

**Pierre Baussand's speech, Director of the Social Platform – European Meeting of People
Experiencing Poverty - 19 June 2013**

The Social Platform welcomes the increased number of CSRs on **poverty, employment, education and care and health services**, as well as the new positive individual proposals for some countries regarding key target groups such as youth, children, migrants and Roma. However, the overriding message from the CSRs is about reducing public deficits and debt, primarily through reducing public expenditure. This will very likely generate increased poverty and social exclusion and undermine the coherence of the social CSRs and their potential for delivery.

He insisted on the need of a European strategy to combat poverty to ensure the implementation of the target.

Three years ago, 500 metres from here, in June 2010, the heads of states decided to reduce to poverty by 20 million by 2020:

- This was not an ambitious objective
- **Poverty/social exclusion** - There is a persistent and increasing level of poverty and social exclusion. Poverty has increased from 116,2 million (2010) to 119,8 million (2011); **Severely deprived**: increase 40,8 million (2010) to 43,4 million (2011)
- Austerity measures do not work: the data on the situation in countries under Troika programme arrangements (Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus) show that the policy of prioritising economic and fiscal consolidation is not working and that an alternative is required.
- The Council and the President of the Commission in mid-April have recognised that “politically and socially, one policy that is only seen as austerity, is of course not sustainable”. It “has reached its limits in many aspects, because a policy to be successful not only has to be properly designed. It has to have the minimum of political and social support”.
- **It's time for concrete actions to really reduce poverty – we need a comprehensive strategy to fight poverty and social exclusion. That would give the direction to the individual instruments developed in their own corners.**

COMBATING POVERTY WILL NOT BE ENOUGH – WE ALSO NEED TO ADDRESS GROWING INEQUALITIES IN EUROPE

- Inequality is also growing because of policies implemented over more than 20 years. This has contributed to deeper social and wealth disparities and to weaker social cohesion.

- **Income inequalities** in OECD countries is at its highest level for the past half century. The average income of the richest 10% of the population is about nine times that of the poorest 10%.
- This has gone up as a result of changes in the distribution of wages and salaries combined with the weakening (in many member states) of redistributive policies and mechanisms through taxes, benefits and services. The income gap has increased, with the reduction of medium incomes and salaries at the lower end.
- Meanwhile redistribution through transfers has become less effective as rates for personal income tax for the wealthiest fell from 60-70% to only 40% in most major OECD countries, whilst social protection levels have been reduced.

WORKING TOGETHER

His slogan could be “Nothing about people experiencing poverty without people experiencing poverty.” EAPN ensures the participation of people experiencing poverty and the associations of people experiencing poverty should be involved in the decision making process. The Social Platform continues to build alliance and EAPN is member of Social Platform together with 46 other European NGOs. Also, the Social Platform works with trade unions, environmental organisations and development organisation.