



# European Parliament Hearing

## Fighting Poverty and Inequality – Building Trust in the EU

Hosted By: Proinsias De Rossa, MEP

Organised by: European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)

3 December 2009: 16.00 – 18.00

Meeting Room (4B001) - Languages (English, French, Spanish)

[Followed by Reception](#)

### Outline Programme

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| 15.00 – 16.00 | <b>Registration</b>  |
| 16.00 – 16.45 | <b>Introduction and Welcome: Proinsias De Rossa, MEP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty and Inequality in the EU and its impact: <i>Fintan Farrell, Director of EAPN.</i></li><li>• Presentation of key EAPN proposals: <i>Ludo Horemans, President of EAPN.</i></li><li>• The place of the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Commission's proposals for an EU 2020 Vision and Strategy: <i>Antonia Carparelli, Head of Unit, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission.</i></li></ul> |
| 16.45 – 18.00 | <b>Round Table and Debate: Chair Eric Marlier</b><br><b>How to ensure the fight against poverty and social exclusion is a highly visible part of the EU 2020 strategy?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The views of political groups in the European Parliament?<br/>Opening Remarks from representatives from the European Peoples Party, the Progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Greens and the European United left.</li><li>• Debate with participants.</li></ul>   |
| 18.00         | <b>Reception</b>   |

## Introduction

2010 represents a turning point for the EU. During this year, in the context of the continuing crisis, the EU will decide on the scope and nature of the EU 2020 strategy. The Commission's proposals are likely to refocus on the goals of restoring growth, providing an adequate long-term response to the crisis, creating and maintaining employment, reconciled with measures to reduce environmental impact and climate change.

The social dimension and in particular the fight against poverty and social exclusion runs the risk of being over looked. This represents a serious threat to the social sustainability and viability of the strategy and to the very fabric of social cohesion throughout the EU which has been severely weakened through the crisis.

**The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), which seeks to defend the interests of people experiencing poverty, has organized this hearing to debate with MEPs and key stakeholders concrete proposals for ensuring social progress.**

The commitments made in the Lisbon Strategy (2000) to have a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010, have largely not been fulfilled, with 79 million people, (17% of the 27 MS) still at risk of poverty – a figure largely unchanged since 2000.

## Objectives

The hearing will aim to promote debate on concrete proposals to ensure that the eradication of poverty and social exclusion is made a pre-requisite of the EU 2020 strategy as part of a shift in paradigm towards a more social, sustainable and globally responsible development model. Key elements in this debate will include:

- Proposals to ensure that the EU 2020 strategy delivers on social cohesion and fundamental rights, as a priority.
- Proposals on the reinforcement of the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC) including proposals for effective poverty targets, the need for action plans and effective implementation.
- The implementation of the Active Inclusion Recommendation, and in particular the way to

Hit particularly hard are children and older people (20% and 19%), whilst migrants, and ethnic minorities often bear the worst brunt and people in situations of extreme poverty such as the homeless or many of the Roma community are often invisible in the statistics. This figure and the debt of poverty are likely to increase through the impact of the crisis.

There is widespread evidence, including in some Commission reports, that growth does not automatically guarantee reductions in poverty and inequality, if distribution and redistribution issues are not adequately tackled.

Whilst a quality job can be an essential step out of poverty, the reality is that at least 25% of people in poverty have a job. An integrated approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion has to be part of a strategic approach to how we create and distribute wealth, and ensure adequate income and access to rights, services and resources for all.

The debate on poverty and social exclusion has to form part of a broader debate – what kind of EU do we want? What is the role of the economy? How to ensure that the economic drivers of the EU are used to deliver social cohesion, combat growing inequalities and promotes a sustainable model of development.

guarantee access to adequate minimum income and access to services and employment.

- Proposals on achieving better governance and participation including through guidelines and benchmarking.
- Ensuring EU funding to NGOs and prioritization of social inclusion objectives in a new funding programme and through the use of EU Structural Funds.
- The potential of the EU Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion to deliver results.
- The key role of the EU Parliament in defending a social and sustainable development model for the EU and ensuring effective action in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.