

Human Toll

DYNAMIC, END POVERTY, EY 2010 NGO COALITION, NEWS - By Marta Devon on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 - 10:13

On the occasion of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, around 40 European NGO networks have created a coalition – the EY 2010 NGO Coalition - to put forward common messages and key demands for the outcome of the European Year.

This European Year comes at a time of severe financial, economic and social crisis.

According to the last Eurobarometer survey, 73% of Europeans consider poverty to be a widespread problem in their country while 89% want urgent action by their government to tackle the problem

Against a bleak picture of nearly 80 million people – or 16% of the EU population – living below the poverty line, and facing serious obstacles in accessing employment, education, housing, social and financial services, this survey sheds light on the many facets of poverty and social exclusion.

For the End-Poverty - Coalition, part of the necessary response to this crisis is the renewal of a common vision for the type of society the activists say they wish to create. "A commitment to building a Europe where women and men of all ages can live free of poverty and social exclusion, should be the legacy of the 2010 Year" the coalition of 40 NGOs says in it's declaration.

This European Year will have an impact if there is political will and if poverty is recognised as a violation of people's rights and dignity

- Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network.

"And It is not only up to the institutions to make this EU year a success; everyone needs to believe it's possible and fight for the sort of society we want to build", Mr. Farrell added.

Myria Vassiliadou, Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby carried on saying that "economy must be at the service of people and that entails to rethink the current model, which does not work and has only contributed to increase poverty and social exclusion."

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild, added that "a new vision is needed, that puts people and the planet at the heart of policies. This Year must lead to a declaration committing the EU institutions to a Social Inclusion strategy with clear targets to eradicate poverty and social exclusion."

As the other speakers, Sophie Kammerer from the European Network Against Racism underlined the importance of "involving people experiencing poverty, listen and take into account their views, if we are to build a inclusive society".

"Solutions won't be possible without empowering people experiencing poverty, children and young people, discriminated people and the elderly" added Jana Hainsworth.

Freek Spinnewijn, Director of the Federation of the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, reminded that "progress must be made on minimum income schemes, which are nowhere in Europe adequate and accessible enough".

He added that "this European Year must also follow up on the declaration adopted by the European Parliament on ending street homelessness".

Two persons experiencing poverty involved in ATD Quart-Monde, Yvette de Vuyst and Alain Schacht expressed they had had "great hopes when contributing to the Belgian General Report on Poverty.

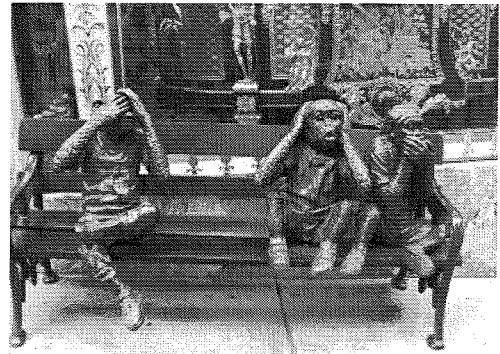
The situation has been getting worse every year and being together is the strength that makes us go forward. Separating children from their parents only makes things worse. Instead, what is needed is psychological support and helping the family to find ways to get out of an unbearable situation, to get an occupation that will enable them to support their family

The Coalition also took the opportunity to launch its website www.endpoverty.eu.


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