

engage

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF SOCIAL PLATFORM, AN ALLIANCE OF 43 NGO NETWORKS FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EUROPE

Conny Reuter (right), President of Social Platform, meets Herman Van Rompuy (left), President of the European Council, to outline the view of social civil society organisations on the Europe 2020 strategy and the Integrated Guidelines (May 2010)

Source: European Council

Our top three achievements

- 1 **March 2010:** Heads of state decide on the outline of the Europe 2020 strategy, recognising social inclusion as a priority
- 2 **March 2010:** Platform publishes the results of a two-year study on how to establish an effective dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations
- 3 **May 2010:** Together with its Spring Alliance partners, Social Platform meets Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, to discuss the Europe 2020 strategy and the Integrated Guidelines

What's next on the agenda

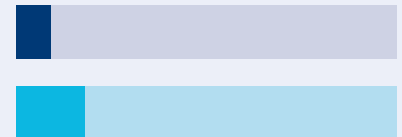
- 1 **June 2010:** Heads of State decide on the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, including a target to reduce poverty
- 2 **End 2010:** Platform organises visits to Hungary and Latvia to strengthen links between local civil society and European NGO networks



Did you know...

Only 9% of Europeans with disabilities go to University, compared to 18% of able-bodied Europeans

Source: Eurostat



What's happened, what's coming up

2010

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

★ **Europe 2020 proposal released**

Commission publishes its proposal for the Europe 2020 strategy (March 3)

What's this?

● **Platform publication on Civil Dialogue released**

Social Platform publishes a booklet based on the results of a two-year study on how to establish an effective dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations (March 3)

★ **Meeting of Social Affairs ministers**

EU Social Affairs ministers meet to debate the Europe 2020 strategy (March 8-9)

What's this?

● **Platform urges poverty reduction commitment**

Social Platform calls on EU leaders, deciding on the Europe 2020 strategy, to commit to reduce poverty by 25% by the end of the decade (March 22)

What's this?

★ **Spring Council**

Heads of state decide on the outline of the Europe 2020 strategy, recognising social inclusion as a priority (March 25-26)

What's this?

● **Platform calls for more emphasis on social inclusion**

Writing to President Barroso and the Commissioners, Social Platform outlines six proposals to strengthen the Integrated Guidelines (April 19)

What's this?

● **Platform holds its General Assembly**

Catherine Day, Secretary-General of the Commission, debates with Platform members on the Europe 2020 Strategy (April 22)

What's this?

★ **Integrated Guidelines proposal released**

The Commission publishes its proposal for broad guidelines on economic policy and employment (April 27)

What's this?

★ **EU ministers agree financial support for Greece**

A three-year financial support package worth 110 billion EUR is agreed to help the struggling Greek economy (May 2)

● **Platform calls for effective action to achieve EU poverty target**

Social Platform writes to EU leaders, urging them to follow the Commission's proposal for achieving the Europe 2020 target on poverty reduction (May 3)

What's this?

★ **EU leaders discuss Greek crisis**

At a special summit, heads of state of Eurozone countries discuss the Greek financial crisis and its impact on the Euro (May 7)

● **Social Platform meets President Van Rompuy**

Together with its Spring Alliance partners, Social Platform meets the President of the European Council to put forward its view on the Europe 2020 strategy and the Integrated Guidelines (May 11)

What's this?

● **Platform meets Spanish Equality minister**

Ahead of the June council on employment and social affairs, Platform meets Bibiana Aído to discuss progress on anti-discrimination laws (May 11)

What's this?

★ **Meeting of Social Affairs ministers**

Social Affairs Ministers decide on the European employment strategy and the Integrated Guidelines (June 7-8)

What's this?

★ **European Council**

Heads of State decide on the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, including a target to reduce poverty (June 17-18)

What's this?

● **Platform meets Commissioners**

Social Platform holds its bi-annual meeting with the Commission, putting forward its proposals to Vice President Reding and Commissioner Andor (June 22)

★ **Belgian presidency starts**

The six-month Belgian presidency of the EU begins (July 1)

● **Platform meets Social Affairs ministers**

Social Platform participates at the Informal Employment and Social Affairs Council in Brussels (July 8-9)

● **Platform study visit**

Ahead of the Hungarian presidency, Social Platform organises a visit to Hungary to strengthen links between local civil society and European NGO networks (September 15-16)

What's this?

The Europe 2020 strategy

The Europe 2020 strategy is a vision for where the European Union should be in 2020. It aims to deliver greener and socially inclusive growth.

Source: European Commission

Integrated Guidelines

The Integrated Guidelines are a core element of the Europe 2020 strategy. Consisting of six guidelines on economic policy and four on employment policy, they lay out how member states can implement the Europe 2020 goals.

The five-minute interview

René Kneip, President, FEANTSA



Who are you?

I'm a social worker who holds the position of Social Director of Caritas Accueil et Solidarité, part of Caritas Luxembourg. I'm also President of FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless.

How and why did you get involved in the NGO movement?

When I was 18, I spent a year in the US as an exchange student. It gave me a real culture shock, exposing me to different values, different ways of thinking. I discovered how important it was to improve tolerance and openness towards foreign cultures. I came back to Luxembourg and took a job helping disadvantaged young men from different cultural and social backgrounds to reintegrate into society. We set up schemes to help them find work (and trained them to keep it) as well as housing. I do a similar job today, but at a wider level.

What's your biggest achievement?

My work on developing ETHOS, the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. Ten years ago, there was no consensus on what it actually meant to be homeless. How could we count the number

of homeless people? How could we tackle the problem? So in 1999 at FEANTSA we started research on ETHOS. It lays out clear categories and sub-categories for homelessness; it's now become the worldwide reference, used by governments and EU bodies like the Social Protection Committee.

What's your next battle?

FEANTSA's Ending Homelessness campaign. This is a continuity of the 2008 written declaration of the European Parliament, which calls for an end to street homelessness by 2015. Also, in December 2010 in Brussels we'll be holding the first ever consensus conference on homelessness, to agree a common approach on how to end it.

Name one thing we could all do today to improve European society.

Again, we need to have more tolerance and openness. The next time you hear someone saying "foreigners take our jobs, send them back to their own countries", step in and correct them because it's simply not the case.

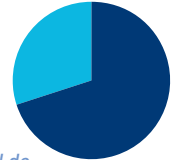
Marchers in Lithuania's first gay pride parade in Vilnius. Homosexuality is still largely taboo in the country; the event was initially banned by a court on security concerns, but was then allowed to go ahead (May 8, 2010)

Source: ILGA-Europe



Did you know...

30% of people in single-parent families in France live below the poverty line



Source: Institute National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques



1 in 17 EU citizens believes it's "very or fairly likely" that they might be forced by financial circumstances to leave their accommodation within the next 12 months

Source: Eurobarometer, March 2010

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Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 43 pan-European networks of NGOs, Social Platform campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

Social Platform acknowledges the financial support of the European Commission. This publication reflects the author's views. The Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained in this publication. Published in May 2010

