

## **Citizens' summary**

# **The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion**

### **THE PROBLEM**

- More than 80 million people in the EU are at risk of poverty: that is one in six. 20 million children and 8% of the working population are affected. This is far too high in one of the richest regions in the world.
- Poverty was already a matter of serious concern in times of reasonable economic growth. It has become even more acute as the most vulnerable have borne hardest the impact of the crisis.
- Action to prevent and alleviate poverty is needed now more than ever.

### **WHY IS THE EU PROPOSING THIS MEASURE?**

- In 2010, EU leaders agreed for the first time a concrete target, i.e. to lift 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. This historical step needs to be supported new methods, and by better use of the ones we have.
- Combating poverty is primarily a responsibility of Member States but the EU has a role to play, as Member States face similar challenges (such as child poverty, in work poverty, budget cuts ...).
- More can and should be done, as the most vulnerable have been hit hard by the crisis.
- We need to step up action at national and EU level for combating poverty and social exclusion and develop more effective and innovative methods and instruments.

### **WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?**

- Concrete initiatives to combat poverty in a range of areas, such as access to labour market, social protection and essential services (e.g. health, housing), education, migration or anti-discrimination.
- Greater and more effective use of EU Funds to support social inclusion.
- Promoting social innovation to build partnerships for reform and test new policy responses.
- Support new partnerships between the public and the private sector, and harness the potential of the social economy.
- Improved policy coordination between Member States.

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?**

- The Platform will help to reach the common European headline target adopted in June 2010, e.g. to lift 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020.
- By promoting more cohesive societies, it will contribute directly to the EU's broad objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

### **WHO WILL IT HELP?**

- The strategy will benefit people living in poverty and those hit hardest by the crisis. Particular focus will also be put on the most at risk (e.g. women, migrants, Roma and ethnic minorities, people with a disability).
- Ultimately, all Europeans will benefit from living in more cohesive societies.

### **HOW WOULD IT WORK?**

- The Platform provides a broad framework, which will be implemented through a wide range of activities, from the local to the European level.
- Actions and tools proposed include voluntary policy coordination and mutual learning, legislation as well as funding.
- An Annual Convention will allow all stakeholders to regularly take stock of progress on the inclusion/poverty reduction target.

### **WHEN WOULD IT COME INTO EFFECT?**

A range of actions will be put in place in the coming years. Many actions are already foreseen for the years 2011 and 2012.