



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DG

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION 2002-2006

CALL FOR PROPOSALS VP/2002/008

**FOR THE SUPPORT TO KEY EUROPEAN NETWORKS INVOLVED IN
THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

Period covered: 01.12.2002- 01.12.2005

(yearly grant renewable twice)

Budget line B3-4105

Guidelines

I.- Introduction

Major developments have taken place at EU level in combating social exclusion and poverty since the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty and the introduction of Articles 136 and 137 giving legal basis for action in this area.

The Lisbon Council of March 2000 set out a strategic goal for the Union for the next ten years: *Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* To take forward this new strategic ambition of a more inclusive society, the European Council of Lisbon gave a mandate to the Council to set appropriate objectives by the end of 2000.

The High-Level Group on Social Protection worked in 2000, in collaboration with the Commission, in order to define a list of common objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. These common objectives as well as the working methods to implement them were endorsed by **the European Council of Nice** in December 2000.

The four main objectives are :

- 1) To promote access to stable and quality jobs to all who are capable of working, and prevent exclusion from work, as well as to facilitate access of all to resources, rights, goods and services, including guarantee of sufficient resources.
- 2) To prevent the risks of exclusion.
- 3) To help the most vulnerable people, by incorporating them among the beneficiaries of horizontal policies or through specific action.
- 4) To mobilise all relevant actors and to mainstream the fight against exclusion into overall policy.

The Lisbon European Council decided to use the **open method of co-ordination** to implement this strategy. In response to the Nice objectives, **Member States adopted their first National Action Plans against social exclusion and poverty (NAPs/incl)** in June 2001. The NAPs/incl present existing or planned policy measures in each Member State to combat social exclusion and poverty from July 2001 to June 2003. The Commission reviewed the NAPs/incl and adopted its draft Social Inclusion Report in October 2001. This Communication served as a basis for a **Joint Report on Social Inclusion** which was adopted by the Council and submitted to the Brussels-Laeken Summit in December 2001. Another achievement of the Laeken summit was the adoption of European-wide **common social indicators** in order to improve the follow-up and monitoring of the process.

In order to **support and complement this open method of co-ordination**, the Commission also proposed a **new Community action programme to combat social exclusion** aimed at encouraging co-operation between Member States in June 2000. This programme takes over a series of **preparatory actions** carried out since 1998. It was agreed in November 2001 and entered into force on 12th January 2002.

The programme will support and supplement efforts at Community level and in the Member States to promote policies **to prevent and to combat social exclusion and poverty**. Notably it is designed to support and complement implementation of the open method of coordination on social inclusion and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policies to combat social exclusion by:

- (a) improving the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help in particular of comparable indicators;
- (b) organising exchanges on policies which are implemented and promoting mutual learning in the context of national action plans;
- (c) developing the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively, and to promote innovative approaches, in particular through networking at European level, and by promoting dialogue with all those involved.

All information concerning the open method of coordination and the action programme is available at the following webpage: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm.

II.- Support for networking at European level

One of the key objectives of the programme is to develop the participation of and to promote dialogue with the various actors involved in the fight against social exclusion and poverty. In this context, it provides that the Community will contribute to the running costs of **key European-level networks of organisations involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion**.

Such networks have an important contribution to make in the context of the new open method of coordination **towards a better understanding of the most concrete forms of social exclusion, a regular monitoring of the implementation of the national action plans at a level closer to their main beneficiaries, a greater awareness of the European strategy in the public opinion, as well as to ensuring that this strategy takes into account the experience of people exposed to social exclusion**. Reinforcing the capacity-building of European networks allows these organisations to better take into account the concerns of their constituent members and to strengthen their abilities to tackle issues relating to social exclusion and poverty within their domestic context.

They have an equally important contribution to make **towards affecting and/or accompanying change in policies to combat social exclusion**. Making a difference requires a sustained, cohesive coalition capable of collecting and analysing information, making that information available to key actors and mobilising many sources of influence. European networks are in a central position to influence policy in the European Union and in the Member states at all levels through their national members. Influence is gained through the increased expertise and information which are important to policy formulation and implementation. It is also gained through the setting-up of coalitions capable of affecting change. A growing body of literature shows the crucial role played by mediating factors, whether institutions or private actors, in bringing about changes. European networks must have as an overall objective to produce effective policy

proposals requiring action by others. By concluding alliances with relevant institutions or actors, European networks can contribute to making other actors, also involved in the fight against social exclusion, acknowledge problems and be accountable to commitments they have made.

In this context, the Commission is calling on **European networks whose main purpose is to contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion and whose membership is composed of organisations who are active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and are established in at least twelve Member States** to submit proposals with a view to obtaining a financial contribution to their running costs. Such members' organisations can be public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions (as referred to in Point 2 of the annex to the Programme Decision).

III.- Financial conditions

The Community contribution would be towards costs inherent in carrying out the activities provided for in the European network's strategic work plan. The work plan should cover a maximum period of thirty-six months starting on 1st December 2002 for a three-year period ending on 1st December 2005. However, subsidy agreements will be signed for one year and be subject to an annual and conditional renewal. The renewal each year will be subject to an examination of a report on the previous year's activities and to an agreement on the next year's work programme.

Financial support for annual co-ordination activities will only be granted to European networks which fulfil the conditions and criteria set out under the eligibility and selection criteria of this notice. Applicant organisations must be operating at a European level.

European networks to be funded after the completion of the present Call will not be allowed to submit similar requests for subsidies with a view to obtaining a financial contribution to their running costs to other Commission's services. Failure to comply with this specific requirement will entitle the Commission to unilaterally terminate the grant agreement in addition to demanding the full repayment of all sums received by the beneficiary under the said grant agreement. In addition, European networks to be funded after the completion of the present Call will not be allowed to claim for overheads costs identified in the provisional budget as "indirect eligible costs" in requests for subsidies towards the costs of specific activities or projects if any.

The total budget made available under this Call is approximately € 2.500.000. **Depending on the content, relevance and quality of the applications, it is envisaged that a maximum of four European networks will be selected following this Call.** As a matter of principle, the maximum amount of subsidy to be given for the twelve-month period in 2002-2003 will not exceed the order of magnitude of grants given under the preparatory actions.

The Decision on the Programme explicitly mentions that the core-funding is subject to an upper limit of 90% of the expenditure eligible for support and that this ceiling may only be reached under exceptional circumstances. According to this requirement, each organisation will have to demonstrate its financial need for the requested rate of Community funding. In case the 90% core-funding is envisaged, a detailed analysis of the exceptional circumstances justifying the demand must be included in the application. The

appropriate matching funding should be guaranteed in cash by the applicant. Contributions in kind are not accepted.

Co-funding may be obtained from the lead organisation, or from any or all of the members, from an external organisation or from any combination of the above. Co-funding may NOT be obtained from other sources within the European Community budget. Applicant networks are asked to submit with their application an explicit written undertaking from each co-financing organisation, including the applicant's organisation if appropriate, to provide the amount of funding stated in the grant application for the operation. The written undertakings provided must cover no less than the full amount of project funding which is not to be covered by the Community subsidy. Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that reception of a co-financing guarantee from third parties may take several weeks. The failure to provide such supporting documents will entail the automatic ineligibility of the request of subsidy.

IV.- Priorities for funding in 2002-2005

European networks are free to set up their own agenda and work programme for the three forthcoming years. However, the Community's financial support intervenes only in the context of the Community Action programme against social exclusion and the objectives which are laid down therein.

As stated in the introduction, the Programme aims at supporting and complementing the open method of co-ordination in the field of social inclusion. It will support and supplement efforts at European level and in the Member States to promote policies to prevent and to combat social exclusion and poverty.

At European level, the main emphasis during 2002 will be on strengthening policy co-operation and mutual learning between Member States, in particular through discussing progress in the implementation of the first round of plans and drawing out lessons that can help to inform the preparation of the next round in 2003. A key lesson from this first series of NAPs/incl is the need for more structured and effective mechanisms of consultation, dialogue and partnership with the key stakeholders (regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, social partners), as well as the need to strengthen mechanisms for involving those experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

At national level, the Member States are committed to implementing their NAPs/incl over a period of two years. It is expected that new series of plans will be adopted in 2003 and in 2005. The three-year funding to be provided for European networks will thus occur at a key time. All appropriate steps must be taken to support the process of setting-up, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the 2003 and 2005 National Action Plans against social exclusion and poverty, while being able to draw lessons from the implementation of the 2001 NAPs/incl.

By acknowledging the contribution of European networks to the fight against social exclusion, the Community expects tangible results from their contribution to the Programme. European networks must therefore endeavour to focus their work programme on priorities designed to foster the achievement of the general objectives of the Community

Action Programme against social exclusion. As a general point, applicants must show how they will mainstream equality between men and women in their work.

Among these priorities, the Commission has identified the following which it would like the European networks to take on board when drafting their work programme:

- 1. Building on existing experience and on key lessons from the 2001 NAPs/incl in order to reinforce policy-making at EU level** - A considerable body of experience on both research and analysis and exchange of learning and best practice already exist at EU level. It will be important for European networks to build on and make the maximum use of this in developing their work programme. In this connection, one should highlight the role of the Joint Report on Social Inclusion in identifying the key structural changes, risk factors and policy challenges arising from the first NAPs/incl. Also for the last three years, various exchange activities have been supported under preparatory actions for this programme, which provide a wealth of information available at EU level. In addition, the work of the indicator group of the Social Protection Committee maps out an important agenda for further research and development on indicators and statistical data.
- 2. Building bridges between the different policy levels and between relevant institutions or actors** - European networks have a key role to play in raising awareness, disseminating information and advocating policy changes. A key aspect of such activities is to act as an intermediary between various policy levels and various institutions or actors who attempt to influence decisions or exert influence in the fight against social exclusion. European networks may need to identify the key institutions or actors, including people exposed to social exclusion, to work with to influence change either at European, national, regional or local level and to ensure synergy between their respective activities.
- 3. Consolidating their membership and increasing exchange among their members** - As stressed above, the strength of European networks lies in their capacity and capability to gather relevant members into an open forum of discussion or exchange of expertise and experience able to influence policy-making. The legitimacy of European networks is also dependent on the extent of representativeness and official recognition of their members in their own country, as well as on their professionalism. European-level organisations must ensure that their foundations, i.e. their membership, are solid which will in turn increase the probability of meeting their objectives. Action to reinforce the capacity of member organisations, e.g. through training sessions, the provision of relevant and up-to-date information or exchanges of good practice among its members, may therefore be appropriate in some cases.

European networks are informed that the Commission would favour a balanced allocation of resources between these types of activities.

The Commission will also make sure it selects European organisations whose activities complement and reinforce and do not duplicate the activities of other institutions or actors at EU level.

V.- Preparing for enlargement

Preparing for the gradual involvement of candidate countries in both the open method of coordination and in the activities of the programme is a priority for 2002 and 2003. The programme decision opens the possibility for candidate countries and for countries belonging to the European Economic Area (EEA) to take part in all activities. The arrangements for their participation are defined in accordance with the European agreements established between the EU and these countries and are subject to bilateral discussions between the Commission and countries that have expressed their interest.

As regards EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), their participation is subject to the relevant EEA Joint Committee Decision being in force, following which organisations registered in EEA will be considered on the same basis as for Member States. Such Decision is not in force at the time of the publication of the call but may be taken in the course of 2002.

As regards the thirteen candidate countries, bilateral discussions will be carried out in the first semester of 2002 with each country to decide in which activities of the programme it would consider taking part prior to its accession. As regards European networks, no decision is expected to enter into force until 2003.

In the period before any appropriate decision comes into force, the costs incurred by any form of cooperation with these countries are not eligible in the framework of this call.

VI.- Eligibility criteria

To qualify for support for their running costs, European networks must:

- a) have their own legal status at the time of the submission of the financial request; alternatively, for a European network which is in the process of establishing itself, one member having its own legal status should take the legal and financial responsibility to act as the legal representative and all the potential members should be able to demonstrate their capacity to set up a new entity by presenting a joint application and should be committed to obtaining legal status for the European network within the first year of the grant, as this will be a prerequisite for any renewal;
- b) be non-profit organisations;
- c) have as their main purpose to contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
- d) act as mediators or as advocates for key institutions or actors, in particular people exposed to social exclusion;
- e) be membership organisations, whose members are themselves non-profit organisations established in at least twelve Member States of the European Community;
- f) be mandated by their members, through a Management Board or other administrative forum, to be responsible for the activities of the network;

- g) have their own administrative and financial management structure; alternatively, for a European network which is in the process of establishing itself, its members should agree on a transitional arrangement which is both viable and legally binding for all of them;
- h) not have general objectives which, directly or indirectly, conflict with the policies of the Union or are linked with an unsuitable image;
- i) have financial resources which are not exclusively made up of subsidies and grants from the European institutions.

VII.- Selection criteria

Applications of the European networks will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

- a) the degree to which the work programme clearly fits the general objectives of the Community Action programme against Social Exclusion;
- b) the degree to which the European network is capable of relaying the experience and interests of institutions or actors they represent so as to contribute to a better formulation of European and national policies against social exclusion and poverty;
- c) the degree to which the European network and its members demonstrate a strong record of competence and experience in analysing and contributing to policy debate on poverty and social exclusion at European level;
- d) the degree of participation of key institutions or actors, including people exposed to social exclusion and poverty, in the work of the network and in the design and implementation of each of the foreseen activities;
- e) the degree to which the European network and its members demonstrate a strong record and commitment to disseminating outcomes and learning from their work and to fostering a greater public awareness on the need to tackle poverty and social exclusion;
- f) the degree to which the proposed work programme contain clear objectives and realistic steps to achieve them;
- g) the degree to which the work programme includes adequate means for evaluating the organisation's activities;
- h) a sound cost-efficiency ratio;
- i) the degree of financial feasibility of the annual programme of activities by means of a realistic, reasonable and balanced budget.

VIII.- Procedure for the submission and appraisal of requests

The application form, and all documents forming part of the application must be **mailed in DUPLICATE, duly completed and signed**, to the following address **by 17 July 2002** (the postmark serving as proof). **Complementary documents sent by fax will not be considered for evaluation. Any document sent after the deadline will not be accepted.**

Unit E2: Call for proposals VP/2002/008
European Commission
Archives - DG Employment and Social Affairs
J-37 00/026
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

In addition, applicants must also send Parts I, II and III of the application form to the following e-mail address: empl-e2@cec.eu.int before the completion of the deadline on 17 July 2002 in order to ensure a smooth examination and evaluation of all proposals by the Commission's services.

Failure to submit by mail the application by 17 July 2002 to the Commission will entail the ineligibility of the request for subsidy even if the application form was sent by e-mail before the deadline.

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that incomplete or unsigned forms, hand-written forms, those sent by fax, internet, or hand-delivered will not be taken into consideration.

In their applications, organisations are requested to include **in duplicate** the following documents:

- a) Official cover letter of request of subsidy quoting VP/2002/008;
- b) Parts I, II and III of 2002 application form duly completed, dated and signed with filled and signed bank form; these include:
 - general information on the applicant's organisation;
 - a list of the members of the management board if it is not enclosed with the articles of association
 - a detailed strategic work plan entailing on separate sheets a description of each of the activities in the annual work programme for 2002-2003, as well as indications on possible developments for 2003-2005, taking into account the priorities outlined in the present call, their objectives and target audience, indicative timetable, venue, the anticipated results and the means for evaluation. In particular, for each of the activities foreseen, European networks are requested to specify how it will contribute to the achievements of the priorities;

- a clear description of the members of the network and of the effective and substantial participation of key institutions or actors, including people exposed to social exclusion, in the design and implementation of each of the foreseen activities;
- a clear description of the plan for the evaluation of the activities to be implemented in 2002-2003 and beyond;
- c) Official statute and recent proof of existence (for instance bank statement, press release, official social security document, etc.); alternatively, for a European network which is in the process of establishing itself in response to this call, the leading member should act as the legal representative;
- d) The global financial statement for 2001 certified by an external audit office, indicated all the expenses and sources of income, including those relating directly to the activities (if the statement is not available at the time of the submission of the application, a provisional statement would be accepted);
- e) A CV of the person who will be in charge of the overall management of the work programme;
- f) An organisation chart and a description of the tasks of staff involved in the work programme (if not enclosed in Part II of the application form);
- g) Description activity sheets for 2002-2003 (if not enclosed in Part II of the application form);
- h) A report of European co-ordination activities organised in 2001, if applicable;
- i) The latest issues of publications by the organisation;
- j) Letter(s) of commitments proving the co-financing in cash of the remaining budget not covered by the Community's subsidy for 2002-2003, including own contribution of the applicant if applicable.

Applications will be processed in the following manner:

1. Commission receives the application;
2. Commission examines the applications. This examination will follow a two-step approach. Firstly, all applications will be checked to ensure that they comply with all eligibility criteria. Thus, only the eligible applications will be appraised by an internal evaluation committee;
3. The Commission is assisted by a Committee made up of representatives of the Member States while implementing the Programme. Accordingly, the list of pre-selected beneficiaries for proposals will be presented to the Programme Committee.
4. Final decision is taken by the Commission; applicants are informed in writing of the outcome.

The decision of the Commission is final. The entire procedure is strictly confidential. Organisations to which the Commission awards a grant will be sent an agreement specifying figures in EURO, the terms and level of funding. It must be signed and returned to the Commission without delay. Any change made to the running of the annual work programme and in the terms of the agreement must be notified in advance to the Commission for approval.

The information in these guidelines should provide all the information you require to submit an application – please ensure that you have fulfilled all of the necessary requirements and paid particular attention to the priorities that have been set for the programme. However, if you should have any further queries, please contact us quoting the reference “VP/2002/008 - Info” at the contact point previously mentioned and allow a reasonable time for a reply. Please note that we can only answer questions related to the requirements of the call for proposals and the application process. We cannot prejudge the process by offering any opinion on the merit of a particular application. Our contact points are:

- by post at the above mentioned address
- by fax to + 32 2 295 65 61
- by e-mail to empl-e2@cec.eu.int