



REF SEP 2/02 EN

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION 2002-2006

**Subject: Minutes of the Informal meeting of the Programme Committee
30 November 2001**

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the participants to the Committee of the new Social Exclusion Programme and invited the delegates to introduce themselves.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA DOC. SEP 1/01

The Chair informed the participants that, as the Programme has not yet entered into force, this meeting was to be considered an informal one. Nevertheless, it was useful to start exchanging views on various items as the programme was very ambitious. On the understanding that no decisions could be taken, the agenda was adopted.

3. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE DOC. SEP 2/01.

The Commission presented the draft Rules of Procedure, and explained that access to documents of the Committee would be granted in accordance with the new regulation 1049/2001 (due to enter into force on 3 December) governing access to Commission documents. As there was consensus on the proposed draft, the Chair proposed that they be adopted at the first formal meeting without discussion.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE COUNCIL DECISION ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON GENERAL GUIDELINES DOC. SEP 3/01

The Commission presented the Council Decision adopted on 22 November 2001. It allowed a great range of activities to be carried out, which were grouped under 3 strands: strand 1 on analysis and collection of statistics, strand 2 on exchange of information and

best practices, and strand 3 on promotion of dialogue between the various actors and support for European networks. The Commission highlighted that the overall budget agreed was 75 Mio € for 5 years; the budgetary authorities were still deciding the effective amount for 2002, but the proposal on the table was 11 Mio €. The Commission expected to increase gradually the amount in the two first years of operation of the programme to reach a higher plateau in the three final years.

The Commission also explained that the programme could be opened to EFTA/EEA countries and to candidate countries. These countries had to express an interest and then negotiate with the Commission the conditions for entry. The EFTA countries had already expressed an interest in joining the programme. Once the Programme was open to their participation, a representative from each of these countries would take part as an observer in the meetings of the Committee.

The Commission also presented the general guidelines for implementation of the programme. In particular it highlighted:

- The importance to keep a longer term perspective. Although annual work programmes have to be agreed, the Commission proposes in particular to articulate the work in two year cycles, to mirror the Social Inclusion process and the production of the Joint Report on Social Inclusion.
- The need for a regular exchange of views with the social partners and the Non Governmental Organisations to discuss the guidelines for the implementation of the programme. Exchange of views with the social partners would take place in the framework of the Social Dialogue. As far as NGOs were concerned, the Commission proposed to meet representatives of European networks before the next meeting of the Committee, and to report to the Committee on the results of the meeting.

The discussion of the guidelines highlighted the following points:

- Analytical work takes time and it was unrealistic to expect major results already in 2003;
- The Indicators Subgroup of the Social Protection Committee should be specifically mentioned in the Guidelines and input from the group should be taken into account in the definition of work priorities on indicators;
- There was broad agreement on the two year cycle. It was important to link the Programme to the Social Inclusion Process, to be closely linked to the work of the Social Protection Committee and to follow its priorities;
- The importance of evaluation all along the life of the programme was highlighted; evaluation however, should not take away time and resources from the actual work. The Commission proposed to present at the next meeting the orientations for evaluation of the programme;
- The importance of presenting the new programme also at national level, to all interested parties. The Committee also welcomed the Commission initiative to consult the NGOs before the next meeting.

The Commission will modify the draft guidelines to take into account these points. The revised version would be put for adoption at the next meeting.

5. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME DOC SEP 4/01

The Commission presented its paper on developing strategic priorities for implementing the programme in 2002 and 2003. The paper highlighted the lessons to be drawn from the National Action Plans submitted in June and the types of activity which could be developed under the different strands. The paper was very comprehensive and the Committee was asked to set priorities between the various actions proposed.

The discussion highlighted the following points:

- Co-ordination with other programmes in related areas (gender, anti-discrimination) was crucial in order to avoid duplication. The Commission would have to draft carefully the calls for proposal as there was a risk of subsidising projects which could be accepted under different programmes. This risk was less in the case of tenders, as the Commission remained fully in control of the terms of reference;
- All delegations agreed to extend the two year cycle to the annual report; this report would coincide with the Joint report on Social Inclusion;
- Delegations requested more information on the preparatory actions undertaken in 1998-2001. The Commission informed the delegates that most information was available on the web site. It would however make available to the delegates a document with a short summary of all the projects financed;
- Delegates highlighted the importance of investing in good data in order to improve the quality of indicators; this data should also be used at national level;
- Some delegations favoured a more focused approach, concentrating on few priority items while others favoured a wide approach, trying to cover as many areas as possible;
- Several delegates favoured more analysis on child poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty and social exclusion; on a rights based approach; on the dimension of access to justice and access to culture; on new forms of exclusion and in particular the digital divide;
- Most delegations highlighted the importance of looking at the links between the national, regional and local level in planning and delivering social policies; of not only identifying good practices, but of elaborating a methodology to define best practices;
- Some delegates felt that the programme concentrated too much on gender aspects, but others highlighted the importance of gender mainstreaming;
- Some delegates noted the absence of any reference to the economic framework and of the issues relating to social participation;

- Most delegations asked how in practice would the different actions be carried out, which were the modalities for selection etc. The Commission proposed to present a paper on this subject at the next meeting.

The Commission thanked the participants for this exchange of views; it will draft the annual work programme on the basis of this discussion with a view to its adoption at the next meeting.

6. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE ANNUAL ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE 2002. DOC. SEP 5/01

The Commission presented the different options for the organisations of the Round Table conference 2002. It could either be organised by one of the Presidencies, with a financial support from the Programme, or directly by the Commission. The Round Table should be an awareness raising event and one of the few occasions where all stakeholders could express themselves on the Social Inclusion Process. About 250 participants should be expected. The Spanish delegation explained that the Presidency programme was already defined and that it would not be interested in organising the Round Table during its Presidency while the Danish delegation explained that, given the change of government, the Presidency programme still had to be decided. The Commission expected to have further negotiations with the two Presidencies. Even if the Commission would organise the conference, it would in any case expect active support from the Presidency.

7. MEETING TIMETABLE FOR 2002

The Chair informed the participants that the meeting for the first semester would be 23 January and 17 April. One more meeting could be expected in the second semester.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mary Gillard, DG EMPL, proposed to present in a future meeting the Community Initiative EQUAL and some aspects relevant to the Social Exclusion Programme, as well as the methodology for partnership building. The proposal was accepted.

Annex: Attendance List

**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION 2002-2006
MEETING ON NOVEMBER 30TH, 2001**

ATTENDANCE LIST

<u>Commission</u>	Armindo Silva	Chair
	Hugh Frazer	
	Ruth Paserman	
	Luc Tholoniati	
	Walter Wolf	
	Mary Gillard	
	Rita Soares	
<u>Belgium</u>	Johan Vandenbussche	
	Muriël Rabau	
<u>Denmark</u>	Eigil Andersen	
<u>Germany</u>	Martina Gräfin von Bassewitz	
<u>Greece</u>	Athena Kourtessi	
<u>Spain</u>	Eva Ferrus Garcia	
	José Luis Castellanos Delgado	
<u>France</u>	Danièle Refuveille	
<u>Ireland</u>	Eoin O'Seaghda	
<u>Italy</u>	Donatella Bini	
<u>Luxembourg</u>	Brigitte Weinandy	
<u>Netherlands</u>	Lidwien Van Langen	
<u>Austria</u>	Helmut Lang	
<u>Portugal</u>	José Castro	
	Susana Viana	
<u>Finland</u>	Reijo Väärälä	

Sweden

Martin Börjesson

UK

Stephen Clode