

**Denmark's activity programme  
for  
the 2010 European Year for Combating  
Poverty and Social Exclusion**



# Contents

Introduction.....	3
Challenges in Denmark.....	4
Background.....	6
Activities during the year.....	6
Dialogue and cooperation .....	10
Budget.....	11
Evaluation .....	12

## Introduction

Denmark is one of the countries in the world where welfare benefits the greatest proportion of the population and where inequality is at the lowest level. But even though the welfare society offers a safety net for everybody, Denmark still has citizens living on the fringes of society. We cannot and should not accept this fact. All citizens should have opportunities for leading satisfactory lives and all should enjoy equal opportunities for utilising the options available in society.

Denmark is characterised by having a comprehensive system of transfer payments and services available to all Danes. Where transfer payments ensure temporary or permanent basic income support, services can generally contribute to strengthening the individual's personal resources. Authorities are obliged to help the individual citizen to become socially included. The objective of all public initiatives is that individual citizens become as self-supporting as possible, able to take care of themselves and find jobs that match their abilities and competences – leading to freedom and self-confidence.

The responsibility for preventing social problems and social exclusion is not solely vested in the public sector. We all share the responsibility of caring for each other. The Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion gives us the opportunity of focusing on the activities and responsibilities which the corporate sector, private individuals and not least voluntary social associations daily assume.

We hope that the Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion will heighten the focus and generate debate generally in the population about many different aspects that factor into determining whether a person lives on the edge of society and that we can jointly strive to give every Dane the opportunity to utilise the many options in our society.

The 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion serves to underline that joint European activities are an important step on the road to creating results in the individual Member States and in all of Europe.

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Minister for the Interior  
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## Challenges in Denmark

Denmark is one of the most privileged countries in the world, highly affluent and with free and equal access for all its citizens to public services. The Danish welfare model ensures everybody a financial safety net where the public sector can step in if the individual citizen needs help.

Several analyses show that Denmark is one of the most equal societies in the world. According to figures from the OECD, Denmark is the OECD country with the lowest income differences and where the share of the population with a relatively low income is smallest.

Poverty in Denmark is not restricted to financial conditions. It is, therefore, necessary to view poverty and social exclusion in the Danish society in a wider context which comprises financial, cultural and social dimensions alike.

In that light, we must acknowledge that Denmark is still facing challenges: Some citizens still find it difficult to function in the Danish society, to gain a foothold in the labour market and to utilise its many options and services. All citizens in Denmark must enjoy equal opportunities to cultivate healthy social relations, obtain qualifying educations and have the ability and will to support themselves.

This is why continued attention is needed on the preventive aspects of initiatives, so that we avoid people falling into trouble. Attention must also focus on helping socially excluded and disadvantaged groups back into society and the labour market.

An extensive range of initiatives must be launched. Social health, employment, education and integration aspects need to be addressed. Thus, action covers a broad spectrum of initiatives, and a substantial challenge lies in coordinating the many activities, so that clear and measurable results can be achieved.

Fighting poverty and social exclusion is a collective responsibility that requires involvement by all players: political decision-makers at the national level, local authorities, regions, the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations as well as voluntary organisations. Each player must contribute its share of the initiatives, thus ensuring that they are wide-ranging and taken across professional and sectoral borders.

It is crucial that citizens receiving transfer payments or daily cash benefits find jobs as quickly as possible. Besides providing the necessary basis of income, labour market attachment also provides access to improved social relations and networks. A key aspect is to reach the most disadvantaged unemployed people who are particularly prone to lose contact with the labour market. This challenge requires close interaction between all relevant players in the area, especially at a time when economic trends are going the wrong way. In the coming years, too, massive attention must focus on establishing dialogues with all relevant parties to find solutions adapted to individual citizens without jobs and new alternative ways to maintain disadvantaged citizens in employment or find jobs for them.

We must improve general public health by expending activities in the area of prevention. This applies to all groups in society and all age groups. Children's health, in particular, should be protected in relation to smoking, poor diets and too little exercise. Unfortunately, prevention and healthy lifestyles have not gained enough ground among the part of the population with the shortest educations, among unemployed people, among recipients of anticipatory pension or among benefit claimants. If these groups are to achieve improved health, their general life conditions need to be changed.

Good qualifications are key to ensuring that everybody finds a place in society. Consequently, an important precondition for preventing social exclusion and poverty is that a growing share of a youth year completes a youth education programme. Moreover, Denmark faces a special challenge in relation to bi-lingual and socially disadvantaged children where targeted educational efforts are needed. Finally, the possibility of retraining and upgrading needs to be ensured through adult and continuing education.

Being responsible for social initiatives close to the citizens and for preventing social exclusion, local authorities play key roles. Employees in local authority social services, childhood educators, school doctors, health nurses and teachers often have insight into individual citizens' situations. Local authority administrations also have many key data on local citizens in general, thus making it obvious that local authorities should concentrate on determining where they can, actively, map the citizens that need help one way or the other. This will enable local councils to prioritise and set objectives for fighting poverty and social exclusion, implementing efficient initiatives and following up the objectives.

The Danish welfare system must never become a pretext for doing nothing and exempting individual citizens from taking personal responsibility. Voluntary recreational associations and voluntary work in Denmark provide fruitful and essential supplements to public initiatives, a sign that personal responsibility is taken. Many business executives show interest in including people on the fringes of the labour market. This represents another type of personal responsibility important in the efforts against social exclusion.

Finally, individual people are responsible for themselves and their families in the context of preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion – and for utilising the options actually existing in the Danish society.

## Background

The EU has decided that 2010 will be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. In connection with Denmark's approval of the proposal for a year of poverty, the government expressed the following attitude:

*"In the opinion of the government, it is particularly important for the individual and society to help people at risk of social exclusion gain and maintain a foothold in society and in the labour market. Consequently, the government approves the draft decision to implement a European Year 2010 for combating poverty and social exclusion."*

Denmark has thus committed itself to coordinating and implementing national, regional and local activities during 2010 that focus on combating social exclusion and poverty.

## Activities during the year

The activity programme encompasses activities launched during the Year. They all spring from the cooperation between the steering group, the reference group and the multitude of other players who have been and will be involved in the preparations and realisation of the Year.

### Communication

The Year is also meant to promote collective responsibility for combating poverty and improve cohesion in society. The aim should be to engender debates on how all players can contribute initiatives to combat poverty and social exclusion. Consequently, information and communication are crucial and key activities in themselves during the Year. Communication efforts must be in the form of information targeted at special groups and at the general public.

A joint website will be set up to function as a nexus for information about the Year. In addition to displaying facts and figures, the website must present activities, ongoing activities and offer inspiration for action and possibly forge partnerships across organisations, authorities, etc. The website will also contain information about the application pools. Transparency and easily accessible communication in comprehensible wording must characterise all individual activities. A key element must be that communication should always be rooted in target groups' options and resources and embed the gender perspective.

The website should further be designed so that, to the widest extent possible, it accommodates people or groups having special needs. The website must comply with the central government accessibility guidelines corresponding to WCAG version 2, AA.

### Joint nationwide initiatives

Some of the activities target the entire or major groups of the population in general. Activities aim at ensuring information and communication on activities during the year and focusing on personal responsibility. The nationwide activities must spread the message of combating poverty and social

exclusion as far as possible and will be developed in cooperation among the steering group, the reference group and any other relevant parties. The steering group must play a key and visible role for these initiatives. Activities targeting the general population must aim at ensuring optimum accessibility for everybody, including disabled people. Gender perspectives must be embedded in the activities.

General activities in connection with the Year:

- Start-up and completion events to create national awareness of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion
- Launch of website containing information on the Year and on activities from ministries and civil society. The website will offer the possibility of visitors' contacting the steering group to propose subjects for debates and content during the year
- Publication of leaflet with relevant key figures
- Information and discussion material on combating poverty and social exclusion targeted at public authorities, social and voluntary organisations, the educational sector and special groups of individuals
- Publication of leaflet containing stories about citizens that on their own or assisted by others have again become socially included
- Launch of prize competition on the inclusive society

### Government initiatives

In recent years, the government has launched a wide array of initiatives and projects with a view to countering social exclusion and poverty as well as generally helping socially excluded and disadvantaged groups in society. Initiatives are rooted in a wide range of factors in the social, employment, health, training and education and integration areas that impact on citizens' ability to be fully included in society. This approach should be maintained in the course of the Year.

The Danish government gives priority to the Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and wishes to use it to focus further attention on the broad spectrum of initiatives already launched and planned. Activities planned for the Year must interrelate with the government's planned activities.

- The government's strategy for homeless people
- Our Collective Responsibility II – the government's action programme for the most disadvantaged groups
- More continuity and cohesion in the initiatives aimed at mentally ill people across sectors and authorities
- Children's Reform
- Continued implementation of citizen-managed personal assistance in the disability area
- National action plan for prevention

- Implementation of the application pool: Improved health initiatives aimed at socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- Model projects on equality in health - On health and prevention in the group of the socially most disadvantaged alcohol and drug misusers and homeless people
- The government's strategy for combating the vicious circle of deprivation, "Equal opportunities for all children"
- Reform of the early childhood and teacher education aimed at ensuring that newly graduated early childhood educators and teachers have knowledge about language stimulation and teaching of bilingual pupils
- Preparatory adult education as part of the government's overall objective of giving all citizens equal opportunities for education
- The welfare reform including initiatives to reduce unemployment and to channel more immigrants and their descendants into jobs
- "A NEW CHANCE FOR EVERYONE" that will help long-term claimants of social assistance and start-help assistance back to the labour market
- A renewed four-party agreement made between the social partners on areas with favourable job opportunities

#### Corporate sector's, organisations' and local stakeholders' initiatives

In the course of the Year, a wide variety of initiatives will be realised by NGOs at national, regional and local levels alike. Some of the initiatives will be financed on nomination by the steering group.

Stakeholders can apply for full or part financing of the initiatives, but may, of course, also launch projects themselves for their own funds. A complete overview of activities during the year will be made – encompassing activities in this activity programme as well as activities implemented outside the activity programme.

Activities will include information, analysis, assessment, debate, dialogue or cooperation on poverty and social exclusion. The applications will be weighed with a view to ensuring that initiatives span a wide array of the challenges existing in Denmark, as stated in the activity programme description of national challenges. Further, priority will be given to applications aimed at creating lasting partnership relations across different interest groups.

Local stakeholders, authorities, businesses and organisations may apply for funds from three pools to realise projects and activities related to the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

A common requirement for the pools is that, to be eligible for funding, projects must focus on promoting social inclusion, using at least one of the following areas as its basis: social health, employment, training and education or integration.

The projects and activities may be in the nature of informative and debate-provoking events, surveys or pilot projects with specific initiatives to combat social exclusion.

The projects must set up clear objectives that enable subsequent evaluation. The project must clearly state its target group and the extent to which it has embedded the gender perspective.



Funds from the pool will be distributed taking into consideration that the different problem areas must, as much as possible, be represented in projects or activities.

Applications can be submitted for three pools:

Pool A:

**Local projects and activities in local authorities and regions.**

Applications for this pool can be submitted by local authorities and regions for projects and activities aimed at launching new activities that combat social exclusion in the geographical area of the local authority or region. Projects or activities can apply for funding, if their key elements are rooted in local or regional work aimed at promoting cross-sectoral inclusion. The projects require 50% co-financing, and special focus will rest on determining local poverty and social exclusion indicators and solutions to follow them up.

The pool will be distributed in allocations of up to DKK 200,000.

Up to DKK 1 million will be distributed from pool A.

Pool B:

**Local projects and activities by local organisations performing voluntary social work.**

Applications for this pool can be submitted by locally-based voluntary organisations that perform voluntary social work, i.e. either local branches of nationwide voluntary organisations or organisations that exist only in the given local area. They can apply for support for specific projects or activities suited to promote social inclusion and encompassing cross-sectoral cooperation, including voluntary stakeholders and businesses. No co-financing is required by applicants to pool B.

The pool will be distributed in allocations of up to DKK 100,000.

Up to DKK 1 million will be distributed from pool B.

Pool C:

**Local informative and debate-provoking events**

Applications for this pool can be submitted by private individuals or organisations, such as educational institutions and workplaces, to organise informative and debate-provoking events, aimed at finding methods and initiatives suited to combat social exclusion, including promoting corporate social responsibility as well as individual citizens' responsibility for their fellow beings in relation to combating social exclusion. No co-financing is required by applicants to pool C.

The pool will be distributed in allocations of up to DKK 25,000.

Up to DKK 300,000 will be distributed from pool C.

All applications will be considered by the steering group, which chooses and recommends projects for support.

**Time schedule:**

Application material and call for applications published: early November 2009.

Deadline for applications: 1 December 2009

Selection of projects: Early January

Allocation period: January 2010 – 31 December 2010

**Conditions:**

Grant recipients are subject to the Ministry of the Interior and Social Affairs' conditions for grant recipients available in Danish at: <http://www.ism.dk/Puljer/Sider/Start.aspx>

## Dialogue and cooperation

Realisation of activities related to the EU Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion calls for cooperation at many different levels and between many, very diverse partners. Recent years have revealed a steadily increasing interest in cooperation across various professions and sectors, and Denmark intends to launch even more partnership projects in the course of the Year. As a concrete implementation of the partnership work, in June 2009 the steering group for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion invited several key NGOs to a meeting to establish the national activity programme.

To oversee activities during the Year, a steering group has been set up with representatives of:

- Ministry of the Interior and Social Affairs (chairman)
- Ministry of Employment
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs
- Ministry of Health and Prevention

The steering group is charged with preparing the national programme for the Year, enumerating the activities to be realised in the course of 2010. The steering group is also responsible for realising the 2010 activity programme, distributing pool funds for regional and local activities and for following up projects and activities in 2011.

Moreover, an advisory reference group has been set up, consisting of:

- Danish Confederation of Trade Unions
- Danish Employers' Confederation
- FTF - Confederation of Professionals in Denmark
- Local Government Denmark
- Danish Regions
- European Anti Poverty Network
- Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark
- Council for Socially Marginalised People
- National Council for Children
- Danish Council for Social Volunteering

- National Institute of Public Health
- Council for Adult and Continuing Education
- Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Danish Refugee Council
- National Network of Business Leaders

The group is tasked with considering civil society's interests and embedding them in the activities of the Year. The Year will offer opportunities for focusing on poverty and social exclusion and thus also for setting up brand new partnership forums between, for instance, organisations, associations, companies and private citizens that have not previously worked together. Forums may also be established in completely new networks. Or they may take the form of concrete projects in which key authorities, organisations and individual people are included.

The objective is for several of these forums to continue after 2010. All activities must deal with poverty and social exclusion in some form or other. This requirement will provide ample opportunity for performing cross-sectoral activities at both national and local levels. At the same time, a range of major, nationwide joint activities must be used as a means of including various parties at several levels. The dialogue will be broadened to transcend not only authorities or organisations, but also people. To this end, debating events, meetings and seminars will be organised, at which people can meet and debate opinions.

Combating and preventing poverty and social exclusion require that a desire exists for innovation, dialogue and cooperation.

## Budget

Budget for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion:

Income:	
EU funds	DKK 1.3 million
Danish co-financing	DKK 3.0 million
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>DKK 4.3 million</u></b>
Expenditure	
Key initiatives	DKK 1.9 million
Evaluation	DKK 0.1 million
Pool A	DKK 1.0 million
Pool B	DKK 1.0 million
Pool C	DKK 0.3 million
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>DKK 4.3 million</u></b>

## Evaluation

### Effect goals for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

The effect of the nationwide campaign will be evaluated. The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion will also be evaluated in relation to the following objectives:

- about 250,000 Danes must have heard about the European Year by the end of 2010
- at least 10 publicly accessible “products” (websites, publications, campaign material, etc.) must be prepared on combating poverty and social exclusion to mark the European Year
- at least 20 organisations and at least 500 individuals must participate in conferences related to the European Year

The steering group selects an evaluator, who will perform the overall evaluation of the Year as stipulated in the steering group’s detailed directions.