



# Newsletter

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010

4 < October 2010



## A chance to focus minds

**This special edition of the newsletter takes a look at the aims and objectives of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which takes place each year on 17 October.**

**We also carry an interview with Herman Van Breen from ATD Fourth World, the NGO that instigated the International Day. Mr Van Breen talks about how society as a whole must come together to tackle poverty.**

**As the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (EY2010) enters its final stages, plenty of activities are taking place across the European Union. Some complement the International Day, such as a meeting of young people against poverty which will take place at the European Parliament in Brussels.**

**The newsletter also provides details about a number of larger upcoming events, including the Solidarity Days in Riga and the 9<sup>th</sup> Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion.**

## 17 October – a day for action!

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed every year since 1993, after designation by UN General Assembly – but its roots go back further than that.

On 17 October 1987, ATD Fourth World, an anti-poverty NGO, held a vigil in Paris which attracted more than 100 000 people. Their aim was to honour those who have fallen victim to poverty and hunger.

This inspired the UN to take action. Now the International Day provides a focal point to promote awareness about the need to beat poverty and destitution across the world, especially in developing countries.

Every year, the International Day has a different focus. For 2010, the theme is: "From Poverty to decent work: bridging the gap". This is an opportune time to raise awareness of the link between work and poverty. The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion raised awareness through events and activities, and has led to strong political momentum.

Figures from the International Labour Organisation reveal that the share of workers in vulnerable employment across the world is likely to reach 1.5 billion, that is more than half the world's working population.

The UN wants this year's International Day show how access to decent work and opportunities for learning can improve lives. There is an emphasis on helping young people as they have been particularly affected by the downturn.

To mark the International Day, the European Parliament's Esplanade will play host to a delegation of 100 young Europeans who want to see more action taken to end poverty. There will be exhibitions, video projections, dancing and music, as well as a lantern parade.

**For more information:** <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlDay/2010.html>

## Poverty – an issue for everyone

Herman Van Breen is a Permanent Volunteer with ATD Fourth World, which works with individuals and organisations across the world to eradicate extreme poverty.

For him, the International Day is about giving those living with poverty a platform to speak out about their situation while honouring the many millions who have suffered its consequences.

"Thousand of people will be gathering across Europe to mark 17 October, taking time to recognise that those living with poverty are trying every day to address their own problems," says Mr Van Breen.

ATD Fourth World promotes a human rights approach to poverty which shifts the emphasis away from paternalism. Instead, the message is that everyone needs to get involved in beating poverty, not just politicians and agencies.

"We cannot treat poverty as a sideline issue anymore, it is actually central to the functioning of our society and democracy," adds Mr Van Breen.

ATD Fourth World's ethos recognises that those in poverty are not clients but are in fact the prime actors for change.



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## < In Focus

"Poor people often don't have the means to realise their goals – but that doesn't mean they don't have goals," adds Mr Van Breen. "Society should be aiming to give poor people the means to help themselves rather than dictate to them."

According to Mr Van Breen, the European Year is helping to focus minds as well as providing valuable practical support to organisations that are trying to make a difference.

He says: "The key is to ensure that the European Year has some continuity. For example, next year the focus is on volunteering, which provides scope to get more people involved in tackling poverty."

**For more information:**  
<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/>

Visit the EY2010 website!  
[www.2010againstpoverty.eu](http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu)

## < News and Events

### Events inspired by EY2010

**A Participatory Forum** entitled "Building a society for all – A circus against exclusion" takes place at the Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels on 19-20 October.

The event will illustrate the diversity of actors and projects that have been gathered under the EY2010 umbrella, through workshops organised by the Commission and stakeholders themselves, while highlighting other actions that are taking place to combat poverty and social exclusion.

In the spirit of participation and shared responsibility, which is the hallmark of the European Year, those attending will be offered an active role in the Forum's debates, workshops, open spaces and stands.

25 circus artists will deliver performances during the day and in the evening. Some of them come from circus schools which have educational and social objectives, while others come from the best professional circus schools in Europe.

> For more details on the above events, check out the calendar of events EY2010 website:  
[www.2010againstpoverty.eu/calendarofevents?langid=en](http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu/calendarofevents?langid=en)

### Round Table discusses active inclusion

The 9<sup>th</sup> Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion takes place in Brussels on 18-19 October.

These meetings provide an opportunity for European and national policymakers, NGOs and other stakeholders to get together and share ideas on how to combat poverty.

This edition is hosted by the Belgian Presidency of the EU and focuses on the use of active inclusion as a means of helping vulnerable and marginalised people as well as on the integration of this strategy in the EUROPE 2020 agenda.

The European Commission is keen for all Member States to develop active inclusion policies which centre around: building inclusive labour markets; providing adequate income support

so people can live in dignity; and providing access to quality services in areas like social assistance, health, training and childcare.

On the basis of experiences coming from the ground, the Round Table will discuss how best to implement and apply the Commission's recommendations and will compare practice from Member States. The aim is to find out which approaches to active inclusion work best while raising awareness about any potential problems.

Workshops will examine all aspects of active inclusion. Special attention will be paid to the issue of minimum income provision, which the Belgian hosts believe to be a necessity when helping people out of poverty. A workshop will be also dedicated to the EUROPE 2020 strategy and its flagship initiative on the EU Platform against poverty and social exclusion.

**For more information:**  
<http://www.eutrio.be/ninth-round-table-poverty-and-social-exclusion>

## Diary Notes

**Step forward European Youth** – ATD Fourth World has organised a meeting of European youth to bring 17 October and poverty issues to the attention of Brussels-based policymakers and local citizens. "Young Europeans Gather Against Poverty" takes place on the Esplanade of the European Parliament on the 17th, from 3pm.  
**More information:** [www.oct17.org](http://www.oct17.org)

**Mental health in focus** – "Challenging Poverty: Creating Hope" explores the links between mental health and poverty. Field workers and experts from across Europe will exchange experiences and good practice in dealing with this sensitive issue on 23 October.  
**More information:** <http://www.mhe-sme.org/conference2010.html>

**Film Festival Cottbus** – The festival, 2 to 7 November, aims to raise awareness about the culture and customs of Germany's Eastern and Central European neighbours while promoting exchanges of ideas on a variety of issues including poverty and social exclusion.  
**More information:** <http://www.filmfestivalcottbus.de/en/home/>

> To find out what is going on in each participating country, see:  
[www.2010againstpoverty.eu/mycountry](http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu/mycountry)