



Europe 2020 strategy / June European Council

Open letter to the President of the European Council and to Heads of State and Government

June 10, 2010

Re: Take a step towards eradicating poverty in the EU: adopt the headline target of 25% EU poverty reduction and the Integrated Guideline 10

Dear President,
Dear Heads of State and Government,

During the European Council on June 17-18 in Brussels, half way through the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, you will adopt the Europe 2020 strategy together with the corresponding Employment Guidelines.

The economic crisis has the greatest impact on those people in Europe who are most in need. At the same time, the "restructuring plans" of EU countries are leading to cuts in social investments which further increase their hardship.

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Our members include organizations working with or representing the marginalized and socially excluded. They therefore have valuable grassroots expertise to contribute to the kind of EU level political and economic decisions that you will make at the European Council.

We call on you to:

- **Maintain the 25% poverty reduction target based on the relative poverty indicator** (as proposed by the Commission on March 3) as a first significant step towards the eradication of poverty within the EU. Ensure that member states will use the full set of indicators measuring poverty as endorsed by the Laeken European Council of December 2001.
- **Adopt the Integrated Guideline 10:** 'Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty' in the latest version, as proposed by the Social Protection Committee (see annex 1).
- **Ensure that partnership with civil society organizations** becomes best practice in the implementation of Europe 2020 strategy, as stated in recital 14 of the proposal for Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies (see Annex 2), together with monitoring and evaluation processes.

We hope that we can count on your support that the decisions that you will take at the European Council will put the well being of the people of Europe first.

Yours sincerely,



Conny Reuter
President



Pierre Baussand
Acting Director

ANNEX 1

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY SPC contribution

Guideline 10: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

Member States' efforts to prevent and reduce poverty, including through the extension of employment opportunities as an essential aspect of an integrated strategy, should be aimed at promoting full participation in society and economy. Full use of the European Social Fund should be made to that end. Efforts should also concentrate on ensuring equal opportunities, including through access for all to high quality, affordable and sustainable services, in particular in the social field, housing and health care. Public services (including online services, in line with guideline 4), play an important role in this respect. Member States should put in place effective anti-discrimination measures. Empowering people and promoting labour market participation for those furthest away from the labour market while preventing in-work poverty will help to fight social exclusion. This would require the enhancing of social protection systems, lifelong learning and comprehensive active inclusion strategies to create opportunities at different stages of people's lives and shield them from the risk of exclusion, with special attention to women. Social security and pension systems should be modernised so that they can be fully deployed to ensure adequate income support and access to health and long-term care — thus providing social cohesion — whilst remaining financially sustainable and encouraging participation in society and in the labour market. Benefit systems should focus on ensuring income security during transitions and reducing poverty, in particular among groups most at risk from social exclusion, such as one-parent families, minorities, including the Roma, people with disabilities, children and young people, elderly women and men, legal migrants, homeless. Member States should also actively promote the social economy and social innovation in support of the most vulnerable. All measures should also aim at promoting gender equality.

ANNEX 2

COUNCIL DECISION on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines

(14) While these guidelines are addressed to Member States, the Europe 2020 strategy should be implemented in partnership with all national, regional and local authorities, closely associating parliaments, as well as social partners and representatives of civil society, who shall contribute to the elaboration of national reform programmes, to their implementation and to the overall communication on the strategy.