

European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

2007/0278(COD) - 17/06/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 635 votes to 29, with 10 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending, under 1st reading of the codecision procedure, the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Marie **PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU** (EPP-ED, EL) on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

The European Parliament did not follow the text adopted by the committee responsible. It adopted a number of new compromise amendments incorporating the position of the following political groups: EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL. These amendments can be summarised as follows:

Objectives and Guiding Principles: the Parliament states that the objectives and guiding principles of the European Year shall be as follows:

(a) **Recognition of Rights:** Parliament believes that it is necessary to recognise the fundamental right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society. The European Year will increase public awareness of the situation of people experiencing poverty, particularly that of groups or persons in vulnerable situations, and will help to promote their effective access to social, economic and cultural rights as well as to sufficient resources and quality services. The European Year will also help to combat stereotypes and stigmatisation;

(b) **Shared responsibility and participation:** Parliament insists on increased public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising both collective and individual responsibility in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, as well as the importance of promoting and supporting voluntary activities. The European Year will promote the involvement of public and private actors, inter alia through pro-active partnerships. It will foster awareness and engagement and create opportunities for contributions by all citizens, in particular people with direct or indirect experience of poverty;

(c) **Cohesion:** Parliament aims to promote a more cohesive society by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society where poverty is eradicated, fair distribution is supported and no-one is marginalised. The European Year will foster a society that sustains and develops quality of life, including quality of skills and employment, social well-being, including the well-being of children, and equal opportunities for all. It will, moreover, ensure sustainable development and solidarity between and within generations and policy coherence with EU action worldwide;

(d) **Commitment and concrete action:** Parliament reiterates the strong political commitment of the EU and the Member States to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion and promoting this commitment and actions at all levels of governance. Building upon the achievements and potential of the OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the European Year will strengthen the political commitment, by focusing political attention and mobilising all interested parties, to the prevention of and fight against poverty and social exclusion and give further impetus to the Member States' and the European Union's action in this field.

When implementing these objectives, the Community and the Member States should take into account the priorities listed in Part IV of the Annex.

Content of actions: Parliament stresses that the actions at Community and national level designed to meet the objectives may include the following in particular:

- a) meetings and events;
- b) information, promotional and educational campaigns;
- c) surveys and studies on a Community or nationwide scale, based on gender-disaggregated data collection where appropriate .

All actions addressed to a wider public should be easily accessible to all, including people experiencing poverty and people with disabilities.

Gender mainstreaming: the Parliament insists that the European Year shall take into account the different risks and dimensions of poverty and social exclusion experienced by women and men. The Community and the Member States should take account of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the European Year.

Implementation: the European Parliament asks the Commission to conduct a regular exchange of views with stakeholders including those working with people living in poverty, particularly at European level, on the design, implementation, follow-up and assessment of the European Year. The European Commission shall, as appropriate, cooperate with other EU institutions, bodies and agencies.

The National Implementing Body shall closely consult and cooperate with a broad range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and organisations defending or representing the interests of those who experience poverty and social exclusion, the social partners, and regional and local authorities. This collaboration shall intervene when discussing and implementing the various actions of the European Year.

Report: the Parliament calls for the report envisaged by the Decision to contain information concerning the upholding of the principle of equality between the sexes in the course of the European Year, as well as an assessment of the way in which the European Year has been of benefit to vulnerable groups.

Financial envelope: MEPs confirm the envelope proposed by the Commission of EUR 17 million (EUR 6.5 million of which shall be for 2009).

Annexes: lastly, the European Parliament includes a series of amendments to the annexes to the proposed decision. It insists in particular on Annex IV concerning the priorities for the European Year Activities. The European Year should focus around the following themes:

- promoting multidimensional integrated strategies to prevent and reduce poverty, in particular severe poverty, and approaches which would be mainstreamed across all relevant policy areas;
- fighting child poverty including the intergenerational transmission of poverty as well as poverty within families, paying special attention to large families, single parents and families caring for a dependent person, as well as poverty experienced by children in institutions ;
- promoting inclusive labour markets, addressing in-work poverty and the need to make work pay;

- eradicating disadvantages in education and training, including digital literacy training and promoting equal access for all to ICTs, with particular focus on the specific needs of disabled people;
- tackling the gender and age dimensions of poverty;
- ensuring equal access to adequate resources and services, including decent accommodation, health and social protection;
- facilitating access to culture and leisure opportunities;
- overcoming discrimination and promoting the social inclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities;
- promoting integrated approaches to active inclusion;
- addressing the needs of people with disabilities and their families, the homeless, as well as other groups or persons in vulnerable situations.