



# Newsletter

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010

5 < December 2010



## Battles are being won in the fight against poverty

**Much of this European Year has focused on the many and complex facets of poverty and social exclusion, and on raising awareness at all levels and in all strands of society about this issue – a necessary exercise considering these issues affect more than 80 million Europeans.**

**It is not all doom and gloom however, because across Europe battles are being won and lives are being changed for the better. The European Year has showcased a raft of initiatives that are helping to get people out of poverty. Many of these inspiring examples are now being used by others as templates to make changes in their own countries, in their own regions or in their own local communities.**

**Some of the best examples are revealed in this newsletter, which also rounds-up some of the final events of the 2010 European Year. These include the closing conference, which takes place in Brussels on 17 December.**

**The conference will be cheered by the news that the Council of Ministers adopted a declaration which urges the EU and its Member States to continue to work together to fight poverty.**

**Full declaration published in the Official Journal of the EU (OJ C 333 of 10 December 2010):**

**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:333:0008:0009:EN:PDF>**

## Inspiring solutions from across Europe

The European Year has been able to gather examples of projects, programmes and measures that are helping people free themselves from the shackles of poverty and social exclusion.

Some of the most inspirational initiatives are revealed in a Commission brochure called 'Getting out of Poverty', available in all 23 EU languages. The articles tell the life stories of people, and the solutions found to provide access to health and financial services, employment, education, to fight discrimination and rural isolation.

In addition to the brochure, videos have been made to showcase effective measures from across the European Union.

The videos feature people who have turned their lives around thanks to support from the EU, government, civil society bodies, NGOs and community groups.

## Highlights from some of these 29 videos:

### Child's play

The video from Austria features 10-year-old Serbian-born Marijan as he takes part in KinderUni, an initiative run by the Vienna University Children's Office. KinderUni's seminars and lectures give deprived children the chance to make new friends from different communities while learning and having fun.

The organisers make a special effort reach out to children like Marijan, whose parents have immigrated recently and are unemployed. Cost is not an issue for the parents as KinderUni hands out day tickets to children and provides free transport to and from home.

### Overindebtedness

In Ireland, the story of Tony, a 52-year-old father of six, shows that it is possible to recover from financial pressures and debt.

Taxi-driver Tony got into financial difficulties when his wife fell ill. As the bills mounted up he contacted the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, a Government-funded independent organisation that helps people in financial trouble.

The service seeks to ensure its clients are receiving the right tax and social welfare entitlements and puts in place achievable debt reduction plans. Tony is now able to manage his finances and is 'getting by' thanks to the budget plan created for him by the service.

### Rural poverty

The Kasingeliai family live on a farm in a remote village in Lithuania. Both parents have had to cope with long-term unemployment, which has exacerbated the isolation and exclusion felt by them and their three children.

To help improve matters, the International Heifer Baltic Foundation gave the family a sheep, a cow and training on how to breed livestock. Training takes place at a local community centre so families on the Heifer scheme can get to know each other and share best practice.

The family is much better off now – the children are at school and the flock of animals is getting bigger. They are also receiving a little extra support from the European Food Aid Programme.

### Housing

In Lisbon, Portugal, the Housing First Programme focuses on helping homeless people with mental health problems. Rather than concentrating accommodation in one building, Housing First disperses tenants across the city to increase their community integration.



# Newsletter

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43-year-old Manuel slept rough in the city for 12 years before receiving help. He now has his own flat in a nice neighbourhood and is getting his life back on track. The Housing First team has also helped him to find a job as a carpenter.

## Literacy

Kay, 38, was born and raised in Halle, Germany and has always struggled with reading and writing, and was only recently diagnosed with dyslexia. He was not able to finish his studies or keep a job – a situation that has led to a life of isolation and exclusion.

Now Kay is getting help from the Alpha+ Project which provides counselling to people who cannot read or write. The Alpha+ team has given Kay renewed self-confidence. He is now enjoying reading and writing and hopes to find a job soon.

The video features can all be watched, downloaded and embedded on [Europa](#) and on the 2010 European Year [website](#).

The Getting out of Poverty brochure can be [downloaded](#) and can be ordered from the [EU's official bookshop](#).

## < In Focus

### Award winners shine a light on poverty

The 2010 European Year Journalist Award winners will be announced on 17 December as part of the European Year's closing ceremony in Brussels.

The award was created by the Commission to recognise journalists who have helped to increase understanding and awareness of issues surrounding poverty and social exclusion.

Open to both print/online and audio-visual (AV) journalists from all EU Member States, plus Norway and Iceland, the award proved to be enormously popular across Europe. 128 people participated in the AV pool, generating 194 TV and radio reports. Meanwhile, the print/online section attracted 505 participants and a total of 968 articles were received.

## National and European prizes

Two national winners were picked, one for each category, by juries made up of representatives from National Implementing Bodies, NGOs and journalist associations. They were joined in their deliberations by a person who has experienced poverty, a Commission representative and a national ambassador.

The winners were then put forward for the European Award, which has been judged by a panel made up of journalists and representatives from European-level organisations that are active in the field of poverty and social exclusion.

The European winners will be present in Brussels to receive their prizes. First, second and third prizes will be awarded for both the print/online and AV competitions. These are worth € 4 500, € 3 000 and € 2 000 respectively.

**All submissions for the award can be viewed at:** [www.2010againstopoverty.eu/journalist-award](http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/journalist-award)

Visit the EY2010 website!  
[www.2010againstopoverty.eu](http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu)

## < News and Events

### A call for continued action

The curtain falls on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion with a closing conference that will take place in the Charlemagne Building, Brussels on 17 December.

The conference promises to highlight key achievements of the European Year and showcase good practice from around Europe.

Heads of State and Governments are expected to come together and make reference in their proceedings to a strong declaration adopted by the Council of Ministers on the 7 December on the need to continue the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The declaration calls upon all parties to continue to work together to tackle these issues beyond 2010 – especially through the European Platform against Poverty.

For an agenda note on the closing conference see: <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event302.html?langid=en>

### Making old age bearable

A seminar on adequate incomes in old age took place in Brussels on 7 December. Organised by AGE Platform Europe, this event provided an opportunity to discuss issues with a range of stakeholders. Debate took account of the direct testimonies of older people from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Italy, Poland and Slovakia.  
<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event304.html?langid=en>

### Human ring offers solidarity against poverty

On 19 November, thousands of people came together to form a human ring around the European Parliament to highlight the plight of the poor and socially excluded people in the European Union. The symbolic event was organised by a coalition of anti-poverty NGOs and attracted people of all ages and from all walks of life. Their message was clear: Ending poverty is everybody's business. Visit the event photo wall: <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event304.html?langid=en>

### EU Development Days

2010 European Year Ambassador, Dr Lesley-Anne Knight, Secretary General of Caritas international, spoke at the opening ceremony of the fifth edition of the EU Development Days, which took place in Brussels on 6-7 December.

Heads of State and government officials from Europe, Africa and beyond were joined by development specialists, NGOs, civil society representatives and the media.

<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/evnt324.html?langid=en>

### Homelessness in the spotlight

The European Consensus Conference on Homelessness took place on 9-10 December in Brussels. The aim was to reach a consensus on six key areas relating to homelessness. They were: the meaning of homelessness; the feasibility of ending homelessness; the efficiency of housing-led policies; the participation of homeless people; access to services; and key elements in an EU strategy to combat the problem.

<http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/events/event195.html?langid=en>

> For more details on the above events, check out the calendar of events EY2010 website: [www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents?langid=en](http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents?langid=en)

> To find out what is going on in each participating country, see: [www.2010againstopoverty.eu/mycountry](http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/mycountry)