



The Anti-Poverty Strategy: Your Questions Answered

This document aims to present the contents of the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. It was co-drafted by the European Anti-Poverty Network and the European Commission. The actual text of the Strategy, as adopted by the Commission, can be found [here](#).



Is a plan to reduce and prevent poverty.



Wants to make sure people can live with dignity, throughout every stage of life.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy



Looks at many topics such as income, jobs, housing, services, and discrimination.



Calls for governments, organisations and communities to work together and involve people experiencing poverty in decisions.

Hi! I'm Piotr. I've experienced poverty myself, and I'd like to know more about the Anti-Poverty Strategy.



Hi Piotr! Nice to meet you! I'm Anna and I work at the European Commission.



WHAT IS THE ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY AND WHY DO WE NEED IT

Nice to meet you too. So, can you please tell me what this EU Anti-Poverty Strategy is about?



The Anti-Poverty Strategy says what the problem is (poverty), what we want to achieve (ending and preventing poverty), how we will get there (actions). The European Anti-Poverty Strategy helps make sure that fighting poverty remains a political priority and that progress is checked over time.

That seems like a big step forward. Currently there are 93 million people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union. Can you imagine? This represents 1 in 5 residents in Europe. People struggle with high prices for food, housing, energy, health, education, among other things.



It's a serious problem. At the European Commission we want to help end poverty by 2050. By 2030, we also aim to reduce poverty and social exclusion by at least 15 million people, including at least 5 million children, comparing to 2019.

What are you talking about when you mention poverty?



Poverty is not only about having too little money. Many people face other difficulties that make it harder to find work, access services, or fully participate in society. These barriers can include discrimination, disability, poor health, migration background, age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality. Even where you live can impact poverty.

I know many. For example, A single mother with a low-paid job. A person with a disability who cannot access suitable work. A migrant who faces discrimination when looking for housing or job. An older person living on a very low pension. Many times, people face several of these barriers at the same time. This can make poverty even harder to overcome.





The Strategy recognises that poverty has many facets and that different forms of disadvantage can overlap.

I hope it calls for policies that take different realities into account and provide support based on people's needs.



It does. It also recognises that people can face several forms of disadvantage at the same time, such as poverty, discrimination or disability, and aims to address these together.

FIGHTING POVERTY AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

Today, 1 in 4 children in the EU is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Children that grow up in poverty are likely to face difficulties later. For example, a child growing up in poverty may have more difficulties accessing healthcare, participating in activities, or succeeding at school. These challenges can affect opportunities later in life, including finding a good job. Can you explain what the Strategy does to support children and their families?



Our first goal is to help families build a path out of poverty. The surest way to achieve this is to enable parents, and in particular mothers, to work in quality jobs, for example by providing adequate childcare support. That's one of our main priorities. Then, when earnings from work are not enough, child and family benefits should be well-designed so that they can really support families. The Commission will put forward concrete actions on both topics.

What about other important type of support as educational assistance, school meals, leisure activities (like sport or cultural activities), healthcare or housing?





Yes, this is essential! Ensuring that each child in need effectively has access to such key goods and services is the goal of the European Child Guarantee. This is an initiative which has been at the centre of our efforts to promote equal opportunities in the last years and has brought positive results. Since it was set up in 2021, not less than 7 countries have expanded their school meal programmes to ensure that no children attend school hungry, and more than 600,000 children in poverty have gained access to school-based activities such as sport or school trips. Still many children do not access these services, and we will increase our efforts to reach out to all.

But how will you do that?



Think of it like a puzzle. Some policies and actions already exist, but they do not always work well together. The Strategy is not just about new policies. It aims to bring all the pieces together. Instead of isolated measures that leave gaps, it creates a common plan so that all actions contribute to the same goal: ending poverty.

And how about young people? How can we make sure they continue to get help beyond childhood and the Child Guarantee?



It is important that young people get help so that they can participate in education or training or enter quality jobs. The Commission is already supporting Member States to achieve this and it will further help them step up their efforts to make sure there is no gap in this support between childhood and youth.

That would be helpful. What about those who are no longer considered young and are out of the job market?





The Strategy says that for those who can work, having a quality job is their best chance, but of course many people today are excluded from the labour market and struggle to enter it. The Strategy announces an action to provide them with support to find a job, considering their individual needs.

Sounds good but having a job is not enough to protect people from poverty anymore. Around 1 in 10 workers in the EU is still at risk of poverty.



I see you know your numbers...

Not the numbers, the people.



Yes, it's true, we're never talking about numbers but about people. With the Strategy, the European Commission aims to help Member States protect workers from unfair and insecure work.

It's necessary to improve working conditions. What about those who cannot work? Some people face health problems, disabilities, or need to take care of relatives. Those people should still be able to live with dignity. What is your proposal?



We think that an adequate minimum income support, combined with access to social services is a starting point. However, many people are already entitled to receive support and they don't, so the Strategy also wants to help improve information and the access to these rights.

You mentioned all stages of life, including old age.





Some people reach old age after a lifetime of low wages, insecure jobs, unemployment, illness or caring responsibilities. The result is that it affects their pensions, people with low pensions are at a higher risk of poverty. The Strategy announces that the European Commission will continue to promote pensions that allow a dignified life in old-age, and support autonomy.

FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA

You know what makes it even harder?



I want to know.

People experiencing poverty are often judged unfairly or treated with less respect because of their financial situation or lived experience. This makes it harder to find a job, rent a home, access services, or take part in society.



Thank you for sharing that reality. The Strategy recognises that everyone should be treated equally and with dignity. It aims to better understand socio-economic discrimination.

Many also face discrimination because of who they are.



Do you mean that for instance, a person with disabilities, someone with a migrant background or from a racialised community, ethnic minorities, Roma, LGBTQI+ people and women can face even more judgement and stigma?



Exactly. And this can cause poverty and social exclusion in some cases.



The Strategy recognises that everyone should be treated equally and with dignity. This is why the Strategy promotes policies that reduce discrimination, remove barriers, and ensure equal opportunities for everyone.

HOUSING AND BASIC NEEDS



You mentioned finding a home. The Strategy also pays attention to difficulties to access housing and fulfil basic needs.

What does that include?



The basics to have a life with dignity. A safe and affordable home, healthy food, energy, transport, water, sanitation, internet, and digital services. Around 88% of people in the EU struggle to pay for these basic needs because of rising prices and the cost of living. In some cases, this can also lead to debt issues. The Strategy shows how the European Commission has tools to help address these problems. For example, it supports food banks, tracks food prices and combats energy and transport poverty. It also aims to help people improve their financial literacy, prevent them from falling into debt, and protect consumers in vulnerable situations.

Some people also experience homelessness or housing exclusion...



That is why we need to improve the access to affordable housing but also prevent and reduce homelessness. The EU will now provide guidance to EU countries on how to do that.



SOCIAL SERVICES

Social services are expected to help people experiencing difficulties, but they are often hard to find, hard to understand, or hard to access. Some people also face barriers because of language, disability, where they live, or how services are organised. The digitalisation of services, turns out, leaves a lot of people unable to access services too.



That is why the Strategy wants services to be easier to find, to access and to understand. Plus, services must be affordable. The goal is to give better support through social workers so that people experiencing difficulties know about the benefits and other support they can access. This can also help others from falling into poverty in the first place!

Let me tell you, good services need to treat people with dignity and respect. They need to be easy to reach, to understand. Services should communicate with each other so that people don't have to tell their story over and over again. Services also need to find people, not just the other way around.



I'm taking notes, but that is aligned with the Strategy objectives.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Good. But, as you said earlier, the European Union itself cannot eradicate poverty. It is the 27 Member States that have the most competence to do so. So how can this Strategy translate into reality?





The European Union institutions can bring ideas and together fight as a block for the eradication of poverty. But the countries are the ones who have the most power to define and implement measures. The creation of policies, legislation and the decision to invest money in the fight against poverty happens first at the national level. This is why the Strategy calls on each country to develop its own anti-poverty plan and to appoint a responsible person called the national anti-poverty coordinator to ensure its implementation and success. It also provides guidance to help countries when developing their plan.

And how about the private sector? Can they do more to support these objectives?



The Strategy certainly encourages them to do so. It launches a new Coalition against poverty to encourage private companies and philanthropies to contribute to the fight against poverty.

People with lived experience of poverty can also contribute. They are experts through that experience. They know what works, what doesn't, what could be changed, where are the biggest barriers. Now that the Strategy was launched, participation in the implementation is important, the same for monitoring what is working or not.



That is why, for the first time, the European Commission is committing to create a regular structured dialogue with people experiencing poverty. People with lived experience will be involved in consultations, but not only, also in the discussions on how the Strategy is put into practice.

That is good news. I'm really looking forward to seeing that in practice. What are the next steps?





The Strategy now needs to become reality. The next step is implementation. Progress will need to be monitored over the coming years. Governments, organisations and people experiencing poverty all have a role in making sure the Strategy delivers on its promises. The European Union will also provide funding to help Member States implement the Strategy.

How can I use this strategy?



You can use it to understand what the EU is committing to and ask your government what actions they will put in place. As a person with lived experience of poverty, you can take part in consultations and discussions and work with organisations that promote the rights of people experience poverty.

*Thank you for all
the clarifications.*

Thank you too.



Building effective anti-poverty policies at national, regional and local levels

Good anti-poverty policies should:

Be well planned and coordinated



Different authorities should work together and make fighting poverty a priority.

Protect people's rights



Everyone should be treated fairly and have access to their rights.

Provide enough income to live with dignity



People should have enough income and resources to cover their basic needs.

Support people into quality employment



Everyone who can work should have access to decent jobs and fair working conditions.

Ensure access to quality services



People should be able to access housing, healthcare, education, childcare, energy, transport and other essential services.

Put people at the centre



EU and national policies should respond to people's real lives and recognise local needs.



How can I use this Strategy?

Understand what the European Union is committing to.

Take part in consultations and discussions meaningfully.

Work with authorities and organisations to support activation and social inclusion of people experiencing poverty and promote their rights.



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