



Newsletter

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010

02 < March 2010



The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion was officially launched at a major conference in Madrid, Spain, on 21 January 2010.

More than 300 delegates heard a rallying call to action from the EU, national governments, NGOs and anti-poverty groups.

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, said: 'Together, in a culture of European partnership, we can change things for 84 million Europeans who live in difficulty on our continent.'

Vladimir Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, added: 'The promise of a better life for all, starting with the most vulnerable, must be at the heart of the European political project.'

People who have experienced poverty at first hand were also present, including Mirko Grga, a member of the Italian Roma community, who explained what it is like to be excluded.

'We are stigmatised because in our documents, our address is listed as 'camp'. You don't get a job if they know you live in a camp', he said.

The 29 countries participating in European Year 2010 launched their national campaigns during February and March.

*For more details see the 'My Country' section of the European Year 2010 website:
www.2010againstopoverty.eu/mycountry/?langid=en*

Women are at greater risk of poverty than men

In 2007 the at-risk poverty rate for women was higher for women (17%) than for men (15%). But why are women at greater risk of poverty? For a start they are at a disadvantage in the labour market. On average in the EU, women earn around 17.6% less than men.

Women are also less likely to be in work than men – the gap in employment rates between the sexes was 13.7% in 2008. In addition, women are much more likely to be employed in part-time jobs than men. Women also tend to be concentrated in lower-paid sectors of the economy, such as health and care services.

The lesser earning power of women over their lifetimes has an adverse effect on their social security provisions and pensions, which means they are at greater risk of poverty than men, especially in retirement.

Poverty also particularly affects women in vulnerable situations, such as lone mothers, elderly single women, women with disabilities, and those from immigrant and ethnic minority backgrounds.

The European Year 2010 campaign intends to highlight these poverty related gender issues, while showcasing efforts to help women in poverty.

Figures from Report on Equality between Men and Women – 2010:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langid=en&catid=418>

The fundamental right – to a decent life

The European Union is one of the world's richest and most developed regions, but around 84 million Europeans live at risk of poverty.

Poverty usually means having limited access to education, health care, social support services, leisure facilities and financial services.

Most Europeans take these products and services for granted, which in effect means that poorer people are in danger of missing out on their fundamental rights as EU citizens.

The Lisbon Treaty now enshrines the European Charter of Fundamental Rights into EU law. Many of the Charter's articles are specifically relevant to poorer people.

The Charter covers a person's right to be treated with dignity and without discrimination, along with the right to education, health care, social security and social assistance.

The rights of children and elderly and disabled people are also addressed – groups that are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion.

The Charter's new status should add impetus to efforts now being made to eradicate poverty.

Charter of Fundamental Rights homepage:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/unit/charte/index_en.html



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< In Focus

INCLUSage: Dialogue to help vulnerable elderly people

INCLUSage is a two-year project designed to boost the social inclusion of elderly people in seven EU countries.

Launched in 2008 through AGE, the Older People's Platform, the project seeks to promote debate at local and national level on aspects of poverty and social exclusion faced by the elderly. The aim is to establish a permanent consultation process on these issues with policy-makers at all levels.

Project partners in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Finland, Germany, Italy and the Slovak Republic are collecting information about the needs of excluded older people, which will be used to inform broader public debates.

Those involved in the consultation process include government representatives, local authorities, social partners, service providers and older people who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

In Poland, for example, the INCLUSage team is touring all 16 regions to talk to excluded elderly people and decision-makers.

So far, about 75% of elderly people say they would like to have more active participation in local policy-making. And about 80% of decision-makers believe that local consultative bodies should be established to represent the needs of older people.

The Polish team aims to create a methodology to help older people develop such bodies so they can be effective in influencing social policy.

More information:

<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/action-name-02>

Did you know...?

22% of older women are at risk of poverty, compared to 16% of older men. (Eurostat 2008)

Visit the EY2010 website!
www.2010againstopoverty.eu

< News and Events

Journalist competition

EY2010 is holding a Journalist Competition, which is open to all on-line, print and video journalists from the EU, Iceland and Norway. The aim is to honour reporters who help to raise public awareness of issues relating to poverty and social exclusion.

Art Partner Project

An Art Partner Project, to be launched in April, is also taking place across the EU this year. The initiative will put artists in touch with people who have experienced poverty. A selection of photographs based on these meetings and exchanges of ideas will be exhibited in Brussels later in the year.
www.2010againstopoverty.eu/artpartnerproject?langid=en

Conference on Inequality Measurement and the Progress of Society

22-23 April 2010, Malta, La Valletta

More information:

<http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Malta/Inequality.htm>

Second Roma summit

8-9 April 2010, Córdoba (Spain)

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=234&furtherEvents=yes>

Meeting people experiencing poverty

A meeting of people experiencing poverty is scheduled to take place at the European Parliament in Brussels, 24-25 June.

Eurocities EY2010

A Eurocities EY2010 seminar will be held in Katowice, Poland, between 10-11 May, which will examine how urban areas can tackle long-term unemployment and help people who face a range of poverty-related problems.

The EUROCITIES network:

www.eurocities.eu

> For more details on the above events, check out the EY2010 website:
www.2010againstopoverty.eu

> To find out what is going on in each participating country, see the calendar of events:
www.2010againstopoverty.eu/calendarofevents/?langid=en