



# Newsletter

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010

01 < December 2009



**Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (EY2010)! Every three months we will highlight salient themes related to poverty and social exclusion, as well as provide information to all stakeholders on activities planned at national and European level during the EY2010.**

**A wide range of activities are planned across Europe during the EY2010 to raise awareness of the many forms of poverty and social exclusion, help build and reinforce partnerships in the field, and inspire people to make a commitment to fighting poverty and social exclusion.**

**The need for everyone in society to come together to fight poverty has been emphasised by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso who trusts that the EY2010 will make Europeans understand that 'we all have a responsibility for tackling poverty and we will all benefit from its eradication.'**

**It is hoped that the EY2010 will prove a decisive turning point in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion and provide, according to Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 'a chance for us all to underline our strong and renewed commitment to those who are the most vulnerable in society'**

## Poverty and social exclusion: Perceptions vs. Reality

A new Eurobarometer survey on poverty released on 29 October provides a unique insight into Europeans' views on this topic.

Nearly three quarters of European citizens on average believe that poverty is widespread in their country. This figure is particularly high in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. This perception matches closely with reality, as the highest rates of poverty in the EU are recorded in the same three countries according to recent Eurostat data.

Europeans believe that those most at risk of poverty are the unemployed, followed by the elderly and those with low levels of education or training. Statistics show that the unemployed are indeed a group particularly susceptible to poverty: 42% of people out of work have an income below the national poverty line.

Eight in ten Europeans think that poverty has increased in their country in the last three years, a result which seems to reflect citizens' uncertainties at this time of economic crisis.

89% of respondents believe that urgent action is needed by their national government to fight poverty. While the majority of Europeans turn first to their national governments, the role of the EU in combating poverty is also seen as important by many (28% see it as 'very important', and 46% 'somewhat important').

The EY2010 will help show the EU's role in supporting Member States' efforts to fight poverty and highlight its commitment to bringing about change.

### According to European citizens...

*What are the 'societal' causes of poverty?*

- < High unemployment (52%)
- < Insufficient wages (49%)
- < Inadequate social benefits and pensions (29%)

*What are the 'personal' causes of poverty?*

- < Lack of education, training or skills (37%)
- < 'Inherited' poverty (25%)
- < Addiction (23%)

**Eurobarometer 321 'Poverty and Social exclusion – How Europeans perceive poverty in the context of the crisis'**

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb\\_special\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm)

**Eurostat, Statistics in Focus - Issue number 46/2009**

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product\\_details/publication?p\\_product\\_code=KS-SF-09-046](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-SF-09-046)



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## European Conference, 'Poverty between reality and perceptions: the communication challenge', 29 October, Brussels

In preparation of the EY2010, the conference brought together stakeholders from throughout the EU to explore the role of communication in combating poverty and social inclusion from three perspectives:

- < how Europeans perceive poverty and exclusion;
- < how poverty and exclusion are presented in the media;
- < how public authorities can use communication tools to promote social inclusion.

In the discussion on public communication, Anne Joubert from the Ministry of Labour in France stressed that administrations must learn to communicate effectively to the media on their work and interact successfully with NGOs.

During the debate on poverty in the media, BBC Northern Ireland journalist William Crawley urged the media to 'not miss the stories within the stories', as the multi-faceted nature of poverty often means that there are many interlinked factors which may lead to a person experiencing poverty.

The importance of the role the media will play in the EY2010 was also emphasised by Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

In his speech, the Commissioner expressed hope that the EY2010 will act as a springboard for change.

### Presentations

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=211&furtherEvents=yes>

## < News & Events

### European Media Seminar: 'Poverty and media' 28 October, Brussels

This seminar brought together media professionals from across the EU to exchange information and experiences on reporting on poverty and enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the subject.

Journalists took part in workshops to discuss the complexities of reporting on poverty and visited a number of projects involving people experiencing poverty. Through direct contact with people in poverty, and the organisations supporting them, journalists were able to hear first hand about the challenges they face.

#### Presentations from seminar

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=211&furtherEvents=yes>

### 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' Campaign special award on poverty

Every year, the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' campaign honours online or print journalists in the EU who, through their work, contribute to a better public understanding of the benefits of diversity and the fight against discrimination. In anticipation of the EY2010, a special award will be given in the 2009 competition for articles which highlight the link between discrimination and poverty.

#### Journalist Award 2009

<http://journalistaward.stop-discrimination.info/>

## < Key dates

21 January 2010  
EY2010 Launch Conference  
Madrid

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

## < In Focus

### ATD Fourth World, Belgium

ATD Fourth World is an international organisation which aims to 'work alongside people living in poverty to support them in their refusal to accept poverty as a fact of life and find solutions to eradicate it together.' An innovative project run in Belgium is the 'Le croisement des pouvoirs' (the crossroads of power) which examines the knowledge gap between scientists, 'poverty professionals' and people experiencing poverty. Information gathered through workshops now forms the basis of a publication.

#### 'Le croisement des pouvoirs'

<http://www.editionsquartmonde.org/Le-croisement-des-pouvoirs>

### Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an independent charity which aims to provide independent information, promote the exchange of best practice and influence policies to improve the living conditions and services offered to people experiencing poverty. A recent project is a guide for journalists in the UK. This publication was developed with input from groups dealing with poverty issues and a series of seminars involving journalists, as well as experts on the issue and people experiencing poverty.

#### 'Reporting poverty in the UK: a practical guide for journalists'

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/reporting-poverty-uk-practical-guide-journalists>