

Brussels, 20 January 2010

## **The 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

### **What is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion?**

The European Year is a one-year Europe-wide programme to raise awareness of poverty and social exclusion among civil society, national governments and the public at large. It was designated by the European Parliament and approved by the Council of Ministers in October 2008 following a proposal by the European Commission.

### **What does it aim to do?**

The Year has four main objectives:

- To recognise the fundamental right of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to take an active part in society;
- To promote shared collective and individual responsibility in combating poverty and social exclusion, and fostering commitment by all public and private actors;
- To promote a more cohesive society, as society as a whole benefits from the eradication of poverty;
- To take concrete action to renew the pledge of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion.

### **Was the European Year launched because of the economic crisis?**

The decision to make 2010 the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion was taken before the economic downturn. However, fighting poverty and social exclusion is key to the EU's goals of improving social cohesion, achieving economic growth and developing more and better jobs. With the sharp rise in unemployment that many countries have faced in the last year, there are more people than ever at risk of falling into poverty, so the Year takes place at a significant point in time.

### **How will it be organised?**

The key principles behind the European Year are decentralisation and coordination. While a series of activities will take place at European level, each participating country is responsible for its own programme of activities according to priorities defined at national level and approved by the European Commission.

Civil society and stakeholder involvement are essential. Design and implementation of the European Year has involved a wide range of partners, including organisations that defend the interests of the poor, the social partners, local and regional authorities and think-tanks.

## **What are the main activities?**

A wide variety of activities are planned, including information campaigns, innovative initiatives, debates, conferences and competitions highlighting achievements and successful projects connected with the EY2010 theme.

At European level, the key events will be:

- Opening Conference in Madrid on 21 January 2010 (Spanish Presidency conference);
- Competition for journalists at national and EU levels;
- Initiative on the role of art in social inclusion;
- Spring focus week - to concentrate a number of projects over a short period in May 2010 to increase visibility at the time of the conference on people facing poverty;
- Autumn focus week - to apply the same idea at the time of the Round Table on poverty and social inclusion and the International Day against Poverty (17 October);
- Closing conference in Brussels in December: awarding of prizes to journalists and artists (Belgian Presidency conference).

At national level, there will be hundreds of individual projects linked to national priorities and the objectives of the European Year. The national programmes are available here <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/mycountry/>

## **What is the budget of the Year?**

The EY 2010 has a budget of €17 million. Previous experience of European Years tells us that spending this sort of money represents a good, long-term investment. The aim is to create momentum so that governments and other stakeholders are encouraged to tackle poverty and social exclusion with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

Of this, €9 million is dedicated to actions in the participating countries. This will be complemented by an equivalent amount coming from national authorities and even more if other sources or sponsors are committed. So in practice, at least €18 million will be dedicated to national or local activities.

## **Will the campaign have any real effect on poverty and social exclusion?**

Yes it will! Only by stimulating debate can change take place. The Year will challenge stereotypes and bring poverty and social exclusion into the media spotlight across the length and breadth of the EU.

A renewed debate on these issues will help the EU and its Member States to develop new policies to improve the lives of people who suffer poverty and social exclusion and generate a new impetus to fight poverty – create and reinforce new partnership beyond the classical audience.

## **Which countries will participate?**

The 27 EU countries as well as Norway and Iceland will participate.

## **Who is responsible for the national programmes of the Year?**

Each Member State has appointed a National Implementing Body (NIB) to organise its participation in the European Year and ensure coordination at national level. NIBs are responsible for defining national programmes for the European Year. They will select national activities to propose for EU funding, and will work closely with civil society organisations, social partners, regional and local authorities, and bodies that represent the interests of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

You can find the contact details for the NIB in your country here:  
<http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu/mycountry/>

Further information  
[www.2010againstpoverty.eu](http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu)

See also [lp 10/36](#)