

# Network news



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Editorial

## 2010: an important, even crucial year for social NGOs

I want to put forward two main objectives for 2010: one external and one internal.

The external objective is to get another and better European inclusion strategy. The new commitment of Heads of States and Governments has to deal at once with the four dimensions of policy: the social, employment, economic and environmental dimensions, to reach a coherent overall social and sustainable European policy. The main issue in this process will be to question the unregulated free market approach: we need cooperation as a driving force behind the strategy, not competition. The current financial and economic crisis reveals all too clearly where more and more competition based on financial and economic greed leads us.

The internal objective is the participation of people experiencing poverty. We don't have direct political power, but over the years EAPN has built up moral authority because decision makers (and others) know that when we speak, it's more and more on the basis of real contact with people experiencing poverty. We have to safeguard and strengthen this moral authority by giving people experiencing poverty a larger place in our own bodies, structures and meetings. We are working on it, but we have to continue and increase our efforts.

It will be a hell of a job to achieve this, but I've seen so much energy and dynamism in national networks, European organizations and EAPN staff that I think we have a good chance of success.

*Ludo Horemans,  
President EAPN*

## GETTING READY FOR 2010 EUROPEAN YEAR AGAINST POVERTY!

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## Preparing for 2010: Let's make it "our" Year!

The 2010 European Year against Poverty will be all the more special for EAPN as it will mark the deadline the EU set itself to "make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" and EAPN's 20th anniversary.

### WHAT CAN SOCIAL NGOS DO TO GET READY FOR THE 2010 YEAR?

- **Plan political outcomes** - The Year should leave a political legacy at local, national and EU level and it is crucial to start defining in advance what your expectations are and plan alliance to promote them.
- **Prepare projects, activities and contact project promoters** - Not all projects will be selected through open calls: it is therefore useful to propose ideas as early as possible and share them with the future National Implementing Body.
- **Plan participation of people experiencing poverty** - Participation will be a key aspect for the Year but needs to be planned in advance.
- **Organise a meeting with the future National Implementing Body (NIB)** - Meeting with the future NIB should allow you to discuss the agenda for the Year and possible actions that can be undertaken. In particular, this should be an opportunity to secure a place in stakeholder dialogue.
- **Organise a meeting with other NGOs** - This will allow you to see what their plans are, generate knowledge about the Year, coordinate preparation and discuss possible common actions.
- **Contact the media and other institutions to suggest activities or common actions** - Actions taking place during the Year will not be limited to those taking place in the official framework for the Year. It is quite likely that media, museums, theatres, or schools for example will also plan specific activities linked to the Year.
- **Contact foundations** - Foundations are also likely to provide financial support for the Year, but need to be contacted as soon as possible to make sure this is included in their budget well in advance.

#### Yet another EU Year?

2010 is far from being the first European Year dedicated to a specific cause, and previous ones such as the 2003 Year of People with disabilities or 2007 Year of Equal Opportunities are still fresh in memories. Aiming primarily at raising awareness and launching public debates, these Years also led to major political developments. In some countries they were also a lever to reinforce civil society itself.

The 2010 Year will be all the more special for EAPN as the idea emerged from our network, and as the year will mark the deadline the EU set itself to "make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty".

While acknowledging the possibility of a European Year "fatigue", EAPN believes 2010 is an opportunity to strengthen dialogue between NGOs and public authorities - especially in those countries where civil dialogue is still lacking or in development. Providing a clear "hook" for new, stronger coalitions, it will also provide a platform for promoting a better understanding of the reality of poverty and deconstructing well spread stereotypes. We also hope that 2010 will be an opportunity for the EU and its Member States to go beyond self-celebration, review progress made in the last decade and give a new impetus to the fight against poverty.

#### Objectives and themes

According to the EU institutions, the Year should focus on four main objectives:

**Recognition of rights** - mainly recognising the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty to live in dignity, promoting access to rights, combating stereotyping;

**Shared responsibility and participation** - focusing mostly on promoting involvement from all key

actors in the fight against poverty, including the people experiencing poverty;

**Cohesion** - raising awareness on the fact that poverty eradication, inclusion and fair distribution concerns society as a whole;

**Commitment** - reaffirming strong political commitment both at EU level and in the Member States.

Member States are also encouraged to integrate some horizontal themes in their activities (gender, participation, territorial inequalities) and focus on specific themes such as multidimensional strategies, access to adequate resources and services, active inclusion, child poverty, homelessness, etc.

The success of the 2010 Year will depend on the level of participation and ownership beyond EU circles.

#### EU budget as leverage funds?

The total amount provided from the EU budget is the highest ever provided for a European Year: EUR 17 million, to be spent mostly in the Member States and completed by public or private co-financing. Once divided across Member States, the money available appears relatively small with regard to the ambitions set for the Year (from 120 000 € to about 750 000 € depending on the size of the country, to be completed by an equivalent level of co-financing).

Given this rather limited budget, the focus will be primarily on policy and awareness raising activities rather than on traditional "grassroots" projects.

Yet it is crucial to see beyond this: we know from previous European Years that the EU budget and national co-financing for 2010 are not the only possible support to activities 'branded' for the Year: they should rather be seen as a lever supporting a core set of activities, which will hopefully be accompanied by many more.

It is therefore crucial to raise awareness among other actors (such as media and cultural institutions); convince them that poverty is a topic worth focusing on in 2010 and trigger a snowball effect among them.

### Roadmap for planning

In each Member State a National Implementing Body (NIB) will be appointed by early 2009, which will organize the country's participation in the Year.

The NIB has to be "an administrative authority or equivalent", with competence and experience in the fight against poverty. As things now stand, it appears that bodies responsible for the National Strategic Report and NAPs inclusion should play a key role, but the final decision will depend on the Member States.

One of NIBs' first priorities will be to draw up a National Programme setting up priorities, to be approved by the European Commission before launching calls for proposals of activities (hopefully by the summer 2009). The NIB will be the key actor to engage with, and it essential for civil society organization to initiate a dialogue, making sure they are consulted in the main planning and implementation steps.



### Time to get ready!

Calls for national/regional/local activities should take place in 2009. Yet organizations interested should not wait until then to develop plans, engage with other project promoters, raise awareness among major cultural institutions and the media, encouraging them to put poverty on their agenda for 2010.

At this stage, some of the actions planned by EAPN members include poverty round tables, Parliaments of People Experiencing Poverty, developing and implementing new methods for participation, cooperation with poverty ambassadors, cultural actors (film festivals, theatre plays), business and media, symbolic actions, new poverty barometers, specific action weeks for social services, training for key actors (decision-makers, media, civil servants, NGOs...).

Most activities planned at EU and transnational level will be developed by institutions themselves (logo, information campaign, new communication tools, "ambassadors", conference on engaging with the media).

### Building NGO cooperation at EU level

To build NGO cooperation at EU level, EAPN is facilitating a 2010 NGO contact group made up of European organizations in membership of EAPN and the members of the Social Platform. This cooperation hopes to build support to transnational activities and develop a model for cooperation that would allow different organizations to cooperation across the EU.

This cooperation would be based on:

- A rotating national focus, where each country will be "under the spotlight" for one specific week during the year
- Two European Focus Weeks (in May and October), organized as participatory weeks around major cultural and political actions (concert, photo exhibitions, sports tournament, conference...), which would make the link between national developments.

In addition, the year's legacy should not be limited to activities: civil society and other actors have a responsibility to work together towards common political outcomes, from the local to the European level. The 2010 NGO contact group will play an important role in this regard.

### Making it our Year

The success of the Year will depend to a great extent from national contexts and from the openness of the main political actors. If we want to make 2010 a success, it is crucial for EAPN to see it not as an institutional event, but as our year, as an opportunity for people experiencing poverty to make their voice heard, be visible and put their issues on top of the EU agenda. Yet this will not happen without a more pro-active attitude, i.e. anticipating rather than following each of the Year's key steps.

*Elodie Fazi*

## WHAT ABOUT NON EU MEMBER STATES?

The EU 2010 Year against poverty and social exclusion will be opened to Member States of the European Union (EU) but also:

- Candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia),
- Countries from the Western Balkans,
- Countries from the European Free Trade Agreement (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland)
- and also those countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (with funding from the ENP instruments though).

Yet activities in these countries will not be financially supported by the 2010 budget (focusing on the current 27 Member States): financial support will be covered by other programmes or will have to be financed by the States participating.

## EAPN IRELAND: NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE KICK STARTS PREPARATIONS FOR 2010

60 people participated in EAPN Ireland's roundtable on the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion in October 2008. Representative of NGOs, trade union, employers, government, academics and members of the general public came together to discuss the lessons of previous European Years in Ireland, to learn about the 2010 Year and to consider the challenges that 2010 presents.

The discussion was kicked off by contributions from the Minister of State with responsibility for Community Affairs, representatives from bodies responsible for earlier years in Ireland, as well as Irish NGOs and EAPN Europe, who acted as a catalyst for discussions on how to secure a lasting legacy for the Year in Ireland.

Participants identified the significance of public perceptions of poverty, and identified in the Year an opportunity to raise awareness and change negative perceptions. The clear message that 'poverty is not acceptable' needs to be sent. Discussions concluded that "the over-riding theme of the year should be a specific message to change people's perceptions of poverty".

For EAPN Ireland this national roundtable offered an opportunity to energise preparations for 2010. Our focus now moves to influencing the governments' framework strategy and developing our own plans for the Year. We have already established an NGO working group, and have met with the Minister for Social Affairs. We have been inspired by the energy and enthusiasm of the participants during the discussion, and feel confident that, in the words of one participant: "this will be the best European Year yet, in Ireland."

*Anna Visser  
Director, EAPN Ireland  
Email: [anna@eapn.ie](mailto:anna@eapn.ie)*

## Roadmap for planning and implementation for the 2010 European Year

This table lists the key steps to take place in preparing for the Year. More information will soon be found on the European Commission's website.

	EU level	Member States
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of the decision for the Year by EU institutions (October)</li> <li>Publication of Strategic framework Document with guidelines for Member States (December)</li> <li>Preparatory phase for EU information and media campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing appointment of National Implementing Bodies</li> <li>Preparing participation in EU consultative committee</li> <li>Identification of national stakeholders</li> </ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support, dialogue with NIBs and approval of national programmes (throughout all year)</li> <li>Preparation 2010 activities</li> <li>Meetings with stakeholders and EU consultative committee (from March on)</li> <li>Conference: social exclusion and the media (29 October)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official appointment of National Implementing Bodies (January)</li> <li>Stakeholder consultation on National Programmes (until April)</li> <li>National Programmes submitted (by mid May, to be approved by end of June)</li> <li>Preparation of calls for proposals (until June)</li> <li>Preparation of national media campaign (July to September)</li> <li>Selection of projects (until November)</li> </ul>
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening conference (Spanish presidency, January)</li> <li>EU Year activities</li> <li>Meeting with stakeholders and EU consultative committee</li> <li>Closing conference (Belgian presidency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening events (January/February)</li> <li>Start of activities (March)</li> </ul>

# Preparing for 2010: What are the European Commission's plans? Interview with Antonia Carparelli

Antonia Carparelli is Head of Unit responsible for inclusion, social policy aspects of migration and streamlining of social policies at the European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

**APN: What will be the Commission's overall responsibility in organizing the Year, in particular vis-à-vis national authorities?**

**Antonia Carparelli:** The Decision creating the 2010 European Year has settled on a mix of centralised and decentralised activities as this option will allow accommodating national specificities and at the same time to retain a strong EU dimension and identity.

In this regard, the Commission's role will be to ensure an effective coordination of the different actions in order to achieve a significant impact in terms of visibility and to create opportunities to exploit synergies.

**EAPN: How to make the link between national developments?**

**A.C.:** In planning the European Year's activities, the Commission and the Member States will develop an integrated and co-ordinated approach. Such an approach should adapt the priorities to the local situation and involve all relevant actors.

Thus, in the management and coordination of the 2010 European Year activities, the Commission will be assisted by a Consultative Committee, composed of Member States' representatives appointed by each National Implementation Bodies (NIB) and chaired by a representative of the Commission. The Commission will organise the committee meetings. It is also essential to underline that each meeting of the Consultative Committee will be preceded by a meeting of EU stakeholders which will give their views and input in implementing the year.

While the Commission can provide for a framework for coordination at the various levels, tangible progress will only be achieved through

a significant involvement of Member States at national level. Activities defined at European level to ensure consistency such as for example, an information / communication campaign towards a just and inclusive society, will then be adapted to the specificities of each Member State.

**EAPN: Is it possible in your view to ensure a real impact with a rather limited budget? What do you expect as a legacy for the Year?**

**A.C.:** A total of €7 million has been allocated to the EY2010 from the EU budget, of which a maximum of € million will be used for activities in the Member States. The latter amount must be complemented by equal co-funding or more by the Member States. Therefore around €8 million should become available for national activities. The budget allocated to the EY2010 is in fact the highest ever allocated to a European year and by no means can be considered as being a limited budget, particularly, in this period of economic crisis.



In terms of the Year's legacy, European Years have so far proven to be effective instruments to stimulate debate and dialogue on questions which are central to achieving a just society and contribute to a broader participation. They also proved to be an efficient community tool to create a momentum around key topics and EU priorities in helping bringing forward the EU agenda in respect of the chosen issues. The Commission expects that the EY 2010 can prove to be an essential additional tool for ensuring a stronger EU added value to the efforts undertaken so far under the social Open Method of Coordination in order to make full use of its potential in tackling poverty and social exclusion.

## EAPN HUNGARY: "2010 REPRESENTS A CHANCE TO GET REAL POLITICAL COMMITMENT"

Certain circumstances may limit our imagination and our expectations regarding the 2010 European Year Against Poverty. On one hand the Hungarian economy is very defenceless to the negative effects of the recent financial and economic crisis. On the other hand 2010 is the year of national and local elections in Hungary.

Although there is a threat that the issue of poverty may be lost in the campaign, we think it's a chance to get real political commitment and undertakings for the period after 2010 on the issue.

EAPN Hungary is still working on its plan and the political expectations for the Year, but we can speak about three topics which will be highlighted: the introduction of adequate and guaranteed minimum income schemes in the country; the introduction of methods and processes for ex ante and ex post evaluation and poverty proofing of legislation, strategies and government measures; as well as the improvement of the participation of people experiencing poverty.

At this stage we know more the principles and values which will guide our actions than the actions themselves. We want to ensure the balance between large scale activities and small projects reflecting local needs. The programme should build on the cooperation of different sectors (state, civil society and market actors) and different fields (education, culture, sport etc) and the social field. Many of the actions should aim the awareness raising on the reasons and the reality of poverty in order to reduce intolerance and stereotypes, mainly concerning the Roma.

*Izabella Marton  
Hungarian Anti Poverty Network*

## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT 2010!

### Previous European Years:

- 2007 Year of Equal Opportunities for All :  
[www.equality2007.europa.eu](http://www.equality2007.europa.eu)

- 2008 Year of Inter-cultural Dialogue :  
<http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/>

### 2010 Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion:

- Future website of the European Year (to be activated in 2009) :  
[www.2010againstopoverty.ec.europa.eu](http://www.2010againstopoverty.ec.europa.eu)

- European Commission's website :  
[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/news/news\\_en.cfm?id=326](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=326)

- Decision from the Council and the European Parliament to establish a European Year :  
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st03/st03645-re01.en08.pdf>

## ILGA-Europe : " 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, a positive experience"

**F**or ILGA-Europe, the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities proved to be a positive experience. At European level, the Year prepared the ground politically for the proposal of a new anti-discrimination directive, while at national level the Year gave a unique opportunity to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organisations to successfully call for visibility to be given to their rights.



The Year did allow for a dialogue to be established between LGBT organisations and public officials, a dialogue which has continued beyond 2007. In many countries, the Year was used by NGOs as a leverage to get government officials and the media to address LGBT issues, in some cases for the first time. It also proved to be a very useful "hook" for NGOs to undertake action at national level with other actors (trade unions, service providers, etc.).

Political will and leadership of public authorities proved essential in creating the conditions for activities to be carried out in a meaningful way, despite structural and financial barriers, especially where the political climate was not favourable to promoting equality. Capacity-building and ongoing exchange of experience and information between members and the ILGA-Europe office throughout the Year contributed to national NGOs feeling empowered to take action in their countries.

A number of problems were encountered during the Year by national LGBT organisations and the impact of the Year varied a lot from one country to another. But on the whole, ILGA-Europe members made use of this Year whether it is to build new alliances, raise visibility for their issues or to initiate a dialogue with their government officials.

*Evelyne Paradis*  
ILGA-Europe Policy Officer

## EDF: 2003 made "nothing about us without us" a reality

**T**he 2003 European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD) was proposed by the European Disability Forum (EDF).



The greatest success of the Year was the full mobilisation of disabled people and their families all over Europe and the establishment of partnerships with the private sector, trade unions, local authorities and media.

Disabled people held the ownership over the Year and this significantly increased the presence of disability issues in the European and national social agendas. It enhanced a new image of disabled people, based on the human rights approach and not on the medical and charitable one.

Among the key achievements was the adoption of the European Commission Disability Strategy and Action Plan for 2003-2007, including disability in all policy areas.

The most significant demand of the EDF was that 2003 would lead to European disability specific non-discrimination legislation in the areas outside

employment.

The European year owed its success to the implementation of the EDF principle "Nothing about us, without us" into practice through disabled people's full participation in the organisational committees at both national and European level. Unfortunately, this was not the case with following years, including 2007 - the Year of the Equal Opportunities.

The Year was well prepared and concrete activities were underway already at the beginning of 2002. It is therefore important that sufficient time for preparation is foreseen between the decisions on an activity and its official start.

The EYPD 2003 also highlighted the importance of translating awareness raising campaigns into permanent practices, and of giving a response to challenges through an adequate policy and legislative framework.

*Irina Papancheva*  
EDF Press and communication officer

## EAPN Czech Republic is gaining ground

The EAPN Network in the Czech Republic (EAPN CR) is a forum for sharing opinions, information and experiences and participates in the EAPN's activities at a European level.

**T**he aim of EAPN CR is to achieve acceptance of social exclusion issues by the general public and by the authorities. It has been created in order to remove the social and political barriers faced by people who are threatened by social exclusion and it works to bring about their inclusion.

The greatest challenge faced over recent years has been the mainstreaming of social inclusion. A very successful project, known as "STOP Social Exclusion" was presented at the international conference in Opava in 2007. Supported by European Communities and the Czech Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, its main subject was mainstreaming social inclusion, developing its influence on strategies, planning and politics. This conference led to the production of the handbook on Mainstreaming social inclusion, which explains related terms, ways of thinking and the practical implementation of the subject into everyday policies. It is true to say that the project brought the system closer towards the system operated in the European Union.

**The greatest challenge faced over recent years has been the mainstreaming of social inclusion.**

### The main activities of EAPN CR:

- Support member organizations, develop and carry out activities aimed at social inclusion,
- Are designed to achieve social inclusion and to combat poverty,
- Promote the smooth development of the quality of social services for persons threatened by social exclusion,
- Introduce the mainstreaming of social inclusion through a variety of approaches, such as helping people to find better jobs, family reconciliation, counselling,
- Improve access to information technology and education for people at the risk of social exclusion,
- Strive to promote preventive measures to combat poverty and social exclusion and

- to avoid the repetition of difficult situations; these measures are of a material, financial and administrative nature,
- Are designed to develop the skills and responsibilities of people experiencing poverty, notably by enabling them to take part in the decision making process,
- Increase the effect of its actions by grouping together individuals and organizations engaged in the fight against poverty and social exclusion,
- Build upon the working methods used at the European level and draw upon the experiences of neighbouring countries,
- Participate in tasks that EAPN Europe sets for the national networks: working groups, commitment to campaigns and challenges.

EAPN CR takes courage from the meeting of the Ministers for Social Affairs of the EU countries held in Marseille in October 2008, since they are the people whose work focuses on those experiencing poverty. This was the first opportunity for ministers to discuss the issues of poverty and active social inclusion. Three key questions were discussed, namely the idea of a minimum income, creating better quality jobs and improving the way in which the social services systems works.

The Prague negotiations took place between the MLSA and EAPN CR with a view to the 8th European meeting in Brussels on people experiencing poverty. Both before and after the meeting in Brussels, EAPN CR organised a number of national and regional meetings. The conclusions of the main discussions are going to be used at the meeting in Brussels. These meetings and seminars are also part of the preparatory work for the International Year against Poverty in 2010.

*Milena Černá, President of EAPN Czech Republic*

## EAPN CZECH REPUBLIC AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

A week for the eradication of poverty was organized in October 2008 in Ostrava, which is an area with a great deal of heavy industry and mining and is also the third largest town in the Czech Republic.

This important event included performances by famous singers and musicians, talks around a camp-fire and prayer meetings. The press conference, in which the president of the EAPN network in the Czech Republic Milena Černá, took part, was given wide media coverage on both Czech TV and radio.

The results of the negotiations carried out by the EAPN's European Director, Fintan Farrell, in September 2008 at the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, led to an agreement that the Ministry will host the 8th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, which is due to be held on 15 and 16 May 2009 in Brussels.

A First National Round Table under the presidency of the EAPN CR took place in Prague on 17 October 2008. The participants discussed the issues of poverty, over-indebtedness and money lending.

The participants at the Round Table pointed out that there is a lack of awareness of the problem and that the current legislation in this area is incomplete and that both of these factors are partly responsible for the present situation. They also emphasised the fact that the banks and financial institutions should assume greater responsibility when providing loans to people on a low income.

The participants called upon the Government to develop preventive measures against poverty caused by over indebtedness.

## Czech Republic: "Roma continue to find themselves at the margins of society"

**I**n 2006, 310 localities in the Czech Republic were identified as being excluded and they were mostly inhabited by Roma. They are located across all 14 regions of the Czech Republic. Not all of these excluded localities are completely separated from their surrounding areas. Roma people have moved into these localities and adapted to the prevailing poor conditions. Their isolation has resulted in poor and insufficient levels of education, long-term unemployment, alcoholism, money lending and debt problems.

In 2000 local and regional politicians began to move "problematic inhabitants" to certain places and regions in order to confine them to certain areas and separate them. Following heated exchanges between members of parliament and senators, the legislation was passed and the Roma were sent to places where it was difficult to gain access to social services, job opportunities, schools and public transport. It is worth pointing out that the majority of these localities have been established over the last ten years.

This has developed historically since the beginning of the 20th century. In the initial development of the Republic of Czechoslovakia after 1918, many legal measures, which had been carried over from the end of 19th century, remained in force. In the 1920s, the authorities introduced the police registration of the Romany population, fingerprinting them, etc. Between 1942 and 1944, nomadic Roma were deported to Czech gypsy concentration camps. Many were then deported from these camps to death camps, where many of them died.

After the Second World War, the Roma people were denied their ethnicity in the Czech Republic.

They were not accepted as a special ethnic minority with specific interests and needs. The socialist state dealt with the Roma as if, from a legislative point of view, they did not exist, whilst, at the same time, they allocated special funds for solving their problems. Throughout this period, efforts were pursued to promote the assimilation of the Roma within the mainstream of society.

The General Declaration of Human Rights focussed attention in the Czech Republic on the emancipation of the Roma. The Roma civic initiative group represented the Roma community in Parliament. The Roma protested against racism and underlined the fact that special schools for Roma pupils blocked access to higher education, etc. Nevertheless, with the development of the market

economy, unqualified Roma continue to find themselves at the margins of society. Unemployment amongst the Roma is as high as 75% or even 95% in some areas and although this is due, in part, to their low level of education, it is also due to a latent and sophisticated form of racism.



The European Social Fund Operational Programmes have provided the opportunity to develop major initiatives in favour of the Roma community in the Czech Republic. Since the 1990s many successful projects have been carried out, mostly through NGOs that now belong to the EAPN CR. These NGOs have attempted to address the issue of the social exclusion of members of the Roma community in Czech cities, towns and villages and to create a platform for interaction between Roma and non-Roma citizens. But many problems still remain. The Nationalist Movement in the Czech Republic is getting stronger, whilst the majority keeps silent. Once again civil society trying to fight off these imminent dangers.

M.C

The success of the 2010 Year will depend on the level of participation and ownership beyond EU circles.

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Editor  
F. Farrell

Responsible for publication  
A. Gueudet

Square de Meeûs 18  
B-1050 Brussels  
tel. 32 2 226 58 50  
fax 32 2 226 58 69  
E-mail: [team@eapn.eu](mailto:team@eapn.eu)  
Internet: <http://www.eapn.eu>

Contributors  
E. Fazi  
C. Flémal

Bureau de dépôt  
1600 Sint Pieters Leeuw 1

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