

European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

2007/0278(COD) - 12/12/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to designate 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council

BACKGROUND: an estimated 78 million people are currently living at risk of poverty in the EU. Deep poverty continues to cause concern and the number of people suffering from absolute poverty has increased. The fight against poverty and social exclusion is a core objective of the EU. Indeed, the 2000 Lisbon Strategy calls upon the Commission to tackle policies that have a “decisive impact on the eradication of poverty” by 2010. The European Commission’s “Social Reality Stocktaking Consultation”, begun in 2006, is a sign of the importance the Commission attaches to addressing old and new forms of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. In its 2005-2010 Social Agenda, the Commission announced a proposal to designate 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion to complement action being undertaken under the Open Method of Coordination.

CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal is to designate 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion. It intends to reaffirm and strengthen the initial political commitment, made in Lisbon 2000, to make a “decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”. The European Year should raise public awareness of poverty and exclusion in Europe as well as conveying the message that poverty and exclusion are disruptive to social and economic development. In designating 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, the EU will be reaffirming its commitment to solidarity, social justice and greater cohesion. The proposed budget is **17 million EUR** over the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2010 (for further details, please refer to Financial Statement).

Four **specific objectives** are foreseen. They are:

- **recognition:** recognising the rights of those living in poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society;
- **ownership:** increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions as well as emphasising everyone’s responsibility to tackle both poverty and marginalisation;
- **cohesion:** promoting a more cohesive society, by raising public awareness of the social benefits to eradicating poverty; and
- **commitment:** reiterating the EU’s commitment to fight poverty and social exclusion.

Actions: Actions on a Community scale (as set out in part I of the Annex) may be subsidised up to 80% or give rise to procurement contracts financed from the general budget of the EU. This will include, for example, organising solidarity actions relating to poverty alleviation and social inclusion; the development of a logo for the European Year; an information campaign at a Community level with a national level etc. Actions at local, regional or national level may be co-financed from the general budget of the EU by up to a maximum of 50% of the total eligible costs of the actions implemented in accordance with the procedure set out in part II of the Annex. These types of actions will include mutual learning seminars or other events connected to the preparation of EU-level initiatives such as the yearly European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The year will focus on a number of themes including:

1. child poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty;
2. an inclusive labour market;
3. lack of access to education and training;
4. the gender dimension of poverty;
5. access to basic services;
6. overcoming discrimination and promoting the integration of immigrants and the social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities; and
7. addressing the needs of disabled people and other vulnerable groups.

Implementation: The themes will be adapted by the Member States as well as by regional and local governments. The proposal provides for a Committee, made up of Member State representatives, in order to assist the Commission in the implementation of activities relating to the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion. Each Member State will be asked to submit a national Programme for implementing the European Year. These Programmes will incorporate the overall objectives and essential principles as defined in the Decision establishing the European Year and as developed in the Strategic Framework Document. National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) as well as the National Advisory Groups (NAG) will also play a crucial role in the implementation of the core themes.

At a European level the designated year should offer added value by:

- raising overall public awareness of the causes, prevalence and multiple facets of poverty in today's Europe. The European social model will be highlighted and its achievements emphasised;
- stimulating a debate on ways to include those excluded in society as a whole and to allow a broader range of stakeholders to become involved in expressing their views on how to tackle poverty and exclusion, how to publicise their actions; and on how to reinforce and exchange concrete proposals on this issue;
- promoting a more cohesive society and fostering stronger links and synergies with EU initiatives and programmes, including the Structural Funds;
- ensuring a strong political commitment on the part of EU actors to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, in continuity with commitments entered into under the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

Participating countries: The European Year will be open to the Member States; candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy; the countries of the western Balkans; EFTA States that are parties to the EEA Agreement; and those countries participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The Commission will also work closely with other international organisations such as the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations.

Follow-up: The Commission will submit a report to the Council and the European Parliament by 31 December 2011 on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the actions.