



## ■ Working together, working better

Participation and mobilisation at all levels of government, private enterprise and civil society, is essential for European Social Protection and Social Inclusion policies to achieve the overall goal of promoting a greater social cohesion in Europe.

The direct involvement of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the development, delivery and monitoring of policies and programmes is crucial to ensuring the design of more focussed and relevant actions.

By considering the knowledge, skills and resources and creating synergies and dialogue between trade unions, non-governmental organisations, and businesses, the EU is working to create to a more cohesive society for a stronger Europe.

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## ■ The EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process

Through the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process, the European Union coordinates and encourages Member State actions to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to reform their social protection systems on the basis of policy exchanges and mutual learning. As such, it underpins the achievement of the Union's strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion by 2010.



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An initiative of the European Union



# A more cohesive society for a stronger Europe



The European Union's commitment to social protection and social inclusion

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/spsi](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi)



European Commission

## ■ The EU: 27 countries, one set of values

The ethos of the European Union is underlined by a package of common values – *freedom, democracy, equality and solidarity*. These values have inspired the social systems of all the EU Member States. Although social systems vary, they share a number of common characteristics: they all involve government intervention to reduce poverty and social exclusion, redistribute income more fairly, ensure high levels of social security and promote equal opportunities.



Today, the implementation of this common package of values is under pressure. While Member States are at different stages of developing their social systems, they all face similar social challenges – demographic, competitive and technological – that are transforming our society and economy. The EU must, therefore, face the major challenge of adapting and modernising its social model in the coming years.

## ■ Coordinating national policy efforts

At the Lisbon EU summit in 2000, EU leaders recognised that access to modern, high-quality and sustainable services is essential to enable people to participate fully in society. This is the core of Europe's 10-year strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion, which still acts as the guiding principle for the Member States' and the European Commission's activities.

Through the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process, Member States are working together to modernise the European social model through a host of initiatives. This includes increasing employment, reforming our social protection systems in order to address the needs of an ageing population, and the tackling of social exclusion in all its forms.

### Three priorities arise from this commitment:

- 1. Eradicating poverty and social exclusion;*
- 2. Securing adequate and sustainable pensions;*
- 3. Providing accessible, high quality and sustainable health and long-term care.*

The European Commission has a key evaluation and advisory role in this process.

## ■ A method based on mutual learning

Within the framework of the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process, Member States agree to identify and promote their most effective policies in the above-mentioned areas with the aim of learning from each others' experiences.

This is a flexible and decentralised method, which involves:

- *Agreeing to common objectives which set out high-level, shared goals to underpin the entire process;*
- *Agreeing to a set of common indicators which show how progress towards these goals can be measured;*
- *Preparing national strategic reports, in which Member States set out how they will plan policies over an agreed period to meet the common objectives;*
- *Evaluating these strategies jointly with the European Commission and the Member States.*

Through PROGRESS (Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process also provides a framework for the exchange of best practice and mutual learning.

This method promotes good governance, openness, transparency and the involvement of stakeholders – at European and national levels – as a means for better policy making.