



Newsletter

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010

03 < September 2010



Policy to the fore

Lately some important developments have taken place in terms of establishing policies to combat poverty and social exclusion in the European Union.

On 17th June, the European Council set a specific target to lift 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion when it approved Europe 2020, the EU's new strategy for economic growth. It is the first time that the EU has agreed on a specific target to cut poverty figures.

Member States and EU institutions will have to coordinate on this and other aspects of Europe 2020, which stresses the need to develop a vibrant economy that places inclusive growth at the heart of policy-making.

Meanwhile, the 9th EU Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (PEP) took place at the end of June. Delegates from across Europe worked together to thrash out priorities for 10 year action plans that aim to cut poverty across the EU.

The newsletter provides more details about Europe 2020 and the PEP meeting, along with updates on news and events relating to the European Year. The EU-level ambassadors for the European Year are also 'In focus'.

New strategy will help poor sections of society

The European Union's new strategy to deliver jobs and growth also promises to get to grips with poverty and social exclusion.

The Europe 2020 strategy was approved by the European Council in June. It provides for greater coordination on economic policy between the EU and its Member States and based on three interlinked priority areas:

- smart growth for developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- sustainable growth to promote efficient use of resources while building a greener economy; and
- inclusive growth, where the aim is to foster high employment along with social and territorial cohesion so that everyone in Europe benefits from a re-invigorated economy.

Five headline targets have been agreed to drive the strategy forward, including one that aims to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion by 2020.

One of Europe 2020's flagship initiatives is to build a 'European Platform Against Poverty'. The goal here is to ensure that poor and socially excluded people are able to live in dignity while playing an active role in society.

The Platform will be central to improving social cohesion in Europe. It will bring together European and national stakeholders to exchange good practice and develop new ways to cooperate on poverty issues.

Through the platform, the Commission aims to devise programmes that deliver better education, training and employment opportunities to deprived communities.

http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

People experiencing poverty demand more participation

People who have to cope with poverty want more say in decisions that affect their lives. That was the conclusion of the 9th EU Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, which was held in Brussels on 25th-26th June.

This year's event – '2010, the Starting Point for a New deal' – was organised by the Spanish EU Presidency, the European Commission and the European Anti-poverty Network. The aim of these annual conferences is to bring those who live with poverty face-to-face with decision-makers.

A key focus of this year's meeting was the drafting of 10 year action plans to eliminate poverty across the EU. Delegates broke into workshops to brainstorm ideas.

Those present concluded that every effort must be made to ensure that people experiencing poverty can participate in decision-making processes at all stages. They also called on decision-makers to be responsible and accountable for their actions.



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In addition, delegates want a guarantee of fundamental rights linked to affordable, quality and safe housing, social services, food, decent work and education for all.

There were also calls for more protection for families and greater control of the banking sector.

The University of Antwerp presented survey research into the impact of these meetings. The findings revealed that 87% of people experiencing poverty think that the meetings contributed to their personal development. 80% of policy-makers said the meetings had helped them learn more about the fight against poverty.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2010/06/20100624c_en.htm

Ambassadors spread the word

Meet our European Union 'ambassadors' – four people who have given over their time to promote the aims and objectives of EY2010. They are all committed to the cause of combating poverty and social exclusion, and bring a significant amount of life experience to their ambassadorial roles.

Dr Vaira Vike-Freiberga is the former President of Latvia, serving two terms between 1999 and 2007. She played a leading role in Latvia's accession to the EU and NATO, and is known as a passionate speaker on liberty, equality and social justice.

Dr Lesley-Anne Knight is from the UK and has more than 25 years' experience in international development and emergency relief work. She is

Secretary-General of Caritas International, which coordinates relief, humanitarian and aid organisation linked to the Catholic Church.

Tascha de Vasconcelos is a model and actress from Portugal. Tasha founded the AMOR Association in 2006, which aims to help reduce global infant and maternal mortality rates. She has also undertaken special missions for the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and served as a goodwill volunteer for UNICEF.

Michal Pirog is a dancer, actor and choreographer from Poland. In his time, Michal has worked as a presenter for MTV Poland and TVN Style. He is an active participant in the WWF and is an ambassador for the ECCO Walkathon, which donates money to worthy causes.

For more complete profiles:
<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/ambassadors/?langid=en>

Visit the EY2010 website!
www.2010againstopoverty.eu

< News and Events

Bringing new 'hope'

Project HOPE – Hope in stations – was launched in January with the goal of improving support mechanisms for homeless people who frequent Europe's railway stations.

In particular, HOPE aims to put staff in train stations who will organise the coordination of public administrations, associations and other stakeholders which provide services for those in need.

The project is running in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, France, Spain and Poland. The EU has provided financial support through the PROGRESS Programme.

For more information:
<http://www.solidarites-actives.com/actualites/hope-stations>

Survey reveals household struggles

A majority of EU citizens consider that poverty is widespread in their country, and one in six people said that their households could not always pay their bills or buy food during the past year.

These are the headline findings from a recent Eurobarometer survey which investigated household financial stress and people's perceptions of poverty.

'Monitoring the social impact of the crisis: public perceptions in the European Union' was published in June this year. The survey also measured perceptions of changes in the affordability of health and social care, along with people's views on pensions and financial security in old age.

The survey is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_289_en.pdf

Forthcoming events

A conference – 'Laying the foundations for a fairer Europe, ensuring adequate minimum income schemes' – will take place in Brussels on 24 September 2010.

<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event192.html?langid=en>

Frankfurt Book Fair hosts the Litcam Conference on Human Rights on 4-5 October 2010.

<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event185.html?langid=en>

> For more details on the above events, check out the calendar of events EY2010 website:
www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/?langid=en

> To find out what is going on in each participating country, see:
www.2010againstopoverty.eu/mycountry