internationalis. At the present stage, in addition to the growing role of such organizations, we can state the growing role of the religious factor. This is due to the increasing importance of cultural factors in shaping world politics due to the emergence of a certain ideological vacuum after the crisis of communism.

The aim of the study is to examine the impact of the Caritas charity network on the political sphere, and in particular on the development of religious diplomacy in the context of international relations. The object of the research is the activity of the network of charitable organizations Caritas (in particular religious diplomacy) at the present stage of development of the international relations system.

The most common foreign studies of religious diplomacy is the monograph trilogy edited and authored by Douglas Johnston: “Religion is a Lost Dimension of Statehood”<sup>2</sup>, “Faith Diplomacy: Stepping on Real Politics”<sup>3</sup>, and “Religion, Terror, and Mistakes: US Foreign Policy and Challenge of Spiritual interaction”<sup>4</sup>. In Ukrainian scientific intelligence, religious diplomacy is associated primarily with the Catholic Church. Given the unique status of the papal nuncios, the increased attention to the Catholic Church here is not surprising. Being both representatives of the state (Vatican) and representatives of the church, they perfectly combine classical and religious diplomacy. Among the Ukrainian studies in this context are the works of Ella Bystrytska<sup>5</sup> and Viktor Kozlov<sup>6</sup>. Despite the great interest in the activities of Caritas, so far, no attempt has been made to consider the activities of the organization in the establishment and conduct of religious diplomacy.

In the modern world, religion is an essential element of public and political life. It is difficult to level the links between religion and politics, although the idea of demarcating them has been widespread for a long time already. Many philosophers of the past and present are inclined to this statement. For example, in the ideas of Plato and Aristotle there are direct indications of a combination of both dimensions: religious and political. Theses about the existence of God/gods, individual, social and political (including formal and legal) consequences of this fact are clearly present in the concepts of both philoso-

<sup>2</sup> D. Johnston, *Religion, the missing dimension of statecraft*, New York 1994, s. 350.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, New York 2003, s. 296.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *Religion, terror, and error: U.S. foreign policy and the challenge of spiritual engagement*, Santa Barbara (Calif.) 2011, s. 283.

<sup>5</sup> E.V. Bystrytska, *Skhidna polityka Vatykanu v konteksti vidnosyn Svyatoho Prestolu z Rosiyeyu ta SRSR (1878–1964 rr.)*, T. 2009, s. 415.

<sup>6</sup> V.A. Kozlov *Dyplomatiya Svyatoho Prestolu v postbipolyarniy systemi mizhnarodnykh vidnosyn za chasiv pontyfikatu Ioanna Pavla II*, Vinnytsya 2008, s. 192.

phers<sup>7</sup>. The views of Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas are also reduced to the unification of religious and political spheres. The classical interdependence of both spheres is also demonstrated by the political theology of Thomas Hobbes, that in turn influenced the views of Karl Schmidt<sup>8</sup>. Max Weber confidently argued for the important role of religion in social and political life. The modern religion is also a part of current interstate relations and an important factor in diplomacy. Greco-Roman Christianity shaped the modern face of Europe. Along with colonial expansion, it has become an integral part of the history of the other parts of the world. Christian ideas were the basis of European integration after World War II. Other religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, also have their fixed position in the social and political life of many states and peoples.

During historical epochs, the religious and political spheres complemented each other. Modern political reality clearly seeks to unequivocally strengthen the idea of the division of religion and state. And the proponents of this idea of the division of religion and secular life justify their position with a quote from the Gospel: "Give therefore to the emperor that which is imperial, and to God that which is divine"<sup>9</sup>.

The modern world, the modern Europe, the modern state must be based on universal, advanced, secular principles and basics. Human, his/her freedom, is the main element of social and political activity<sup>10</sup>. There is, however, a specific interpretation of freedom freed from the Absolute. In 1991, John Paul II in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* stated that "the denial of God deprives a man of his foundation, and consequently leads to a social order in which the dignity and responsibility of the individual are leveled". In a message on XLIV Day of Peace in 2011, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized that "it is inconceivable that believers should renounce part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens"<sup>11</sup>.

Benedict XVI devoted much time to writing a social encyclical and worked on it almost from the beginning of his pontificate, ie about three years. From a formal point of view, the reason for this reflection was the anniversaries of two important works of his predecessors (*Populorum progressio* of Paul VI and *Sollicitudo rei socialis* of John Paul II), which he wanted to present to the world, giving them special significance. Writing of the encyclical was significantly influenced by the global financial crisis, and later by the economic crisis, which delayed the publication of the encyclical. As the Pope himself has publicly stated, the global scale of the crisis requires a deeper study of the correctness of decision-making by responsible actors in the international relations and a rethinking of the current state of the system of international relations.

<sup>7</sup> W. Dłubacz, *U źródeł koncepcji Absolutu. Od Homera do Platona*, Lublin 2003.

<sup>8</sup> M.A. Krapiec i in., *Polityka i religia. Przyszłość cywilizacji Zachodu*, Lublin 2007 (vide art. Z. Pańpucha, s. 253–280).

<sup>9</sup> Z. Stawrowski, *Wokół idei wspólnoty*, Kraków 2012, s. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Mt 22, 21, *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2008, s. 2189.

<sup>11</sup> John Paul, *Centesimus Annus...*

The religious factor in the international relations should be understood as the influence of the religious values set that are in close and constant interaction with specific historical, political, economic, social and cultural practices of peoples. It is necessary to distinguish the following functions of religion in international relations:

- communicative (proof in the most understandable for the majority of the population form of the content of decisions);
- integrating (creating a consensus in support of its foreign policy actions);
- legitimizing (justification of its foreign policy in the eyes of its own population and the world).

The last quarter of the twentieth century was marked by significant changes both in the actual religious environment and in the international relations theory which allowed the religious diplomacy phenomenon emergence of . Not the least role in this process was played by the Vatican's diplomatic initiatives to resolve the Argentine-Chilean conflict (1978), which is often called one of the first steps towards the "great return" of religion to international relations<sup>12</sup>. The adoption of the American Religious Freedom Act in the late 1990s, which created the position of Special Ambassador for Religious Freedom in the world at the level of the US State Department, was also significant. Analyzing the ways of indirectly influencing diplomatic relations, as early as 1991, American researcher Louise Diamond and Ambassador John MacDonald proposed to expand the vision of the structure of diplomatic initiatives to 9 levels, one of which singled out religious. According to their system, diplomatic relations were divided into the following levels: 1) governmental or official diplomacy; 2) professional informal conflict resolution; 3) the business world; 4) private citizens; 5) researchers, coaches, educators; 6) activists; 7) religion; 8) philanthropic organizations; 9) public opinion and mass media, which unite all the above levels<sup>13</sup>.

As we can see, throughout the history the influence of religion on international relations has changed along with the change of religion. The influence of religious values and religious means of organizing people on political life began to diminish, as political thought developed so that it was able to put forward its own concepts that were more effective in achieving relevant political goals than those proposed by religion. But in the form of non-governmental organizations, religion continues to influence people's lives and politics in general. The Catholic Church is the most numerous, and therefore its influence on the world community can be considered the strongest.

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<sup>12</sup> V. Yelens'kyy, *Velyke povnennya: relihiya u hlobal'niy politytsi ta mizhnarodnykh vidnosynakh kintsya XX – pochatku XXI stolittya*, L'viv 2013, s. 503.

<sup>13</sup> J. McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Positive Approach to Peace Track-By-Track Case Studies*, <http://imtd.org/papers/Studies.pdf> (dostep: 29 X 2021).

That is why we will focus on the network of charitable organizations Caritas and analyze their activities, and in particular the contribution to the development of religious diplomacy. Caritas (from the Latin *caritas* – charity, selfless dedicated love) is an international network of charitable organizations, which is a confederation of 165 national organizations<sup>14</sup>. The goal that unites all Caritas is the development of civil society and solidarity, the protection of human rights and socialize policy activities. Caritas' mission is to develop traditions of charity and social work based on Christian moral and ethical values, as well as to design and implement national programs to provide social assistance and support to the most needy people, regardless of nationality or religion.

The first organization of Caritas was established in the German city of Freiburg in 1897 by the priest Fr. Lorenz Wertman. Caritas then appeared in Switzerland (1901), the United States (1910), the Netherlands (1924) and many other countries<sup>15</sup>. Priests and parishioners called their work in these new institutions as “a ministry in the spirit of *caritas pastoralis* (pastoral mercy)”. The works of Pope Leo XIII, in particular the 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which earned the title of Christian Social Doctrine, became a spiritual guide and stimulus for the emergence of the first Caritas centers.

*Rerum Novarum* was called to be an alternative to the ideas of socialism, and unlike the latter, it proclaimed the interdependence and cooperation of classes, the resolution of conflicts by each fulfilling his share of responsibility in the spirit of Christian teaching<sup>16</sup>.

After the break caused by the war of 1914–1918, the formation of the global community of Caritas continued. In July 1924, at the Eucharistic World Congress in Amsterdam, 60 delegates from 22 countries formed an advisory body headquartered in Lucerne, Switzerland. Since 1928, regular conferences have been held under the name *Caritas Catholica*. Delegates met every two years until the outbreak of World War II, when all activities ceased.

Caritas' ideology was sharply criticized both in the fascist bloc and in the USSR. In the first case – through the confession of the principles of equality of people before God, regardless of ethnic or racial affiliation; in the second – because of “conservatism”, rejection of the ideas of social revolution, class struggle. Common in both cases was the anti-Christian nature of criticism, the attempt to establish new values along with the destruction of millennial traditions of theistic ethics. Thus, Caritas's activities were extremely difficult to perform in Western Europe until the mid-1940s and impossible in Eastern Europe until the fall of communist regimes.

Charitable activities resumed in 1947 with two conferences held in Lucerne. They aimed to coordinate efforts and revitalize international cooperation. The development of

<sup>14</sup> *Caritas Ukraine*, <https://caritas.kharkiv.ua/karitas-ukrayina/> (dostęp: 9 X 2021).

<sup>15</sup> *Caritas in the world*, <https://caritas-kiev.org.ua/caritas-kyiv-today/> (dostęp: 1 X 2021).

<sup>16</sup> *Rerum Novarum*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html) (dostęp: 30 IX 2021).

Caritas received the next impetus when the Vatican Secretariat entrusted it with the official representation of Catholic social organizations at the international level, primarily at the United Nations.

The festive year of 1950 marked the beginning of the unification of Caritas organizations. At the suggestion of Monsignor Montini (Secretary of State, later Pope Paul VI), a meeting of representatives of 22 countries was held in Rome to study the problems of the Caritas Christian service.

As a result, it was decided to create an international Roman Catholic charitable confederation.

In December 1951, with the blessing of the Holy See, the first constituent General Assembly of Caritas convened. The founding members represented Caritas 13 countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. In 1957, the Confederation was renamed Caritas Internationalis, reflecting Caritas' growing presence on every continent.

Since the founding of the first Caritas in Germany and the creation of the Caritas Internationalis confederation, Caritas has a rich history, always listening to the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged to give them the means to change their lives for the better. The deep moral and spiritual principles of dignity, justice and solidarity are the guiding principles of Caritas' work and aim to build a society based on justice and brotherly love<sup>17</sup>.

Today, Caritas is a confederation of 165 national charities in about 200 countries. Caritas Internationalis is a member of the Conference of the International Catholic Organization and the Pontifical Council *Cor unum*, which has consultative status with UNESCO and other UN organizations, the Council of Europe and the Organization of African Unity, also cooperates with the European Union and many prominent politicians and public figures<sup>18</sup>.

The first Caritas organizations began to appear in Ukraine in 1992 after gaining independence. It was an initiative of the revived local Greek Catholic communities. Basically, such organizations were engaged in the distribution of humanitarian aid. However, public needs led to the expansion of Caritas' social work in Ukraine, which started the creation of the international charity fund Caritas Ukraine and cooperation with other European countries.

Caritas Ukraine was founded in 1994 to coordinate the efforts of charitable organizations of local communities of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, to represent them at the national level, to develop cooperation with foreign branches of Caritas. Due to the activities of Caritas Ukraine, a network of local charitable organizations has been formed

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<sup>17</sup> *Caritas in the world...*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

and expanded, and cooperation with domestic and European partners is being developed. In 1999, Caritas Ukraine became a full member of the international confederation of Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europe<sup>19</sup>.

As part of the global Caritas family, Caritas Ukraine won the National Philanthropist of the Year 2008 competition in the category “Representation of an International Charitable Foundation or Non-Governmental Organization”. The versatility and scale of Caritas Ukraine’s work, which is open to absolutely all people in need, were especially noted. In 2009 there was a victory in the national competition of charitable organizations of Ukraine in the nomination “Charitable organization”.

A significant event for the Ukrainian community of Caritas was the election of Andriy Vaskovych as Vice-President of Caritas Europe, who retained the position of President of the ICF Caritas Ukraine. This happened at the Conference in June 2010 in Escorial (Spain).

Today Caritas Ukraine is a unique national organization in terms of experience and scale of activity. There are about 20 regional organizations of Caritas Ukraine in Ukraine, about 1000 employees and volunteers are involved in the projects. In recent years, the annual budget of Caritas Ukraine is about 1 million euro. At the same time, 94–97% of them come from abroad<sup>20</sup>.

Areas of work:

- assistance to crisis children, youth and families;
- guardianship of children of migrant workers;
- rehabilitation and integration of disabled youth;
- assistance in the treatment of children with cancer;
- home care for single elderly people;
- counseling on patient care;
- borrowing rehabilitation equipment;
- palliative medicine;
- prevention and care of people living with AIDS;
- lobbying activities;
- repatriation and reintegration of Ukrainian migrants;
- prevention of human trafficking and assistance to victims of human trafficking;
- humanitarian assistance;
- work of charity canteens;
- support and assistance to prisoners;
- assistance to addicts;

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<sup>19</sup> *Caritas Ukraine...*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*

- emergency assistance;
- charity events;
- development of the volunteer movement.

Qualitatively different and important in the work of Caritas are the following characteristics:

A) A comprehensive and systematic approach to solving social problems – not one or two existing problems in society are taken into account, but their totality, sequence and potential consequences.

B) Providing practical social and material assistance to people in crisis, instead of exclusively leading educational activities or information counseling. At the same time, Caritas employees in Ukraine use scientific approaches in social work, conduct their own research on domestic medicine, migration, unemployment, homelessness, orphanhood and street lifestyles of children, youth, integration of disabled people and more.

C) The experience of the international Caritas network, which has more than 120 years of history, unites 165 national Caritas, with several million employees and volunteers. Every year, Caritas employees help more than 25 million people in 200 countries around the world. Exchange of experience, joint meetings and communication with Ukrainian Caritas are carried out on a regular basis.

D) Partnership with both Ukrainian and international, foreign public and charitable organizations, government services and government agencies. Their partners include Caritas Germany, Caritas Spain, Caritas Switzerland, Caritas Belgium, Caritas Austria, Caritas France, Caritas Europe, Rennovabis, the United Nations Development Program, the Canadian Relief Association (CNEWA), the Ukrainian Forum Renaissance Foundation, Eastern Europe Foundation and others.

E) Extensive geographical network of Caritas Ukraine organizations (about 20 regional organizations in different regions of Ukraine), a large number of qualified employees and volunteers, their continuous high-quality training, exchange of experience and internships in other organizations.

F) Activities are carried out on Christian principles and values, but regardless of religion, social status of the person being assisted, his ethnic origin, gender, age, etc<sup>21</sup>.

At the national and international levels, Caritas embodies the mission of building a better world, with a special focus on the poor and disadvantaged.

After the visit of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko to the Vatican, the topic of Vatican-Ukrainian relations emerged. How did 23 years of diplomatic relations go? During this time, 5 presidents and 5 nuncios and 3 popes have changed, so what was the Vatican's policy towards Ukraine? Of course, the Vatican is a state and an actor of international law, but now it is not a state in the classical sense as it was in the nineteenth

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.



century. And this is due to the evolution of understanding of the role of the church itself in the society. And it happened very shockingly for the Catholic Church itself. When the Pope in the late XIX century realized that the Catholic Church should have not political but moral authority. But they wanted to remain part of this international law, as if they had preserved the state, and on the other hand, this power is not political. So the power of the pope is moral, I think he can influence, but more as a diplomat of good. That is why Caritas today is good diplomacy. Diplomatic relations also form cooperation with the Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta in Ukraine, entitled “Humanitarian Diplomacy of the Sovereign Order of Malta and the Role of Churches in Conflict Resolution”.

Following the ancient tradition and slogan of the Sovereign Order of Malta “*Tuitio fidei, obsequium pauperum*” (“Protection of Faith, Helping the Needy”), the Order, together with its supporters and partners, has been implementing charitable projects around the world for more than 900 years.

For the last 26 years, the Order of Malta has been actively helping Ukraine and its citizens. This is especially noticeable in the example of active humanitarian activity of the Order. Disabled children, orphans, thousands of internally displaced persons, victims of hostilities in eastern Ukraine – all these categories receive assistance and support in the framework of charitable missions and projects of the Order. In particular, there are currently nine centers of the Maltese Order of Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Ukraine: in Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Severodonetsk, Starobilsk, Slovyansk, and in the Kyiv region (Boryspil and three centers in Kyiv).

Caritas builds links with diocesan and national Caritas, as well as with Caritas of other parishes, to share experiences, mutual support and coordination in the event of similar work. It is also worth developing and maintaining relations with local non-governmental organizations and state authorities. Caritas works with other pastoral organizations (fraternities and sororities, catechists, youth communities, etc.) to ensure the whole life of the parish and to involve as many parishioners as possible in charitable activities and ongoing cooperation.

Given the global challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Caritas Internationalis is working with local Churches to address and prevent the pandemic from spreading. Thus, along with local governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, religious communities and organizations, including the international network of Catholic humanitarian organizations Caritas Internationalis, also play an important role in measures aimed at overcoming the pandemic and its consequences. The priorities of their activities in the context of the emergency are to gather information and spread awareness about COVID-19 among the population. For example, in Rwanda, Caritas Internationalis helps the local Church disseminate information about the coronavirus to prevent infection, as they do in Singapore. In Italy, Caritas continues to serve the

poor through canteens, hot meals and dormitories. The activities of volunteers who help the elderly are coordinated.

In 2018, the foundation completed the implementation of the action “Pope for Ukraine”, which became an extraordinary manifestation of solidarity of Catholics around the world. In 44 settlements, almost 17 000 people who found themselves in extremely difficult life circumstances received assistance<sup>22</sup>.

In 2020, Caritas Ukraine, in cooperation with the U-LEAD with Europe program, launched the project “Support of United Territorial Communities in the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic”, which provides assistance to 936 rural and urban, as well as OTG small bridge. Each of these communities will receive two Community Health Boxes, which will contain personal protective equipment and essential items for health care workers. This program is co-financed by the European Union and makes a significant contribution to the creation of a multilevel system of governance that is transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of citizens<sup>23</sup>.

For the second year in a row, the Caritas-Spes of Ukraine Religious Mission, with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland and Caritas Poland, has been implementing the project Activities of Medical and Social Offices in Zaporizhia and Berdyansk (Zaporizhzhya Oblast). Kharkiv (Kharkiv region).

This project is mainly (80%) aimed at helping internally displaced persons from the eastern, war-torn regions of Ukraine, the rest is a socially vulnerable category of the local population, namely: orphans, chronically ill, the elderly age, people with disabilities, large families, the unemployed<sup>24</sup>.

Conclusions. Thus, religious diplomacy is a notable trend in modern international relations. It refers to charitable and peacekeeping initiatives of non-governmental and religious organizations. Such activities differ significantly from traditional official diplomacy, in particular, in the level of interaction with the state and religious centers, the level of formalization of activities, features of the focus, and so on. It has its drawbacks and advantages – it is able to attract additional tools, accumulate social capital (increase interpersonal ties) and has its own ways of promoting peace (through an appeal to a higher authority). At the same time, religious diplomacy is closely linked to and complementary to official government diplomacy.

In conclusion, we note that the network of charitable organizations Caritas is quite successful in developing and implementing national programs to provide social assistance and support to the most needy people, regardless of nationality or religion. The

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<sup>22</sup> *Caritas Ukraine Charitable Foundation*, <http://caritas.ua/karitas-vukrayini/> (dostęp: 29 XI 2020).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Caritas Spes Ukraine*, <https://caritas-spes.org/ua/news/news/dopomoga-z-polschi-dlja-potrebujuchih-ukraini.html> (dostęp: 10 X 2021).

organization influences the complex processes of democratization of societies, which indicates the prospects for further strengthening their role in shaping a new architecture of the world order, thanks to the tool of religious diplomacy. Volunteers of the organization do not focus on one or two social problems, but take into account their totality, consistency and potential consequences. The Foundation provides effective and practical social and material assistance, as well as active educational activities. There is a continuous exchange of experience between the representatives of the international network "Caritas". In Ukraine, the organization's activities are developing steadily and have a high potential to help our citizens. After all, in the current challenges to Ukraine's state security, the transformation of society's attitude to charity has become an important factor in national unity in overcoming crises in the political, economic, military, social, medical, and transport sectors. Caritas Ukraine plays an important role in the accumulation of financial and human resources aimed at helping socially vulnerable groups, servicemen of the Armed Forces, anti-terrorist operation participants, displaced persons and other victims of the armed conflict.

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### **The influence of Caritas charitable organizations on the development of religious diplomacy**

**Summary:** The article analyzes the influence of the Caritas network of charitable organizations on international relations during the period of political transformations. The network's direct influence on the complex process of social democratization is discussed. The study demonstrated that Caritas is an important transnational actor and an effective religious diplomatic tool that has contributed to the formation of a new global order.

**Keywords:** non-governmental organization, network of charitable organizations, new transnational actor, global system, religious diplomacy, civil society