



Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies

2010 National Programme European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

- ITALY -

1. NATIONAL CONTEXT: THE CHALLENGES TO BE MET

1.1 The challenges and the national strategy against poverty.

The European Parliament has designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. This is an occasion for all EU member states to revise the strategies for tackling poverty set in Lisbon in 2000, plan ahead for the next decade and focus on activities which will help to address these objectives.

The aim of the European Year for combating poverty is to involve governance at every level, including policy makers from all sectors as well as financial and civil society players, since a long-term cohesive effort is needed to achieve any real progress. The European Year is taking place at a very critical time for the economy, due to the global downturn which has also caused visible changes to the social structure within our country.

On the one hand, and in the light of recent events, an updated interpretation of the dynamics of poverty and exclusion is needed. Coupled with traditional statistical tools, these can produce a picture of the changes that are taking place right now: this is also the reason why it has become so important for information to be made

available as quickly as possible. This information needs to be broken down into local data and it should also highlight any new qualitative survey tools which can interpret the changes through the use of focused initiatives (with regards to this point the Inquiry Commission for social exclusion carried out a territorial social audit in the Spring of 2009).

On the other hand, Italy has set itself a complex organisational and cultural challenge through its 2008-2010 National Strategic Report. It will need to change direction and embrace the widespread participation of the organisations involved in order to achieve its objective of forming a new welfare model that will become – as highlighted in *The White paper on the future of the social model*¹ – “the fusion between opportunity and responsibility”. It will anticipate and tackle poverty and work towards a community base that knows how to “take care of” people living in poverty, developing *active inclusion* measures in order to achieve an improvement in the wellbeing of each citizen, guaranteeing access to wealth, services and social and professional development opportunities, in line with EU strategies. The White Paper, in particular, looks at absolute poverty, that is people who are living below the threshold of what is deemed socially acceptable, and urges “a framework of tangible solutions to these people’s needs” as the “main objective of a cohesive society”. Social awareness of absolute poverty must be encouraged, together with an increase in responsibility and awareness of the need for urgent and tangible action in order to break the cycle of poverty which is passed down from one generation to another.

Strategies detailed in this document constitute a roadmap of the Italian Government’s commitments towards managing the European Year.

1.2 The administrative Structure in place

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, in its capacity as National Implementing Body, will be the coordinating administrative body for the European Year. The coordination of all national and regional administrations will be

¹¹ *The White paper on the future of the social model* of 2009 is the framework document from which inspiration shall be drawn for the Italian government’s welfare policies over the next years.

guaranteed through regular meetings, starting in September 2009 for the organisational phase of the European Year, and then again in 2010 for the implementation phase. The aim of these meetings is to encourage a good working partnership between the administrations involved and to group together all official initiatives under the same European Year umbrella. This will include those initiatives that are not directly financed from resources made available by the 2010 National Programme but that are implemented on the back of projects launched independently by other interested bodies.

2. THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME

2.1 Activities of the European Year:

The activities that Italy will adopt for the European Year project have been chosen in compliance with the 2010 strategic framework regulations endorsed by the European Union, and will include national strategies for social inclusion – formalised in the 2008-2010 national plan of social inclusion – drawn from the *White Paper on the future of the social model*.

With reference to the Commission's first strategic framework objective – **recognition of rights** – the 2010 Italian National Programme is committed to the creation of a coordinated campaign to raise awareness within the general public, the media, operators and the government, on the standards of living of people experiencing poverty. In particular, all individuals and families can become increasingly vulnerable, an issue which should be highlighted and targeted with strategies that can strengthen people's skills within their own network of social and personal relationships. Moreover, it should be highlighted that encouraging awareness and understanding of the strategies to create a more cohesive and active society is a shared responsibility – involving the public and private sectors, private individuals and collective organisations. This vision conforms to *The White paper on the future of the social model* directives adopted by the Italian government in May 2009, to create a social protection system aimed at protecting and shielding from the risks and threats of everyday life. It will combat the new sources of social exclusion and build relationships between individuals and communities in order to tackle

loneliness and encourage solid inclusion measures that guarantee everybody equal access to opportunities, such as making goods and services available and not just financial support, with the backing of new ad-hoc policies. Following on from this last point, the 2010 National Programme wishes to promote partnerships between the public sector, private sector and intermediary social entities which are not limited to just identifying policies for social cohesion and narrowly defined social interventions; these partnerships will also cover a wider field of cohesive services to include the entire spectrum (information, culture, education, sport etc.) therefore developing a network of relationships – and therefore protection – for all individuals.

Another important aspect of the 2010 Italian National Programme are the initiatives aimed at highlighting the conditions of people living in poverty and the underlying causes which affect the more vulnerable sector of the population, a category which is also underrepresented from a political standpoint and which struggle make their voice heard: minors, people with disabilities, immigrants and ethnic minorities and people that are totally marginalised from society such as the homeless. The 2010 national programme will focus on specific ways to make the public more aware of government initiatives aimed at guaranteeing access to civil rights for this section of the population as well as awareness of strategies and concrete actions in place to combat the phenomenon.

With regards to the second objective highlighted in the Commission's strategic framework – **shared responsibility and participation** – the European Year activities will consolidate the relationships between entities within the public sector, and between the public sector and private entities in order to encourage the formation of partnerships. A really innovative aspect of Italy's involvement in the project will be provided by its management strategy for the European Year, which will not only encourage the widespread participation of organisations directly involved in social inclusion but also follow the principle of “never again without them”, so that those who have personally experienced poverty issues and opportunities for inclusion, will be directly involved in running these initiatives. This is the reason why, as we shall see further on, the main focus will be on the creation of a broader initiative which follows, amongst other things, the programme's objectives and guidelines. It will

include *People experiencing poverty* meetings, promoted for some time now at the community level by the large NGO European networks and the European Commission. This approach has in fact shown that it can highly motivate people who are suffering and, in Europe, it has symbolized an important driving force in promoting cultural differences and application procedures which are widespread amongst social stakeholders. This is the objective we aim to experiment with, starting at a local and regional level, to get people and communities really involved.

With regards to the objective of promoting a **more cohesive society**, proposed measures will be directed towards promoting awareness of the advantages gained from a poverty free society. Poverty is caused by extreme levels of inequality. It is for this reason that the 2010 National Programme will generate initiatives concerning access issues, such as access to services, opportunities and the forms of wealth that the community and public and private organisations produce.

It is the European Year's duty, within this framework, to promote the idea of social cohesion as a financial multiplier and provide justification for investing in policies and inclusion services. Moreover, since this investment covers the management of social cohesion procedures assigned to the local authorities and intermediary departments, the European Year should be an opportunity to highlight the role of the many players – not only the State, but local public stakeholders, the third sector and voluntary organisations, family networks and individual companies – who are asked to come together in order to promote all those procedures that allow the immediate access and sharing of wealth that these “places” produce. Although it is common knowledge that the European Year will not be enough to solve the various institutional, organisational and financial problems that underlie the more general issue, it does not mean it cannot bring renewed vigour to this debate and result in a different set of choices.

With regards to adopting the objective of **commitment to concrete action**, the European Year will be a platform through which Italy can update its strategy for combating poverty, which will be formalized at the *round table on combating poverty and social inclusion* which the Italian government will hold in the second half of this year, as part of the concluding proceedings of the European Year.

Within this framework, European Year procedures will progress as follows:

- Mobilization and participation campaigns regarding the issues listed in point 2.2, and in particular:
 - mobilization campaign in schools: promotion of a campaign-framework in schools against living in poverty, where several players can make a contribution, including self funded initiatives, as long as they promote content and use tools approved by the National Implementing Board, as demonstrated by the issue of the European Year logo.
 - Organising local and national events that promote widespread participation of people living in poverty (in the same way as the already mentioned European activity *People experiencing poverty*).
 - Campaign aimed to promote the participation of the private sector (social partners, trade, handicraft and industry associations, big firms, public utilities, cinemas, sport events) in already existing public programs, such as the Social Card Fund, addressed to tackle poverty and social exclusion. This measure is aimed to give the role of partner of the European Year and the use of its logo and brand to all the private subjects that will contribute to the program with money or that accept to lower the prices for the access to their services or goods. This measure is needed both in order to gather more resources in combating poverty and to let the logo and the brand of the European Year have a wider diffusion by appearing both in the public and in the private campaigns.
 - Campaign for digital inclusion: the objective is to make policies, experiences and good practices which exist at a community level available at a national level, particularly in the field of *eAccessibility* and digital literacy skills, in order to support the *roadmap* mentioned in the 2007 *eInclusion* Communication, resulting from the *eInclusion* Vienna Conference in December 2008.
- Key activities for increasing awareness of these phenomena are as follows:
 - The consolidation of simulation models used to predict future scenarios and evaluate the impact of alternative efforts.

- Studies on the impact of measures to combat poverty, including those promoted by the Inquiry Committee on social exclusion.
- The development, promotion and application of more sophisticated poverty and social exclusion indicators, as well as indicators measuring well-being (e.g. territorial indicators, well-being of minors, intergenerational mobility etc.).
- Research aimed at raising awareness of how the homeless live (quantitative analysis, service database, analysis of organisational models for services aimed at this category, the role of communication in combating stigma).
- The promotion of public and private local observatory networks, as well as partnerships, aimed at encouraging the exchange of procedures and methodologies and the definition of common standards for the production of information, data and indicators on poverty.
- The promotion, with the support of local organisations and the participation of those living in poverty, of specific awareness campaigns aimed at political decision makers; these would take the form of accompanied “visits” to the facilities and listening to narrations of real cases of social marginalisation.
- Establishment of an open internal coordination method for the policies aimed at combating poverty, by organising meetings which include the various government departments as well as organisations involved in the fight against poverty. The aim is to:
 - Create local strategies for the fight against poverty and social exclusion based on regional and local social plans which involve all the key stakeholders involved in implementing the Open Method of Coordination.
 - Define a yearly meeting (round table on social inclusion) to discuss progress of social inclusion local strategies.
 - Promote all forms of ‘horizontal’ subsidiarity efforts, such as voluntary work and partnerships.
 - Create a standing round table for the policies aimed at combating extreme social marginalisation in large cities. This is to be implemented with the

support of ANCI and all those Municipal Administrations which have demonstrated the ability to develop effective social inclusion strategies in the past years.

2.2 Communication strategies (opening event, website and national campaign)

Due to the multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion the aim is to integrate prevention and the fight against poverty and social exclusion into other policies. National communication strategies will therefore need to produce added value and complement social protection and inclusion efforts.

The communicative strategy shall be aimed at: the general public, policy decision makers at all levels and field specific experts and operators, the different social groups and organisations within civil society, the people and groups affected by poverty and exclusion.

The communication programme for Italy shall include the following initiatives:

- Opening event between the end of January and beginning of February 2010 organised together with the Municipality of Milan, a closing event in October 2010 where the *first Italian round table on the fight against poverty and social exclusion* shall be held.
- Website dedicated to the European Year aimed at providing clear and informative details on the event's objectives, on how it is organised and managed, as well as national objectives and strategies. The website shall also promote discussion forums targeted at individuals, groups and organisations on the topics and initiatives implemented by the 2010 National Programme. The website shall also provide a link between the initiatives of the European Year and the official local and national programmes aimed at promoting literacy skills and access to computers for the disadvantaged.
- National communication campaign to raise awareness among the general public of the way people affected by poverty live, aimed at promoting the development of social cohesion and active participation.
- Cultural events, such as the European travelling exhibition of sculptures and other modern artworks, focusing on marginalisation, and promoted by the European FEANTSA network. There will be competitions for graphic designers,

designers and creative minds involved in social inclusion (such as the *Spot School Award*), links with Italian audiovisual festivals whose participation will include homeless people for certain events (short ad-hoc films will also be shown).

- Collaborations with schools of journalism to highlight the need to focus on poverty, especially with regards to breaking the cycles which continue to reinforce the stigmas attached to poverty.
- Initiatives within schools, promoted directly by the programme and in partnership with other campaigns promoted by private bodies which are permanently involved in education and youth recreation.

2.3 Gender dimension as a transversal approach to the 2010 National Programme.

An effective strategy for the fight against poverty and the implementation of social inclusion measures requires a system which is highly all-inclusive; a system which fully implements the principles of equal social treatment and equality for everyone, a form of substantive equality which adopts all the positive measures aimed at combating existing disparity and eliminating discriminatory situations. Gender mainstreaming is an issue that cuts across all sectors, in terms of growth and development as well as being a key factor in the fight against serious marginalisation. Women, in percentage terms, are generally less hit by marginalisation but are often affected more severely. The commitment is to bridge existing gaps in the various areas and concretely increase opportunities for women in society's economic, productive and government sectors. With regards to cohesion policies, therefore, promotion of equal gender opportunities must be integrated into the various areas of intervention.

2.4 Accessibility of the actions

Access to initiatives of the European year are guaranteed though the following dedicated commitments:

- National communication of actions, by involving local administrations and private organisations in the running of events. Granting of permission for initiatives to bear the European Year logo shall be closely linked to the levels of

access and participation to said initiatives of people living in poverty and people with disabilities.

- The use of participation models implemented using mobility and involvement methodologies, aimed at local people and groups, based on the experience of *People experiencing poverty*.

3. CONSULTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND STAKEHOLDERS

3.1 Stakeholders consulted

Social inclusion strategies must be adapted to work within a federal and multilevel system, and even the European Year must take into account the fact that these characteristics are at the base of all public policy procedures in Italy. Additionally, as well as Italy's polycentric structure – whose role grows in importance as the number of inclusion strategies developed within the “territories” increase – a key role is played by horizontal subsidiarity efforts and the large network of private organisations which operate in the social inclusion and social services sectors.

Planning and implementing the European Year while promoting the role of all these players to form a complex but coordinated *governance* team is a demanding task; however 2010 may actually provide the opportunity for this constellation of stakeholders to make advances in their integration processes. A fact worth mentioning is that during the meetings held to prepare for the 2010 National Programme voluntary associations and organisations stated their desire for common positions among said organisations, as well as expressing the hope that the activities of the European year may in turn lead to the creation of partnerships and common projects.

Stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of the event (in addition to the Ministry of Labour, of Health and Social Policies) have been:

- The Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Department of family policy, Department of equal opportunities, Department of technological innovation), The Ministry of Economic Development (Department managing European structured funds), The Ministry of Infrastructure (Department managing housing policies), The Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Education.
- Social policies coordinators of the Italian Regional Presidents, UPI and ANCI.

- Social partners and the NGOs which were already consulted for the National report on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion, as well as other organisations identified by the European Commission in its communications on the European Year.

3.2 The consultation process, its outcome and follow-up

Information on the objectives, organisation, participation criteria, schedule and activities shall be published on the website of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, as well as the web magazine of the Ministry, starting from September 2009. This information shall also be made available as printable material for any information agency looking to publish it through its own channel. An online discussion platform on European Year related discussions shall be made available from October. Special focus shall be placed on *e-inclusion* and the bridging of the *digital divide* for the disadvantaged.

Monitoring of activities carried out in 2010, as well as their evaluation following the end of the European Year, shall in turn be discussed by the public and private partners listed in point 3.1.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Call for proposals, award criteria, selection procedure, etc.

The activities of the European Year fall into two categories:

- Activities financed directly by the budget assigned for the 2010 National Programme.
- Activities which depend on public or private funding of another kind, but which are nevertheless eligible to use the logo of the European Year following an evaluation carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies (in its capacity as National Implementing Body).

The first category includes all the campaigns and actions covered in point 2.1. These shall be implemented in partnership with the stakeholders, with the support of one or more agency chosen, in compliance with the usual procedures for the supply of services to public administrations. The task consists of implementing the campaigns and managing all the technical activities required, and collaborating with the other

official and private bodies which will take part in the implementation of said campaigns (Regions, Municipalities, and Associations etc.).

The campaigns shall, in any case, take into account any additional activities funded independently by public or private bodies which may be carried out between January and December 2010, and which follow the objectives of the National Programme and may, therefore, make use of the European Year logo. Authorisation to use the logo of the European Year shall be granted officially by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies following an assessment of the projects and activities presented to an internal committee.

In addition to the specific activities funded by the budget of the European Year the National Implementation Body shall endeavour to provide opportunities for any local or national parties that have presented interesting initiatives which, however, cannot be funded by the budget, to meet with public or private bodies which may be interested in supporting said initiatives. Any similar local and/or national initiatives, which have been approved to the National implementing Body and which are compatible with these guidelines, may become part of the 2010 common initiatives and be carried out under the European Year umbrella.

Presentation of project proposals and additional activities for the 2010 National Programme can be easily submitted to the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies via a dedicated section of the website, as well as the site dedicated to the European Year, starting from October 2009.

4.2 Indicative Timetable

September 2009

- Publication of objectives, materials and participation criteria for the European Year on the website of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies.
- Start of the formal co-financing procedures funded by the budget of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

October 2009

- Start of online consultation of contents and actions for the implementation of the 2010 National Programme.

- Public consultation with national, regional and local bodies and NGOs on procedures and organisation of the European Year.
- Preparation of outline of the action categories to use in the implementation of the 2010 National Programme.
- Communication campaign calling for requests to use the European year logo.

November 2009

- Publication of calls for tender and selection procedures for projects aimed at implementing the 2010 National Programme and project selection criteria, compatibly with the adoption of the Financing Decision 2010.
- Public consultation with local, regional and national bodies, and NGOs to discuss projects selected for the online publishing of the initiatives funded by the 2010 National Programme, together with those funded independently and which have been authorised to use the European Year logo.

December 2009

- Presentation of national application the European Commission to request funding.

January/February 2010

- Opening event of the European Year in Milan.
- Signature of the delegation agreements with the European Commission.

March/April 2010

- Start of European Year activities.
- First Focus Week

May/June 2010

- Public consultation with local, regional and national bodies, and NGOs to discuss monitoring of the 2010 National Programme activities and provide updates on the initiatives which have been authorised to use the European Year logo.

September/October 2010

- Second Focus Week
- Closing event for Italy's initiatives involving *People experiencing poverty*.
- Round table on the fight against poverty and social inclusion (location to be confirmed).

December 2010

- Public consultation with the local, regional and national bodies, and NGOs to discuss the evaluation of the initiatives implemented by the 2010 National Programme.

5. INDICATIVE BUDGET

1,500,000 euros have been allocated to fund the 2010 National Programme, including those provided by the European Commission. National co-financing shall be funded by the revolving fund for the implementation of EU policies, as provided for in Article 5 of Law No. 183 of 16 April 1987.

Infrastructure and human resources are to be added to the financial resources, and provided by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies: Department for training and education policies and the Department for inclusion, social rights and corporate social responsibilities.

An indicative breakdown of resources is as follows:

- Communication campaign: €450,000
- Website: €50,000
- Promotion and participation of groups of people living in poverty: €100,000
- Competitions, cultural events and training (e.g. journalism schools): €100,000
- Opening event, focus week and closing event: €400,000
- Projects: €400,000
- TOTAL: €1,500,000

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

At the end of 2009 the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies shall define the evaluation grid for the activities of the European Year, which will be submitted to the public and private organisations involved in the preparation of the 2010 National Programme and to the European Commission.

Monitoring of these activities, using the evaluation grid, shall be carried out to the highest level of transparency and participation. The actions and activities timetable shall be constantly updated on the website and summaries and documentation of the events, people and groups involved and the resources used shall be published on the website on a quarterly basis.

An interim evaluation of the activities, open to the public and private organisations involved in the preparation of the 2010 National Programme and to the European Commission shall be carried out between the end of May and the beginning of June. The aim shall be to make the necessary changes to the programme's activities and to update the activities which have been authorised to use the European Year logo. The same level of transparency and participation shall be applied to the final evaluation of the European Year planned at the beginning of 2011.