



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Deputy Director-General

SPEAKING POINTS

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty**

20 JUNE 2013, BRUSSELS

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Key developments in the follow-up of the EU Poverty Reduction Target**

- Commissioner Andor yesterday and President Schultz in the opening statements already underlined it. The situation today in Europe in terms of poverty reduction and social inclusion is not improving. To the contrary.
- As you know too well, we are being challenged by new forms of poverty.
- One of the missions of the European Union is to support the action of Member States in this difficult fight.
- This support is for investing into people and for finding the right employment and social national reforms, notably through the European Social Fund, the ESF.
- Only in 2011, more than 12 million people participated in ESF programmes. Since the beginning of the programming period in 2007, some 2.4 million participants have found a job within 6 months after following the ESF programme in which they were involved.
- Considering extreme forms or new forms of poverty, the Commission has proposed for the 2014-2020 period a new instrument: The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.
- This Fund would provide non-financial assistance to the most deprived persons, particularly when it comes to food deprivation, homelessness and material deprivation of children.
- As Commissioner Andor said, we hope that Member States will understand the benefit of complementing their own national assistance.

**Response to key messages of last year's PEP conference**

- Addressing social exclusion and fighting poverty in Europe is also about ensuring participation.

- Last year's meeting of People experiencing Poverty (PEP) focused specifically on "homelessness and housing rights in the context of the crisis".
- The key messages that came out from our dialogue are reflected in the Commission's policy priorities and proposals.
- This year, in February, we adopted a Social Investment Package. This is about making welfare states more effective to reply to new social and societal challenges.
- This Package calls on Member States to foster social inclusion through providing quality, affordable and accessible services, including social housing.
- It invites Member States to implement long-term, integrated solutions at national, local and regional levels.
- The Package contains concrete references to the 2012 PEP conference, recalling the key recommendations and best practices identified by the delegates. We have listened to you and brought your suggestions forward.

### **Reflection on key messages from this year's PEP event**

- This year's meeting brought the issue of how to ensure a life in dignity and the related question of an adequate minimum income.
- This is very much part of the Social Investment Package that addresses systemic weaknesses in Member States and proposes solution.
- This discussion is ever more relevant with the increasing inequalities and social discrepancies across Europe.
- Clearly, the PEP event is for us an important reality check. It is a way of raising knowledge and awareness on the problems but also on the most adequate policy solutions.
- I therefore want to thank you for your active participation in this process.
- I also wish to give recognition to your strong commitment to help tackling poverty in Europe.

- The Commission will continue to do its utmost for its part: through EU funding; through policy analysis and advice; through monitoring closely the social and economic situation in Member States; and through dialogue.
- The participatory process is key for EU financial support. The Commission asked Member States to adequately involve all the partners in preparation of the next programming period.
- The European Social Fund will remain a key financing tool to help Member States invest in integrated active inclusion strategies.
- The Commission has proposed to Member States to strengthen the use of the ESF for social inclusion policies and combating poverty.
- The European Union will be able to deliver on our social and economic challenges provided this political ambition is met with the necessary financial means and solidarity both at the European and national level.