



socialplatform solidar

Brussels, 27 May 2009

To: Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs

2010 EU Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion

Dear Minister,

We are the organisations members of the Steering Group of a coalition of European NGOs, who have gathered to ensure mobilisation and cooperation across all relevant social NGOs ahead of the EU Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion¹.

As both national and European preparations for 2010 are gearing up, we would like to draw your attention to some of the activities that we are planning and also to the ways in which your support is essential to ensure that the EU Year 2010 will have a significant impact on fighting poverty in Europe.

Consultation and participation of civil society

The participation and involvement of NGOs and grass roots organisations is an essential element of the Year, and consultation mechanisms and continuous dialogue with civil society at national, regional and local levels are a requirement in the functioning of the National Implementing Bodies (NIBs). We trust that you will support a participatory process throughout the planning as well as the delivery of the Year.

¹ The Steering Group is composed of nine organisations: AGE, ATD Quart Monde, European Women's Lobby, European Anti Poverty Network, Caritas Europa, Social Platform Secretariat, Solidar, Eurochild, FEANTSA. It also ensures cooperation with a wider range of organisations, mostly those in membership of EAPN and the Platform of European Social NGOs: www.socialplatform.org.

Support to small and medium size NGOs

It is very important to make sure that a large part of the funding for activities goes to civil society actors, including in particular small and medium sized NGOs. As underlined in the Strategic Framework Document, the NIBs should make all efforts (including the possibility not to request co-funding from smaller NGOs and accept in-kind as eligible costs) in order to make sure that these structures will be able to access funds for the Year. We hope that your national programmes for the Year include the possibility of financial support for NGO activities.

Ensure that the calls and selection of projects are carried out in a speedy manner

Many small and medium sized NGOs are mobilised and motivated to engage in the Year. The successful planning of activities for smaller structures will largely depend on knowing well in advance that there will be resources available. We therefore urge you to ensure that the call for proposals and selection of projects are completed as soon as possible and that all actors will know in time what support they can expect, so that they can plan properly for 2010.

Support the national focus weeks

As part of the European coordination, and with the aim of ensuring visibility of the situation and actions in fighting poverty, we will be highlighting each Member State through a system of *rotating national focus weeks*. We hope that you will support the various initiatives, and that the NIB in your country will engage in the efforts to generate visibility and raise awareness during the national focus week of your country (see calendar of national focus weeks below).

Spring European focus week: a week of Broadcasting

The Spring European focus week (May 24-30 2010) is an important opportunity to raise awareness on poverty throughout Europe. In order to make sure that there is high visibility on issues of poverty during this week we strongly believe that a week of broadcasting, encouraging national media in all countries to speak about and highlight poverty/social exclusion in the EU at the same time would be a very effective way of raising awareness of the multidimensional aspects of poverty and social exclusion throughout the EU. We would like to seek your full support and participation in making sure that poverty/social exclusion is highlighted both on the air, on television and in the press during this week. The national focus weeks could be used in a similar way to provide an opportunity to direct attention to the fight against poverty/social exclusion in the Member State concerned.

Ensure a strong political legacy of the Year 2010

It is time to recognise that the current EU inclusion strategy is failing to deliver on the promise made in Lisbon in 2000 “to make decisive impact on the eradication of poverty” and to ensure that everyone has access to fundamental rights. *It is imperative to use the EU Year 2010 for the fight against poverty and social exclusion as a springboard towards new and better policies, putting people at the heart of EU policy-making.* The EU year 2010 should lead to the adoption of ambitious EU and national targets in the fight against poverty, (including for example reducing child poverty by 50% by 2012 and ending street homelessness by 2015), with strong EU policy instruments and the investment of public resources to support the achievement of these targets. We count on your active leadership in promoting a strong political legacy of the EU year 2010 along these lines.

These are some of our concerns in view of the accelerating preparations for the Year 2010. We look forward to working with you through our national networks and at European level to make sure that the Year 2010 has a long-lasting impact on the fight against poverty in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

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Conny Reuter, Secretary General, Solidar
Fintan Farrell, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network
Freek Spinnewijn, Director, FEANTSA
Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General, Eurochild
Marius Wanders, Secretary General, Caritas Europa
Myria Vassiliadou, Secretary General, European Women's Lobby
Roshan Di Pippo, Director, Platform of European Social NGOs
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CC:

Members of the Social Protection Committee

Contact for further follow-up
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Annex: Calendar of national and European focus weeks

Some countries are still in the process of identifying the best date for their national focus week.

Date	Country	Date	Country
1) Jan 4-10		27) Jul 5-11	Romania
2) Jan 11-17		28) Jul 12-18	
3) Jan 18-24		29) Jul 19-25	
4) Jan 25- 31		30) Jul 26-Aug 1	
5) Feb 1-7		31) Aug 2-8	
6) Feb 8-14		32) Aug 9-15	
7) Feb 15-21	Ireland	33) Aug 16-21	
8) Feb 22-28	Austria	34) Aug 22-28	
9) Mar 1-7	Hungary	35) Aug 29- Sep 5	
10) Mar 8-14	Slovenia	36) Sep 6-12	
11) Mar 15-21	Luxembourg	37) Sep 13-19	
12) Mar 22-28		38) Sep 20-26	Belgium
13) Mar 29- Apr 4		39) Sep 27-Oct 3	United Kingdom
14) Apr 5-11	Malta	40) Oct 4-10	Portugal
15) Apr 12-18	Czech Republic	41) Oct 11-17	EU Autumn focus week (tbc)
16) Apr 19-25		42) Oct 18-24	Cyprus
17) Apr 26- May 2		43) Oct 25-31	Sweden
18) May 3-9		44) Nov 1-7	Denmark
19) May 10-16		45) Nov 8-14	Greece
20) May 17-23		46) Nov 15-21	Italy
21) May 24-30	EU Spring focus week	47) Nov 22-28	
22) May 31-Jun 6	Spain	48) Nov 29-Dec 5	
23) Jun 7-13		49) Dec 6-12	
24) Jun 14-20		50) Dec 13-19	
25) Jun 21-27	Germany	51) Dec 20-26	
26) Jun 28- Jul 4	Poland	52) Dec 27-Jan 2	