

Citizens' summary

European Platform against poverty and social exclusion

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- More than 80 million people (1 in 6) in the EU are at risk of poverty, including 20 million children and 8% of the working population.
- The most vulnerable have been the hardest hit by the current financial crisis.
- In one of the richest regions in the world, this state of affairs is unacceptable.
- The EU is proposing action to achieve a specific target agreed this year for the first time ever: to lift **20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020**.

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

- Action will be taken to improve access to the labour market, social protection, essential services (e.g. healthcare, housing) and education.
- EU funds will be better used to support social inclusion and combat discrimination.
- Fresh impetus will be given to social innovations, and social policy reforms will be tested and assessed to improve their effectiveness.
- New partnerships between the public and the private sector will be supported and the potential of the social economy will be harnessed.
- EU countries will better coordinate their policies.
- An annual convention will allow all stakeholders to take stock of progress towards achieving the target.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- People currently living in poverty – in particular those most at risk: women, migrants, Roma and ethnic minorities, people with a disability – should see their living conditions improved.
- All Europeans would benefit from living in more cohesive societies, where economic growth is smart, sustainable and inclusive.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- The Platform against poverty and social exclusion is a key element in the [EU's 2020 strategy](#).
- Although combating poverty is primarily the responsibility of national governments, the EU can play a coordinating role, as all member countries are facing similar challenges.
- The EU can help to develop and spread more effective and innovative methods and instruments.
- The Platform will support voluntary policy coordination and mutual learning, as well as providing EU-wide rules and funding.

WHEN WOULD IT COME INTO EFFECT?

A range of actions will be put in place in the coming years, starting in 2011.