



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DG

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COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION 2002-2006

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual plan of work for the Social Exclusion Programme (SEP) in 2002 is developed in accordance with Article 7 of the decision establishing the programme. In developing the plan account has been taken of the discussion at the preliminary meeting of the SEP in November on the paper "Developing strategic priorities for implementing the programme in 2002-2003" (SEP 4/01 EN). Account is also taken of discussions held with European networks of NGOs involved in the fight against poverty.

The overall aim of this workplan is to ensure that the SEP is implemented in a manner which will reinforce and add value to the EU's Open Method of Coordination on poverty and social exclusion. It thus aims to reinforce the common objectives on poverty and social exclusion agreed at the Nice European Council, to support the implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs/incl) developed by Member States and to take forward issues identified in the context of the Joint Report on Social Inclusion and the report of the SPC on common indicators on poverty and social exclusion.

While wishing to make a significant impact as soon as possible the Commission recognises that the programme will need to be implemented on a phased basis. Much of the action in the first year will involve laying the groundwork of future co-operation and initiating actions that will not come to fruition until 2003 or beyond. The Commission is also conscious of the need to develop a work cycle for the SEP which complements the two year cycle of NAPs/incl and Joint Reports on social inclusion.

In developing the work programme for the first year of the SEP the Commission is not starting from scratch. As well as building on the initiatives developed as part of the Open Method of Coordination the SEP can draw on the lessons emerging from the series of preparatory actions in 1998 (B3-4101, 4104 and 4116), 1999 (B3-4101 and 4112), 2000 (B3-4101 and 4105) and 2001 (B3-4105) and from the evaluations of those actions. These actions focus on the exchange of information and good practice between actors in different Member States and have similar objectives as those envisaged under strand 2.1 of the decision on the SEP. The actions funded under the 2000 budget will be finalised during 2002 and the actions funded under the 2001 budget line will run until mid 2003.

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Actions developed under the SEP will also complement and draw on the experience of actions under other programmes such as EQUAL and the programmes to combat discrimination and to promote equality between men and women. Contrary to ESF funded activities the actions funded under the SEP will only focus on transnational activities and will not support specific projects on the ground. They will emphasise exchange of information and good practice.

It is intended that in the context of the enlargement of the EU the SEP will be open to candidate countries and that the programme will help to prepare them for their full involvement in the Open Method of Coordination following their accession (predictably in early 2004). Many of the candidate countries have already expressed interest in participating in the programme. However, their participation is subject to negotiation and will depend on the extent to which they agree to finance their own involvement. It is envisaged that their involvement will be progressive and thus candidate countries are likely to participate only in strands 1.1, 1.3 and 3.2 during 2002 with involvement in a wider range of measures from 2003.

Given the urgent need to improve knowledge on poverty and social exclusion and the policies to fight against them in candidate countries a first priority is likely to be to support studies and seminars in these countries. These could range from statistical studies of aspects of social exclusion, to documenting involvement of civil society in tackling poverty and social exclusion, to consideration of particular issues (such as rural poverty or the integration of ethnic minorities) of interest to individual countries.

The participation of EFTA/EEA countries in the programme is also to be envisaged. An expression of interest has been already received by the Commission which will lead to negotiations in view of determining the terms of such participation.

STRAND 1 – ANALYSIS

Objective: improving the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help in particular of comparable indicators

This strand should focus on improving data and analysis to better understand and monitor poverty and social exclusion. Concerning data, the biggest item to consider is the beginning of the financing of the new Community instrument for Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). This new instrument has been prepared by Eurostat and the National Statistical Offices, and a framework Regulation is now being discussed by the Council. Partially financing this major new project is a long term investment made by this programme to ensure better data on income and living conditions which can be used both at national and Community level.

Apart from the investment in this major instrument, there are a number of areas which are of interest for analysing poverty and social exclusion, and which are not or cannot be covered by a household survey. These include work on populations which are not covered by household surveys, such as the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, or where the sample size would be too small, or where the way to obtain certain information is still to be investigated including qualitative indicators. Concerning the homeless, Eurostat has set up a Task Force to develop common methodologies. Further methodological work needs to be carried out to develop indicators in a number of other areas, such as on old age and pensions, literacy (drawing

for instance upon the recent results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment on literacy and numeracy of school leavers), or to analyse the extent to which assumptions about the sharing of income within households or the different sources of income can affect poverty rates amongst both adults and children. The results of an ongoing preparatory action involving those experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the identification of appropriate indicators will also be taken into account. All these actions will need to be launched in close consultation with the Indicators Sub-group, in order to reflect its work priorities.

This strand can also finance thematic studies in areas where there is a need for further research. An already wide range of research has been carried out within the framework of the fourth and the fifth Framework Programme for Research. Wherever possible DG EMPL will draw on this research to inform policy responses to issues identified during the NAPs/incl process. In order to avoid duplication, the SEP should concentrate on policy oriented research, and in areas identified as more lacking in the assessment of the National Action Plans. Thematic studies could be carried out in 2002 on cultural exclusion and the policy responses to reduce it, on the analysis and identification of policy responses to prevent child poverty and break the intergenerational inheritance of poverty and on the importance of "poverty traps" and of the role played by the tax and benefit schemes.

Given the heavy selection procedure and the need to follow closely the work of contractors, it is advisable not to launch too many studies in one year. The launch of thematic studies on other important issues such as how a rights based approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion can contribute to more effective policies and programmes particularly in relation to those who are most vulnerable and socially excluded, the analysis of measures and policies in the field of justice and the analysis and identification of most effective policy responses to ensure the effective inclusion of those immigrants and their families most at risk of poverty should be considered for 2003..

<i>Action</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<i>1.1. Development of common methodologies</i>	
support the development of methodologies for indicators for agreed priority areas in the Indicator Subgroup of the SPC	Start work March 2002
<i>1.2 Comparable statistics</i>	
Support the development and implementation of <i>Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)</i> in collaboration with Eurostat;	Data collection in spring 2003
<i>1.3 thematic studies</i>	
Analysis and identification of cultural policies and programmes that contribute to increased social inclusion;	Launch tender spring 2002;

	Start work nov 2002
Analysis and identification of policy responses which a) prevent child poverty and b) break the intergenerational inheritance of poverty;	Launch tender spring 2002 Start work nov 2002
analysis of the importance of "poverty traps" and of the role played by the tax and benefit schemes, and identification of recent reforms that have proved to be effective in addressing such problems in a way that both supports people to move into employment and to achieve an adequate income	Launch tender spring 2002 Start work nov 2002

STRAND 2 – POLICY COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICES

Objective: to promote policy co-operation and mutual learning in the context of national action plans

This strand focuses on three elements: first, transnational exchanges aimed at transferring information and good practices and encouraging peer reviews, secondly, expert work and technical studies in connection with the development of indicators and benchmarks and, thirdly, production of a report on social exclusion. It is proposed in the first year of the programme to give priority under this strand to developing the first element. Element two will concentrate initially on putting in place the overall evaluation of the SEP. Under element three, one should consider a number of actions to support the preparation and dissemination of the Joint Report on Social Inclusion. In this connection, one should bear in mind that the two year cycle of National Action Plans is to be maintained, and thus the next report will be due in 2003.

In planning the implementation of Strand 2.1 experience gained over the past four years from implementing the "preparatory actions" will be taken into account. This experience shows that many of the applications suffered from a lack of adequate planning and preparation, a lack of clarity about objectives and potential outcomes and a lack of consideration about how the findings of their exchanges could best be disseminated more widely. In many cases more thought needed to be given to how the process of exchange and learning could contribute to and influence the policy making process. There tended to be an underrepresentation of actors responsible for policy development at national, regional and local levels in the various proposals put forward. Many of the proposals would also have benefited from allowing more time for the identification of appropriate partners in other Member States and in working with them to develop a more coherent and better costed proposal. For many of the proposals the one year timescale was too restrictive to achieve their goals.

In the light of this experience it seems appropriate to phase the launching of the transnational exchange programme. Phase I would start early in 2002 and involve supporting potential project leaders' efforts to formulate clear objectives, to establish solid partnerships (which as far as possible should involve a mix of statutory authorities, non-governmental organisations, social partners, research and academic institutions and

other relevant actors), to ensure clear links to the policy making process and to develop a strong dissemination element to their proposal.

In selecting projects to be supported during this initial phase priority will be given to those proposals that address issues which have arisen in the context of National Action Plans and the Joint Report on Social Inclusion including issues that to date have been underdeveloped in the NAPs/incl process (see discussion paper SEP 4/01 EN for more details). As well as preparing for future exchanges work undertaken during this initial phase should also contribute to taking stock of and disseminating existing knowledge. In this way projects will contribute to informing the further development of the NAPs/incl process. As far as possible projects should be developed in ways which will contribute to increasing awareness of the EU social inclusion process, especially the NAPs/incl, amongst policy makers and practitioners in the Member States involved. It is envisaged that projects in this initial phase will run for up to six months and that in the region of 60 projects will receive funding averaging about 60,000 € per project.

Phase II would start in 2003 and aims at supporting those most deserving projects which had been developed during the previous phase, following a restricted call. Such projects might subsequently last up to two years (with Community support to be reviewed at the end of each year). This support would enable project promoters to fully develop their objectives and disseminate results.

In addition to the exchange programme two other actions will be supported under Strand 2.1 during 2002 and will extend into 2003. The first will be to build on and disseminate the lessons for policy and practice emerging from projects supported under the "preparatory measures". This will involve both collating and disseminating widely the lessons for best practice emerging from transnational exchange projects supported since 1998 and putting in place an evaluation of the projects supported under the 2000 call for proposals.

Secondly, a peer review process between Member States will be put in place. It is envisaged that 15 to 20 peer reviews will take place over a two year period. These peer reviews will concentrate on a small number of core issues emerging from the NAPs/incl process and the Joint Report on Social Inclusion. They will involve both policy-makers, researchers and main stakeholders, including NGOs. They will aim to assess the effectiveness of particular policies or programmes, to contribute to their further improvement and to promote their dissemination across Member States. The overall policy lessons from the first round of peer reviews will be brought together in a special workshop in 2003 (probably linked to the 2003 Round Table Conference). It is also envisaged that this process will help to encourage a more rigorous approach to the evaluation of policies and programmes to combat poverty and social exclusion more generally and to the mainstreaming of best practice.

Sub-strand 2.2. will be dedicated to the evaluation of the programme. In line with the programme decision which states that 'the programme shall be evaluated by the Commission by the end of the third year and at the end of the programme with the assistance of independent experts', there will be a need to put in place the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the programme as early as in 2002. This would require selecting a team of evaluators and defining an evaluation strategy which would be consistent and complementary with other on-going evaluations in related areas, in particular evaluations of other community action programmes.

In Sub-strand 2.3., actions should be closely connected to the preparation and dissemination of the Joint Report on Social Inclusion. Given the need to keep the Member States and the Commission informed about national developments in connection with the implementation of the NAPs/incl, it would be useful to establish during 2002 a network of national experts with the aim of monitoring such developments. Their work will feed into the preparation of the bi-annual report in 2003. This strand will also be used to promote wider public awareness of developments under the Open Method of Coordination through publications and use of the world wide web.

Action	Timing
2.1 Transnational Exchange	
<p><i>Transnational Policy Cooperation and Exchange Programme – Initial Phase:</i> Launch initial phase of transnational exchange and policy co-operation programme. Proposals should: a) aim to take stock of existing knowledge (e.g. through holding a transnational conference); b) foster the development of transnational and multi-sectoral partnerships which would provide the basis for longer term cooperation and exchange; and, for those projects that wish to be considered for longer term funding under the next phase of the programme, c) define objectives and design work programmes for longer term exchange and learning. It is envisaged that in the region of 60 projects will be supported at an average of about 60,000 € per project . Participation in this initial phase will be a precondition for those wishing to be considered for longer term support in response to a further call for projects in early 2003 which will be funded by the 2003 budget. Priority will be given to projects which focus on issues identified in the NAPs/incl and in the Joint Report on Social Inclusion.</p>	<p><i>April</i> – launch call for projects</p> <p><i>Nov. '02 – June '03</i> actions to run</p>
<p><i>Peer Review Programme:</i> Develop a two year programme of peer reviews concentrated on a small number of core issues emerging from the NAPs/incl process and the Joint Report.</p>	<p><i>April – June</i> plan and put in place arrangements to administer programme</p> <p><i>Sept '02 – Dec '04</i> hold first series of peer reviews in each MS</p>
<p><i>Learning from Preparatory Actions:</i> Put in place arrangements to draw out and widely disseminate lessons for best practice emerging from transnational exchange projects supported since 1998 under the "preparatory actions".</p> <p>Put in place arrangements for evaluation of preparatory actions funded under 2000 call for proposals.</p>	<p><i>From March '02</i> document and disseminate lessons</p> <p><i>March</i> start to put in place arrangements for evaluation</p> <p><i>September</i> start</p>

	evaluation
2.2 Technical Studies	
<i>Evaluation:</i> Put in place arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the Social Exclusion Programme	<i>April</i> put in place arrangements for evaluation <i>September</i> evaluation to commence
2.3 Annual Report	
<i>Publication:</i> Publish 2001 Joint Report on Social Inclusion	<i>March</i>
<i>Monitor developments re poverty and social exclusion:</i> Put in place a network of national experts to assist Commission and Member States to monitor developments (during 2002 and 2003) in relation to poverty and social exclusion.	<i>May</i> Establish network

STRAND 3 – PARTICIPATION OF THE VARIOUS ACTORS AND SUPPORT FOR NETWORKING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Objective: to develop the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively, and to promote innovative approaches, in particular through networking at European level, and by promoting dialogue with all those involved including at national and regional level

This strand focuses on two elements: first, core funding for key European networks involved in the fight against social exclusion; secondly, the organisation of the annual European Union Round Table Conference on social exclusion. In addition, this strand should also provide support for European events organised by the acting Presidency of the Union on related themes.

As regards core funding, it is proposed in the first year of the programme to launch and manage the selection process of the key European networks whose primary activities concern the fight against social exclusion and poverty. It is envisaged that the networks would be funded on the basis of annual contracts renewable for up to three years.

As envisaged in the decision establishing the SEP the preparation of the Round Table will be done in cooperation with the Presidency and in consultation with all the actors involved (e.g. social partners, NGOs, the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions) . It should be used as an opportunity to mobilise and energise all actors in support of the EU social inclusion process.

It is envisaged that a key focus of the 2002 Round Table will be to review and discuss progress on the implementation of the first round of NAPs/incl and to draw out learning

that can help to inform the preparation of the next round of national plans in 2003. Another key objective will be to increase the visibility of the social inclusion process and awareness of its importance amongst both policy makers, practitioners and the general public.

Concerning other events of the Presidency in the area of policies against poverty and social exclusion, requests for subsidies will have to be sent directly to the Commission, which will inform the Programme Committee.

Action	Timing
3.1 Core-funding for key European networks involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion: selection of relevant networks	
<i>Core-funding:</i> Launch and complete selection process of the key European networks whose primarily activities concern the fight against social exclusion – Supervision of activities of currently funded networks	<i>April</i> – launch call for proposals <i>As from Nov. '02</i> - action to run (grant renewable every year)
3.2 Annual European Round Table Conference on social exclusion	
<i>Round Table:</i> Prepare for a Round Table conference in 2002 including consultation with actors concerned and involvement of candidate countries. The Round Table will pursue the following objectives: to organise discussions with a wide and representative range of actors concerned for a review of the new European coordination process in the field of social exclusion; to attract public attention and present the new community action programme; to take stock of existing experience; to inform and alert representatives of candidate countries.	<i>February – June</i> plan and put in place arrangements to organise the Round Table <i>Sept/Oct. '02</i> hold the first Round Table
3.2 Support to Presidency events	
<i>Support to Presidency events:</i> Arrange for the support of events organised by the acting Presidency of the Union. The programme will cover the elements which present the European dimension of the fight against social exclusion.	Following the request of the Presidency (several months in advance)