



Nearly 1 in 4 persons is in or at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion in the EU

Over 11.300 people sign petition to back EU Fund to achieve the EU poverty reduction target

Member States must support a strong budget for Cohesion Policy and minimum shares for ESF

To: EU Prime Ministers

Refer: General Affairs Council, 20th November 2012

Dear Prime Minister,

On 20th November, at the General Affairs Council meeting, the Council will try to reach a final position on the future of Structural Funds for the next programming period 2014-2020. Two days later, the European Summit is expected to endorse that.

We are writing to you today to present **our petition, signed by over 11.300 people**, through the joint campaign [EU Money for Poverty Reduction Now!](#), urging you to support the 25% minimum shares of the Cohesion Budget for the ESF and 20% earmarking of ESF for poverty and social exclusion:

“As concerned citizens, we call on Presidents and Prime Ministers of EU Member States to respect the commitment they made when agreeing the EU poverty reduction target. We urge them to invest EU Money for poverty reduction now by:

- Allocating at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy budget to the European Social Fund (ESF);
- Earmarking at least 20% of the European Social Fund to poverty reduction and social inclusion.”

Please find enclosed the list of all the petition signers annexed to this letter.

Additional concerns regarding the EU Budget

In addition, on behalf of all the social inclusion NGOs we represent working for social inclusion at national and local level we would like to express our alarm about the potential negative impact of the 10-billion cut in the Cohesion Policy’s budget in the latest version of the negotiating box proposed by the EU Cypriot Presidency. This would undermine any meaningful contribution of Structural Funds to the poverty reduction target and would significantly diminish the potential for future ESF to support integrated projects fighting poverty and social exclusion and promoting labour market integration of those who are the furthest from the labour market.

Given the current economic crisis and its devastating social consequences increasing the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion to more than 120 million, the rise in unemployment - as well as in euro-skepticism - in the European Union, EU leaders must ensure sufficient financing of EU programmes to prevent and alleviate poverty and social exclusion. Tackling poverty and social exclusion, in addition to ensuring people can live in dignity, also means that people are able to fully participate in society and in the economy, and enables many more people to become active in the labour market through integrated pathways to employment underpinned by integrated active inclusion approaches.

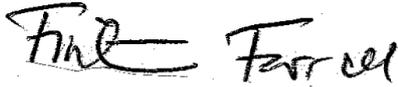
This requires a sufficient amount of funding for Structural Funds ensuring that the ESF has sufficient funds to invest in human capital and deliver on the EU poverty reduction target.

Member States must be consistent with the political commitments they made when agreeing the poverty reduction target and during the last June Council, during which the ESF’s role in mitigating the social consequences of the crisis was clearly endorsed.

We encourage you to respond positively to this call from over 11,300 citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Fintan Farrell,
Director of EAPN



Jorge Nuño-Mayer,
Secretary General of Caritas Europa



Michael Privot,
Director of ENAR



Jana Hainsworth,
Secretary General of Eurochild



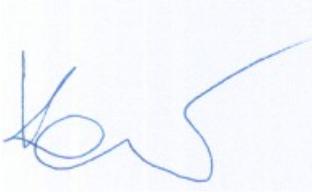
Heather Roy,
Secretary General of Eurodiaconia



Freek Spinnewijn,
Director of FEANTSA



Nace Kovac,
President of MHE



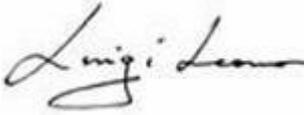
Sonja Lokar,
President of EWL



Luk Zelderloo,
Secretary General of EASPD



Luigi Leonori,
President of SMES-Europa



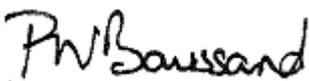
Conny Reuter,
Secretary General of SOLIDAR



Carlotta Besozzi,
Director of EDF



Pierre Baussand,
Director of the Social Platform



Anne-Sophie Parent,
Secretary General of the Age Platform



Anke Seidler,
Director of Workability Europe



Cristina Martins,
President of IFSW Europe

Geert Freyhoff,
Director of Inclusion Europe



Michele LeVoy,
Director of PICUM



Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Roberts,
International Secretary for Europe of Salvation Army



ICSW Europe is also signing this letter.

Cc:

President Rompuy, President of the European Council
President Schulz, President of the European Parliament
President Barroso, President of the European Commission
President Demetris Christofias, President of the Council of the European Union