



MEDIA ALERT

EU Anti-poverty meeting: “Starting point for a new deal”

- **Direct dialogue between policy makers and representatives of people in poverty**
- **Definition of 10 year action plan**

The fight against poverty in the EU will take centre stage in Brussels on June 25th and 26th 2010 when EU policy makers will meet directly with people facing poverty across the European Union. The meeting, with the theme “Starting point for a new deal”, is being organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) in conjunction with the European Commission and the Spanish EU Presidency. It is the 9th annual “European meeting of People Experiencing Poverty” and takes place mid-way through the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The purpose of the meeting is to give a voice to those who are living in poverty and/or experiencing social exclusion and offers them the chance to directly voice their concerns and aspirations at a forum of decision-makers and anti-poverty support organisations. The unique format of the meeting is designed to extend two-way communication and open new forms of dialogue.

Delegations will be present from 26 Member States and will present to decision-makers the real life testimonials of people suffering poverty. This will provide an exceptional opportunity for a better appreciation of current conditions and national differences.

10 Year Action Plan

This year's meeting will focus on the development of the priorities for a 10 Year Action Plan to decrease poverty across the EU Member States. Participants will discuss how to raise poverty awareness issues at national level and to help find solutions in the areas of financial inclusion, housing, the provision of services, participation in society, and employment.

In addition to the participants who have first-hand experience of poverty, delegates will also include representatives of national governments, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and NGOs. Special guests include László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Trinidad Jiménez Garcia-Herrera, Spanish Minister for Health and Social Policy, Philippe Courard, Belgian State Secretary for Social Integration and the Fight Against Poverty, Pervenche Berès, Chair of the European Parliament's Employment Committee, Robert Verrue, Director General in DG EMPL, and Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).

This year's meeting also has a particular significance as it takes place in the context of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

“One of the objectives of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is to breathe new life into existing partnerships and create new ones at European, national, regional, and local level,” commented Commissioner for Social Affairs, Employment, and Equal Opportunities,



László Andor. "This meeting 'Starting point for a new deal' brings us first-hand information from the front line of poverty and suffering in our society. We hope it will help contribute to finding mid- and long-term solutions to poverty and social exclusion and coordinate the actions and resources of all those involved. Fighting poverty is not only an issue for governments, it involves civil society too."

oo ENDS oo

For media enquiries kindly contact:

Written press:

Pamela Woolley
+32 (0)2 550 00 86 (Brussels)
pamela.woolley@ketchumpleon.com

Audio-visual press:

Julie Kovatchev
+32 (0)2 533 95 44 (Brussels)
jko@mostra.com



Background: the need to combat poverty and social inclusion

Each year, the European Union chooses a theme for a campaign aimed at raising public awareness of, and drawing governments' attention to, a specific issue. The issues of poverty and social exclusion were chosen as the focus of the European Year 2010 because of their relevance today and their importance.

The social protection systems in the European Union are among the most highly-developed in the world and yet, today, too many Europeans still live in poverty. The forms this takes are complex, but certain figures speak for themselves:

- More than 84 million people live below the poverty line (set at 60% of their country's median income). That represents 17% of Europe's population.
- One European in ten lives in a household where nobody works.
- For 8% of Europeans, having a job is not enough to avoid poverty.
- Some 19 million children live under the threat of poverty and are disproportionately affected.

Objectives of the European Year:

- To recognise the fundamental right of persons affected by poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to take an active part in society;
- To promote public support for social inclusion policies and foster commitment by all public and private actors;
- To promote a more cohesive society, where it is recognised that society as a whole benefits from the eradication of poverty;
- To renew the pledge of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion, and involve all levels of authority in the pursuit of that aim.

Actions:

Throughout 2010, a variety of activities have been organised including awareness campaigns, innovative initiatives, creative solidarity schemes, meetings, discussions and conferences, and competitions which highlight achievements and successful experiments of related to poverty and social exclusions.

These events involve a wide range of actors, including civil society organisations and those defending the interests of persons living in poverty, as well as the social partners, local and regional authorities.

At national level, programmes have been developed for adapting the policy guidelines defined at European level to the issues and specific characteristics of each country. The individual activities are identified and carried out locally.

For further information:

www.2010againstopoverty.eu