

**National Programme of the Slovak Republic for implementing the
European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion (2010)**

May 2009

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Introduction

The National Programme of the Slovak Republic for implementing the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion (2010) (further “National Programme”) is a strategic document by which the Slovak Republic as a Member State of the European Union expresses its pledge to make “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”, in accordance with the Decision¹, by which the year 2010 was designated for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (further “European Year”).

The National Programme has been drawn up in accordance with the main priorities of the Strategic Framework Document (Priorities and Guidelines for 2010 European Year activities). The presented document also builds on the country Report on the National Strategies on Social Protection and Social Inclusion for 2008 – 2010, particularly linking to the priority objectives of the Slovak Republic in the area of social inclusion:

The objective of the presented document is to:

- ensure public awareness-raising of the situation of people experiencing poverty particularly the groups or individuals socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion, whereby the access will be promoted to social, economic and cultural rights,
- create room for the active involvement of all stakeholders that could contribute to better implementation of social inclusion policies.

The National Programme is submitted with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic as the guarantor (further “Ministry“) but other central bodies of state administration, non-governmental organisations and social partners have also participated in drawing it up by means of opportunities offered by the comments proceedings.

¹ Decision No. 1098/2008 EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

1. National context

1.1. Tasks and the national strategy for combating poverty

Poverty and social exclusion have broad, complex and multidimensional forms that relate to a number of factors such as income and living standards, educational and decent work opportunities, social protection, housing, access to healthcare, etc.

The social inclusion policies in Slovakia are pursued in the context of the Open Method of Coordination (further “OMC”), created at the level of the European Union for joint coordination of policies of the Member States in the areas of combating poverty and social exclusion and social protection with a view to attaining one of the Lisbon strategic objectives, namely “to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010”. The Government of the Slovak Republic pledged in its Program Statement of Policies to materially apply the principle of social rights in the scope typical of a welfare state and fight consistently against poverty, or to reduce the at-risk-of- poverty rate.

Unemployment and the rising living costs contribute to the growing poverty. The groups most at risk of poverty include children and youth, older people, people with disabilities, etc. Another important fact is that poverty in Slovakia is determined also by ethnic aspects and affects to a large extent the Roma population in particular. Reducing the risk of poverty is one of the basic principles of the set-up of legislative measures and of seeking the foundation for assistance to the population groups most at risk of poverty. Within the meaning of the above, the Slovak Republic has subscribed to the programme of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, having as its horizontal themes poverty, gender equality and discrimination. During the European Year, the Slovak Republic will also have the Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme 2005-2015, which will highlight the emphasis in implementing particular activities at national and international levels.

As follows out of the harmonised statistical survey EU SILC 2007, the proportion of people living below the poverty risk threshold in Slovakia makes up 11%. The groups facing greatest poverty risk include incomplete families with children (26%), families with three and more children (26%) and children and youth (17%). Poverty reproduction from one generation to the other is a problematic element of poverty and makes the lives of children very significantly affected by the circumstances of their parents’ lives, such as their education and income. In the case of older people aged over 65 years the at-risk-of-poverty rate is at the level of 8%, and, based on administrative data, there is 376,620² people with severe disabilities in Slovakia.

The Slovak Republic provides for sustainable reduction of poverty and the eradication of social exclusion by means of a number of measures, the key ones including the **provision for income support, support for access to employment, education and labour market integration, the access to public services and the development of human capital**. This support relates to both, the individuals and socially excluded or at-risk-of-social-exclusion groups, and the policy makers and service providers. Active inclusion policies may significantly strengthen not only the social inclusion itself of the most disadvantaged individuals and their labour market integration, but, simultaneously, they can contribute to reducing gender inequalities.

The main objective of the Slovak Republic’s social policy is to create such legislative and institutional framework for its population and to adopt and implement such measures that will ensure the maintenance and development of human, economic, social and cultural rights

² The number of individuals to whom the Card of an Individual with Severe Disabilities has been issued, as of 1 January 2009.

and resources aimed at providing for decent living standards for all, support for gender equality, provision for equal opportunities and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

The Slovak Republic continues to deem as her main priority objectives to achieve the prevention and eradication of poverty and social exclusion in Slovakia in the period 2008 – 2010³, building on the previous period of 2006-2008, namely:

- to reduce poverty of children and resolve the inter-generation reproduction of poverty by preventive measures and by support of families with children,
- to increase inclusion and to fight against discrimination of vulnerable population groups by supporting the availability of public services, developing local solutions and increasing the participation of excluded groups in the life of the society,
- to improve access to the labour market and increase employment and employability of the population threatened with social exclusion.

With regard to the above, we need to note that the Slovak Republic has strengthened and extended the measures designed to pursue the above priority objectives also in the light of the changes occurring as the result of the world financial crisis and the economic crisis.

The key task still remains to provide for a comprehensive approach to social inclusion policy-making and actions, mainstreaming, i.e. interlinking different types of policies at national, regional and local levels; and making provision for awareness-raising in the area of poverty issues and social exclusion. The development of cooperation, the establishment of partnerships of various entities at horizontal and vertical levels is an important element of these activities.

This National Programme supports a coordinated furtherance of the cited actions in the area of effective fight against poverty for the duration of the European Year 2010, and, above all, of the awareness-raising in the area at hand, with the active participation of all stakeholders.

1.2. Administrative structure

In Slovakia, the preparation and implementation of the activities for the European Year will be ensured by the Ministry, as the National Implementing Body (further “NIB”). Its role will be to manage the European funding environment on the basis of a structure of indirect centralised management and to organise the European Year at national level, including the establishment of partnership relations with the stakeholders.

Within the meaning of the National Strategic Reference Frame, the Act on the assistance and support provided from the European Community funds and on the basis of the decision of the Government of the Slovak Republic the Ministry is the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion, whereby it meets the prerequisites and the criteria imposed upon the financial and administrative management. Hence the financial management, monitoring and the evaluation arrangements will be ensured as well as the appropriate links to other measures and activities being already implemented through the projects under the structural funds.

The Social Development Fund shall be charged with the implementation of the National Programme, i.e. the implementation of particular measures with a view to undertaking the activities designed for the European Year. It is a state budget funded organisation in the founding responsibility of the Ministry. The Social Development Fund is

³ The National Report on the Strategies on Social Protection and Social Inclusion for 2008-2010

an organisation established for the purpose of providing assistance to people in eradicating poverty and reducing the risk of social exclusion. Its remit includes giving support to projects that create pathways to integration in the society for persons who owing to poverty and social exclusion have found themselves to be marginalized.

Other sectors will also be involved in the cooperation whose policies coincide with the policy of social inclusion, as well as the social partners, territorial self-government and non-governmental organisations dealing with the issues of poverty and social exclusion and other stakeholders.

Concrete tasks of the National Programme will be specified in more detail in their implementation Action Plans.

2. National Programme and the Communication strategy

The activities of the European Year are designed to achieve its objectives and the guiding principles,⁴ while reflecting also the fulfilment of the main priority objectives of the Slovak Republic directed at the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

The main objectives of the European Year include

- **Recognition of rights** – recognising the fundamental right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play full part in society. The European Year will increase public awareness of the situation of people experiencing poverty, particularly that of groups or persons in vulnerable situations, and will help to promote their effective access to social, economic and cultural rights as well as to sufficient resources and quality services. The European Year will also help to combat stereotypes and stigmatisation;
- **Shared responsibility and participation** – increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising both collective and individual responsibility in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, as well as the importance of promoting and supporting voluntary activities. The European Year will promote the involvement of public and private actors, *inter alia*, through proactive partnerships. It will foster awareness and commitment and create opportunities for contributions by all citizens, in particular people with direct or indirect experience of poverty;
- **Cohesion** – promoting a more cohesive society by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society where poverty is eradicated, fair distribution is enabled and no one is marginalized. The European Year will foster a society that sustains and develops quality of life, including quality of skills and employment, social well-being, including the well-being of children, and equal opportunities for all. It will, moreover, ensure sustainable development and solidarity between and within generations and policy coherence with EU action worldwide;
- **Commitment and concrete action** – reiterating the strong political commitment of the EU and the member States to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion and promoting this commitment and actions at all levels of governance. Building upon the achievements and potential of the OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the European Year will strengthen the political commitment, by focusing political attention on and mobilising all interested parties, in the

⁴ Article 2 of Decision No. 1098/2008/EC

prevention of and the fight against poverty and social exclusion and give further impetus to the Member States' and the European Union's action in this field.

2.1. Activities of the European Year

2.1.1. National conferences focused on the European Year

Examples of activities

Over the course of 2010 two national conferences with international participation will be organised for the purpose of:

- launching the European Year,
- end-of-the-year evaluation of all activities implemented during the European Year.

2.1.2. Support for innovative schemes to promote social inclusion

Examples of activities

- competition and announcement of successful solutions by employers, territorial self-government, non-governmental organisations involved within the Corporate Social Responsibility in the fight against poverty and social exclusion,
- competition and announcement of successful films created with a view to combating poverty and social exclusion,
- engaging primary and secondary schools in the themes of poverty and social inclusion, with the involvement of children, various types of actions in primary and secondary schools (e.g. games involving children, lectures), theatre plays with social topics involving the target groups,
- engaging tertiary schools – competition for best thesis on a given subject among students of philosophical faculties, pedagogic faculties, social sciences, etc. touring theatre plays.

2.1.3. Awareness-raising on the issues of poverty and social exclusion and on the rights of people experiencing poverty and at risk of social exclusion for a life in dignity and for taking an active part in the life of society

Examples of activities

- conferences and special seminars, workshops, sensitising activities and the media campaigns with an emphasis on regional and local campaigns, e.g. ensuring information from the territorial self-government of beneficiaries of social services in their respective regions,
- roundtables with the involvement of citizens in situations of poverty and at risk of social exclusion, specialist seminars,
- giving publicity to successful life stories (taking the form of TV clips and other) of individuals who successfully tackled their social exclusion.

2.1.4. Support for development and education with a view to implementing policies designed to eradicate and reducing of poverty and social exclusion

Examples of activities

- educational activities designed to disseminate and deepen the information in the area of poverty and social exclusion,
- surveys and studies on the state of poverty in Slovakia,
- presentation of good practice examples of implementing motivational, social and counselling programmes and self-help activities designed to prevent poverty and social exclusion, including the programmes activating the individual's responsibility for own life and the life of own family,
- programmes promoting the involvement of people experiencing poverty and at risk of social exclusion in order to take an active part in the life of society.

2.1.5. Public information through the media, universal information materials

Examples of activities

- television clips/documents – engaged through universities will be the students of documentary film, animated film, etc. (benefit – the involvement of artistic public, young people, schools, a broader-scope and a more emotional impact on the public, creative solutions), using the media to combat stereotyped views of poverty; studies (institutes, higher education establishments),
- a film festival on the subject matter of poverty and social exclusion, including in cooperation with the programmes of partner countries; a form of competition is also under consideration,
- ensuring the information materials, such as the design, printing and distribution of brochures, leaflets, posters, audiovisual materials, media campaign emphasising the collective responsibility of the largest public possible in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

2.2. Communication strategy including the launching event, website and the national campaign

Last but not least, the success of the measures implemented within the European Year presupposes to take a number of targeted steps, information activities primarily designed for all citizens (regardless of their working position, age or education attained). The main objective of the activities is to familiarise citizens with the legislative and non-legislative measures addressing the eradication of poverty and social exclusion, or, to jointly seek ways out to improve the quality of life for people in situations of poverty, socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion, and to strengthen solidarity and cohesion.

The relevant communication activities will, as priority, be directed both in the preparation and the implementation of the European Year, at awareness-raising and the strengthening of legal information of citizens on the given issues. Mutual communication with the relevant state and public institutions will be of no lesser importance, as well as with other parties interested in having an open and substantive discussion.

Every citizen will have access to the information so as to eliminate difficult search for it in multiple places and systems. Getting the feedback and opinions from the public will be an associate objective. Such partnership approach is directed towards supporting the construction and development of the social model of the European Union, pledging the Slovak Republic as its Member State to attaching special importance to the area of social policy, objective information of citizens on the measures that directly or indirectly affect them.

The objective of the media and communication strategy within the National Programme is to contribute to the objective information and to the awareness-raising of the general public on such important world problem as poverty, with all its implications for the population groups most at risk.

2.2.1. Tools for management the information and communication campaigns

The Ministry will implement the information activities with regard to broader social groups, with the mass media being its principal communication tool. The public services of the Slovak Television and the Slovak Radio shall be among the priority communication channels.

Apart from these tools Department of Labour, Social Affairs and Family will also ensure the publication and distribution of the information leaflets in its agency. Opportunities for electronic communication will be used to maximum possible extent – Internet, i.e. via the web page devoted to the European Year.

The specific communication and media strategy of the Ministry in promoting the European Year will be based on

- improving available communication through its own website, with links to the web pages of other interested institutions,
- presenting activities and results via own periodicals and non-periodic print materials distributed at press conferences, conferences, sectoral actions and through local state administration and territorial self-government, etc.,
- paid media communication (classified advertisements) taking the form of paid announcements through press agencies, public relation articles and discussions for print media and the programmes or paid participation of main representatives of the Ministry in selected programmes.

2.2.2. Media communication activities and communication means

- organisation of the opening press conference on the National Programme,
- organisation of on-going press conferences on pre-specified communication themes in the relevant month,
- preparation of press releases, interviews, news flashes, discussion forums and discussions in print and electronic media but also in commercial media within the allocated resources,
- organisation of two national conferences,
- publishing of brochures, leaflets, posters, audiovisual materials,
- making maximum use of the Ministry's website to inform the general public,
- media information of the public via public-law institutions: Slovenský rozhlas/Slovak Radio and Slovenská televízia/Slovak Television (live discussion programmes, dispatches, monothematic programs on the Slovak Radio: programs titled *Kontakty*, *Familia*, *Seniorklub*, *Dobré ráno Slovensko*, *Rádiobudík*, etc. In the broadcasting of the Slovak TV: appearances in prime-time news bulletins and such programs as: *Správy a komentáre*, *Dámsky magazín*, *Raňajky s STV*, *Večer na tému*, *Sociálny zápisník*, *Fokus* and in news clips),

- publishing of the journal – subject to consideration of financial possibilities either semi-annual or annual, monothematic print publication focused on the National Programme, organisation of the opening and closing media campaign,
- cooperation with regional and local institutions aimed at the issues of poverty and social exclusion.

2.3. Mainstreaming of the gender equality dimension

The Slovak Republic applies the policy of active social inclusion based on gender mainstreaming, the introduction of gender dimension in each phase of the social inclusion policy process – in its formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. The basic source for gender mainstreaming in the Slovak Republic will be the available statistical information on gender gaps that will be the foundation for proposing and implementing the active social inclusion policy in all chapters and proposed events and Programme activities.

To ensure consideration of gender equality in every phase of the policy drafting and implementation process, it is vital to secure that measures take account of all concrete risks and dimensions of poverty and social exclusion encountered by women and men. The implementing entities of particular activities of the European Year will pay attention to a balanced representation of men and women.

The links between the interested parties and their participation in the implementation of policies for women and men is an important aspect of the National Programme, with a view to precluding their negative impacts and improving the quality and effectiveness.

2.4. Accessibility of the actions

The activities within the European Year will be accessible to the entire society, including the people in situations of poverty and at risk of social exclusion. The activities will be implemented at accessible places using the appropriate language as well as comprehensible information. It is one of the criteria, which will be emphasised in the selection of projects within the activities of the European Year.

All projects implemented within the activities of the National Programme and also those that will not receive the funding but that will be designed to implement the European objectives and will be consistent with the National Strategy defined in the National Programme will have to carry a uniform logo of the EU.

2.5. Anticipated impact and the outcomes of planned activities

The activities of the European Year, referred to above, are designed for the awareness-raising with regards to the eradication and alleviation of poverty and social exclusion in Slovakia at all levels (national, regional, and local) of the general public and the specified target groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion. It is primarily the involvement in the process of the general public as well as the institutions at regional and local levels that will create room for better linking of the social inclusion policies at all levels in order to improve the implementation and the cooperation of the non-governmental umbrella organisations in the field of social inclusion and the civil society.

Another outcome will be strengthening of the links between the policies of social inclusion and the active labour market policy with regards to the application of the

programme and project approach in order to prevent the exclusion from the labour market and to support the integration in employment of the disadvantaged groups.

2.6. Target group

The target groups of the activities at hand include: the general public, groups of children and youth at risk of poverty and social exclusion, families with children in situations of poverty and at risk of social exclusion, other groups of population at risk of social exclusion (such as, individuals with severe disabilities, older people, low-income groups, migrants, the homeless, marginalized communities, particularly the persons living in segregated and separated Roma communities for whom measures of social inclusion are being implemented), persons without education or with low levels of education that are unemployed for more than 24 months and that cannot be identified within the above target groups, non-governmental organisations, citizens' associations and partnerships, employers, employees implementing the policies and measures in the area of social inclusion in the public and non-public sector, employees from the public administration institutions, research workplaces, schools, etc.

3. Consulting of the civil society and stakeholders

3.1. Consulted stakeholders

The relevant sectors in particular had the opportunity to cooperate in the preparation of the National Programme, in the light of their overlapping with social inclusion policies, as well as the territorial self-government, academic sphere and research institutions, social partners, NGOs including those that defend or represent the excluded groups (the homeless, persons with disabilities, families with more children, the poor, the marginalized Roma communities, older people etc.), see sub-chapter 2.6.

This creates the basis for cooperation at horizontal and vertical levels within the public administration, as well as with social partners and non-governmental sector, with a view to strengthening and standardisation of the cooperation in the forthcoming period.

From among the interested parties the following organisations were approached categorised as

- territorial and local self-government (upper-tier territorial units, the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia),
- local partnerships of social inclusion,
- central bodies of state administration (including the Statistical Office),
- non-governmental organisations (such as the Slovak Network against Poverty/Slovenská sieť proti chudobe, the Pensioners Association, the Foundation of Milan Šimečka, the Foundation SOCIA, the Slovak Catholic Charity, the Civil Organisation of Upstream, the Multi-children Families' Club, the Civil Organisation of Man in Peril, the Civil Organisation of Nota Bene etc.), civil organisations acting as umbrella for socially excluded people or those at risk of social exclusion, persons with disabilities (e.g. the Union of Persons with Impaired Hearing),
- social partners (the Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic)

- schools (e.g. the Chair of Social Work of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra),
- research workplaces (such as the Institute for Labour and Family Research, the Institute for Sociology of Slovak Archive of Social Data).

Members of the working group for the preparation of the National Report on the Strategies on Social Protection and Social Inclusion have also been involved in the consultation process, as well as members of the working group for the programme of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

Consultations will continue with the interested parties throughout the preparation of the European Year as well as its implementation, making use of both their experience and primarily their participation in the relevant activities.

3.2. The consultation process, its outcomes and follow-up

Consultations in the preparation process for the National Programme were ensured through the information system created for the improvement of monitoring of the legal regulations' legislative process and for creating room to involve in the legislative process the eligible bodies of state administration and the general public with a view to their active participation in the policy implementation process.

In order to give visibility to the stakeholders' chance to engage in the preparation of the National Programme within the comments procedure referred to above, the information was also posted on the website of the Ministry, which created room for the general public involvement in the entire process.

4. Implementing measures

4.1. Calls for proposal, award criteria, selection procedure

The implementation of the National Programme's activities shall be undertaken in two ways:

1. by ensuring activities via external services on the basis of public procurement, i.e. purchasing of goods and services,
2. publishing of a call for projects (provision of grant to the implementing authority based on the submitted project) – the form of grants for provision of activities promoting information dissemination and awareness-raising on the issues of poverty, social inclusion at local and regional level.

4.1.1. Eligibility criteria

The eligible beneficiaries of assistance taking the form of non-repayable financial contribution include: non-governmental organisations, civil associations and partnerships, private companies, institutions of public, state and territorial administration and local self-government dealing with the themes of social inclusion and the fight against poverty, educational institutions, private sector and other public institutions.

In the case of external services the criteria of eligibility will be guided by the competition rules in the form of public procurement rules.

The conditions and terms of participation and the criteria for evaluation of bids shall be set out in accordance with the Community regulations.

The eligibility criteria shall be defined as the basic conditions that the entity submitting the project/bid will need to satisfy – without satisfying the eligibility criteria the entity cannot enter the call.

The period of eligibility of financial expenditure for the implementation of the activities of the National Programme shall be from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010.

4.1.2. Evaluation criteria of proposal

The applications must be consistent with

- the objectives of the European Year (recognition of rights, shared responsibility and participation, cohesion, commitment and concrete action) and the National Programme
- the gender dimension,
- accessibility of the planned activities, including for persons experiencing poverty and persons with disabilities.

The criteria for the evaluation of bids shall focus on the quality of compliance with the purpose of concrete activities of the European Year, i.e. they will be specified for concrete activity with the emphasis on the content of the activity, its purpose and objective.

The criteria for the evaluation of bids shall be specified over and above the frame of the eligibility criteria that will be defined as basic conditions for the involvement in the call.

The period of eligibility of financial expenditure for the implementation of the activities of the National Programme shall be from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010.

4.2. Indicative timetable

A provisional timetable is given in the Annex to the National Programme.

5. Indicative budget

For financing the measures concerned the system of indirect centralised management will be applied, in pursuance of Article 54 paragraph 2 sub-paragraph c) and Article 56 paragraph 1 of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1605/2002, of 25 June 2002, on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities and in accordance with Articles 35 through 41 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 2342/2002, of 23 December 2002, laying down detailed rules of the implementation of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1605/2002, of 25 June 2002, on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

To ensure the measures to be implemented under the National Programme, there will be appropriated 169,685 EUR from the EU budget, which is 50 % of the total eligible expenditure, and the co-financing from the state budget amounting to 169,685 EUR from the State Budget of Slovak Republic, comprising 50 % of the total eligible expenditure.

Activity	EUR
<i>National conferences focused on the European Year</i>	43,000
<i>Support for innovative schemes to promote social inclusion</i>	80,370
<i>Awareness-raising on the issues of poverty and social exclusion and on the rights of people experiencing poverty and at risk of social exclusion for a life in dignity and for taking an active part in the life of society</i>	80,000
<i>Support for development and education with a view to implementing the policies designed to eradicate and reducing of poverty and social exclusion</i>	70,000
<i>Public information through the media, universal information materials</i>	66,000
Total	339,370

6. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

We deem the monitoring of the implementation of activities to be a very important tool of successful implementation of the measures adopted within the National Programme. Monitoring will be conducted continuously, at quarterly intervals the interim monitoring reports will be produced which will ensure compliance of all activities implemented in the preparation and implementation phases of the National Programme. In the end a final report on the European Year will be prepared and submitted to the European Commission at a date by 31 March 2011.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

- 1. on-the-spot checks (continuous monitoring of the implementation of the evaluated activities in the field)**
- 2. monitoring and evaluation of the results of the national and regional actions of the National Programme**

The entire monitoring and evaluation process will include:

- the setting up of indicators linked to the objectives of the European Year and the activities set out in the National Programme,
- identification of the way the data will be collected at national and regional levels,
- development of requisite forms, data collection sheets, questionnaires, etc.,
- selection of the method of data processing, selection of the software, etc.,
- designation of the way the financial and physical indicators will be analysed,
- the drawing up of the synopsis for the final report on the European Year,
- the drawing up of the way the report will be presented.

Within the evaluation of the actions set out in the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 1098/2008/EC of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010), the NIB shall collaborate with the European Commission in carrying out the interim evaluation.