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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITY TASKS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FOR THE EUROPEAN YEAR FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION 2010 – DRAFT

Preventing poverty and social exclusion is one of the key objectives of social policy in the Republic of Slovenia and requires a comprehensive, co-ordinated and integrated approach. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (hereinafter: MLFSA) co-ordinates measures and policies aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion and acts as the national implementing body responsible for the implementation of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (hereinafter: NIB) .

With a view to achieving the objectives and guiding principles of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 (hereinafter: the European Year 2010), the MLFSA invited the participation of all stakeholders who, through their policies and measures, can contribute to reducing poverty and social exclusion, raising public awareness and alleviating the distress of people living in poverty.

The target groups of the European Year 2010 in Slovenia are:

- people with very low incomes who, as a rule, face a high risk of poverty and whose subsistence often depends on social transfers (long-term unemployed people, unemployed young people up to 24 years of age, single-parent households, single elderly persons);
- "the working poor": individuals who are employed but live below the poverty risk threshold due to low and/or unpaid income;
- migrant workers and their families;
- children whose physical, mental/emotional and social development is threatened by poverty or social exclusion;
- elderly people dependent on others for help due to poverty, health or other reasons;
- people with disabilities and those with mental health problems;
- homeless persons, addicts, Roma, victims of violence;
- drop-outs.

In addition to the aforementioned target groups, European Year 2010 target groups include also **the general public, official bodies, services and offices at national, regional and local**

levels responsible for relevant policies aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion, social partners, civil society organisations and, in particular, organisations representing and fighting for the interests of people confronted with poverty and social exclusion and people experiencing poverty.

In Slovenia, activities within the European Year 2010 will mainly focus on:

1. raising awareness of poverty and social exclusion among the wider general public;
2. providing information to the most vulnerable groups about opportunities for bridging and overcoming their distress;
3. developing and recognising the significance of different forms of solidarity and voluntary activities.

The principle of gender equality will be followed in all activities.

1. NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITY TASKS FOR THE EUROPEAN YEAR 2010:

The national programme of activities and priority tasks within the European Year 2010 includes the following components:

- A) meetings and events in the Republic of Slovenia
- B) information and communication strategy
- C) surveys and studies at national level

A. Meetings and events in the Republic of Slovenia

In line with the objectives and guiding principles of the European Year 2010, there will be various events (meetings and ceremonies) organised in Slovenia at national and local levels, as part of the activities of the Government, professional organisations and civil society, non-governmental organisations and social partners and, in particular, organisations that represent the interests of people experiencing poverty and particularly vulnerable social groups. All events will be accompanied by activities from the information and communication strategy (presented below).

Within this framework, several events will be organised:

OPENING EVENT of the European Year 2010: 12 February 2010

The opening event will be organised as a half-day meeting by the MLFSA and held at the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia. The organisers of this event include: the National Assembly and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, representatives of civil society, people experiencing poverty, experts, the media. Invitations to attend the event will also be sent to representatives of vulnerable social groups and it is expected to draw a total of

100–150 participants. The event is planned for February 2010. The consultation will include the presentation of objectives and guiding principles of the European Year 2010, political messages and the National Programme of Activities and Priority Tasks for the European Year 2010 in the Republic of Slovenia.

MAIN EVENTS

The main events of the European Year 2010 will be of a professional nature. The MLFSA will issue a call for applications for the selection of projects to promote the objectives of the European Year 2010 within the organisation of events. Within the framework of these events we wish to highlight the following themes:

- **poverty of vulnerable social groups and presentation of opportunities for dealing with particular age-related stressful life situations;**
- **access to work and employment** (work and employment as the best and most effective way to exit poverty and social exclusion);
- **enforcement of social rights, access to other public assets and rights** (access to education, healthcare and housing since these are essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion);
- **increasing public sensitivity to issues of poverty and social exclusion of people** (emphasizing the dignity of the human being and everyone's share of responsibility for the society in which we live, provision of support, developing sensitivity towards people in distress);
- **strengthening solidarity and promoting voluntary work through cooperation with various voluntary organisations;**
- **participation as partaking in state, civil society and social networks;**
- **response of social work organisations to the globalisation of opportunities and localisation of consequences;**
- **cooperation with non-governmental organisations during Spring Focus Week** of the European Year 2010, to be held from 8 to 14 March 2010, and during **Autumn Focus Week** of the European Year 2010, to be held from 6th to 12th September 2010;
- **marking international and European days** (20 February –World Social Justice Day; 8 April –International Roma Day; 29 April –European Day of Inter-generational Solidarity; 15 May –International Family Day; 6 October –International Children's Day; 16 October –International Day for the Eradication of Poverty; 18 December – International Migrants Day; 20 December –International Human Solidarity Day, etc.

CONCLUDING EVENT: November 2010, duration: 1 day

The concluding event will be organised as a one-day conference devoted to:

- presenting a report on activities completed under the National Programme for the European Year 2010 in the Republic of Slovenia (together with conclusions and proposals for further activities);
- presenting activities from the European Program for the European Year 2010;

- presenting the results of activities conducted in priority fields of the European Year 2010 (raising awareness among the wider public, providing information to the most vulnerable groups, developing various forms of solidarity and voluntary activities);
- citizens' responses, exchanging opinions and information and discussions among key stakeholders; and
- presenting (interim or final) results of research carried out within the European Year 2010.

The concluding event will also feature a short cultural programme. Invitations to attend the event will be sent to representatives of all target groups of the European Year 2010, i.e. all stakeholders actively taking part in the European Year 2010 and, in particular, representatives of civil society and vulnerable social groups.

B. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The main objective of the national information, promotional and educational campaign is to raise public awareness and thus contribute to reducing poverty and social exclusion. Another key objective is to provide information to individuals and families about rights, measures and programmes intended to alleviate social distress and social exclusion.

One important objective is to raise public sensitivity to issues of poverty and the marginalisation of people who, due to life circumstances beyond their control, live in financial and social distress and are vulnerable to social exclusion. The efforts of the authorities and organisations must be supplemented, so that we all share responsibility for the society in which we live, offer every possible support to those in need, undertake voluntary work and develop sensitivity (solidarity) towards people in distress.

With a view to informing the public, MLFSA will:

- launch a special website on which all information about the purpose, objectives and content of the European Year 2010 will be published, together with all documents, material and information concerning planned events;
- present the activities and key objectives of the European Year 2010 already at the end of 2009 within the presentation of the programme of work of the MLFSA for 2010. A press conference will also be organised before or at the opening and concluding events;
- prepare information about all measures, programmes and existing transfers that are intended to alleviate the social distress of the population. Information will be updated with potential additional measures and will be available to those who will present the measures to the public, as well as to the media;

- keep the public informed about all events held in the European Year 2010 at national and local levels, as well as at the European level;
- present key activities, objectives and significance of the European Year 2010 to the public at the press conferences, interviews, radio, TV and every other public appearance of representatives of the MLFSA. The MLFSA will seriously consider every request or offer made by the media for an interview or appearance in special programmes, and every proposal to present measures to prevent poverty and social exclusion at conferences, meetings of social partners, non-governmental organisations and professional associations, and ensure the participation of a representative;
- carry out the promotional activities for the European Year 2010 within existing activities: measures and programmes to reduce the poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable groups, for example within programmes to be carried out in 2010 under the Operational Programme of Human Resources Development (European Social Fund);
- take every opportunity to present the objectives of the European Year 2010, activities and measures to prevent poverty, if possible in a national media programme;
- use the EY 2010 logo on all its correspondence.

C. SURVEYS AND STUDIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. A survey on the scope of homelessness in Slovenia and the formal assistance network for homeless people, which will focus on two aspects of homelessness, namely on the population of "street homeless" people and on those potentially at housing risk or excluded.

Objectives of survey:

- develop indicators for monitoring homelessness that will be comparable to European indicators;
- gather data on active support programmes for homeless people in Slovenia;
- provide traceable data, which can be compared with data from other EU Member States, on the scope of street homelessness in Slovenia and the population at housing risk or excluded;
- draw up specific proposals for measures to address the issue and develop new programmes tailored to fit the needs of the population concerned.

2. A survey on the living conditions of migrant workers in Slovenia:

Migration or mobility is one of the fundamental human rights; nevertheless, a clear migration strategy must be prepared to avoid economic and social exploitation of migrant workers. To this end, a thorough analysis of the social and economic status of migrant workers in Slovenia is needed, focusing on their working and general living conditions; it will provide the basis

for establishing a realistic picture of the most outstanding issues in migration policy. At the moment, we can say that migrant workers are among the most excluded groups in Slovenia.

3. A survey on social exclusion or poverty of unemployed people in connection with their psychosocial situation:

Data on the at-risk-of-poverty rates with respect to the labour intensity of households for 2007 (SORS) are as predicted and show that people living in jobless households are worst off. Compared to 2006, the at-risk-of-poverty rate has decreased in almost all population groups with the exception of unemployed people. Their position worsened by almost 3 percentage points. Loss of employment or waiting for new/first employment is a considerable psychological pressure on a person and tends to increase with the duration of unemployment. It is necessary to prepare a thorough analysis of the situation of unemployed people in Slovenia from the viewpoint of their social exclusion or poverty and their social, economic and psychological status; it will serve as the basis for the preparation of a comprehensive model of individual psychosocial support for unemployed people that could become part of the regular counselling programme.

In doing so, the principle of gender equality will be followed.

2. CONSULTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The MLFSA has always followed the basic principle of involving representatives of civil society in the preparation of strategic documents and regulations. In line with the objectives and principles of the European Year 2010, at the end of February 2009 the Ministry invited representatives of civil society, non-governmental organisations and social partners to take part in the initiative; on the basis of their proposals it appointed two special working bodies for the preparation and implementation of the European Year 2010. One is a core operational working group (OWG) with 9 members from different directorates within the Ministry, and the other is a National Committee (NC) consisting of representatives from 19 organisations (36 persons nominated as members or alternate members).

- **Representatives of ministries, other state authorities and specialist services:**
 - National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia;
 - National Council of the Republic of Slovenia;
 - MLFSA: Labour Market and Employment Directorate, Family Affairs Directorate, Social Affairs Directorate, International Cooperation and European Affairs Service; Public Relations Office, Minister's Office;
 - Ministry of Education and Sport;
 - Ministry of Health;
 - Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Affairs;
 - Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities;
 - Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Equal Opportunities;

- Community of Social Work Centres;
 - Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.
- **Representatives of civil society:**
 - RISI Institute –Slovenian EAPN network under construction;
 - Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS);
 - Slovenian Red Cross;
 - Caritas Slovenia;
 - Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations;
 - Council of Disability Organisations of Slovenia;
 - Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia;
 - Confederation of Trade Unions of Slovenia –PERGAM;
 - University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work;
 - A representative of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman is also invited to attend the meetings of the National Committee.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The MLFSA made a commitment to act as NIB by the "Declaration of the Managing Authority –Indirect Centralised Management –National Implementing Body (NIB)" and the "Assessment Tool (Declaration)". The MLFSA sent both documents to the European Commission on 15 April 2009.

Pursuant to Decision of the European Parliament and the Council No. 1098/2008/EC of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) and the European Financial Regulation (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities), the MLFSA (acting as NIB) will:

- 1) issue a call for applications for the selection of non-profit organisations to obtain grants for promotional activities related to combating poverty and social exclusion and raising public awareness.
- 2) by means of calls for tenders also select contractors to prepare studies and draw up an information and communication strategy.

The Communication Office of the Republic of Slovenia will issue a public tender for the promotion of activities aimed at increasing the significance and developing different forms of solidarity and voluntary activities. Funds are earmarked in the budget of the Republic of Slovenia for 2010.

Indicative timetable of activities at national level:

August/September 2009	preparation of calls for tenders for the selection of contractors
September/October 2009	issuing calls for tender
August/September 2009	preparation of national media campaign
October / November 2009	selection of EY 2010 projects; selection of EY 2010 contractors; preparation of the proposal for EC co-financing by the NIB;
10 December 2009	submission of the national application to the Commission
Year 2010	implementation of activities

4. INDICATIVE BUDGET

For the purpose of co-financing activities and priority tasks and in accordance with financial regulations, the MLFSA will introduce two new budget items to the 2010 draft budget:

- European Year 2010 – EU participation (50% co-financing) and
- European Year 2010 – participation of the Republic of Slovenia (50% co-financing).

Assessment of envisaged costs:

A. MEETINGS AND EVENTS	EUR 160,000
B. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	EUR 30,000
C. SURVEYS AND STUDIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL	EUR 50,000
TOTAL	EUR 240,000

The MLFSA envisages that funds may be re-allocated between the budget items if required.

5. MONITORING OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EY 2010 ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the National Programme for EY 2010 Activities will require monitoring and drawing up a final report. The first two tasks, i.e. monitoring the implementation of the National Programme for EY 2010 Activities and preparation of the final report will be carried out by the MLFSA in co-operation with the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.

Both institutions will monitor the situation regarding the fight against poverty and social exclusion using standard methods:

- by monitoring official statistical data and other indicators of social cohesion (Laeken indicators) in Slovenia, calculated on the basis of the common Eurostat methodology and published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia;
- through implementation reports on strategies, such as Slovenia's Development Strategy (on the basis of the adopted Lisbon Strategy), the National Reform Programme, the Resolution on the National Social Protection Programme 2010 and other documents;
- through the results of various research projects and surveys in the field of poverty and social exclusion carried out in Slovenia in recent years, such as those on poverty and material deprivation of elderly people (working title: Poverty of the Elderly), and on the phenomenon of the working poor and its causes, and the poverty and social exclusion of families with children.

Monitoring the implementation of the National Programme for EY 2010 Activities will be a priority task of the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, set in its work programme for 2010 and 2011. The deadline for the elaboration of the final report is 20 February 2011.

Evaluation of results of the National Programme of Activities in the Republic of Slovenia will be carried out by an independent outside organisation appointed by the European Commission.