



Europe 2020 / June European Council

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

May 3, 2010

Re: Base the headline target of 25% poverty reduction in Europe by 2020 on the relative poverty indicator proposed by the Commission

Dear President,
Dear Heads of State and Government,

On March 26, you agreed on the Europe 2020 strategy, and identified social inclusion as one of the key objectives for the EU. Social Platform – which represents 43 pan-European networks of social NGOs – welcomes your commitment to adopt a target on poverty reduction during the June summit as one of the five headline targets for the strategy.

Poverty and social exclusion amounts to a daily violation of human dignity and fundamental rights, and should not be tolerated in one of the richest regions of the world. Adopting an ambitious target for poverty reduction would be an important step towards its eradication.

On the poverty reduction target of 25%, we call on you to use the indicator proposed by the Commission, i.e. the relative poverty indicator or 60% of median income, for the following reasons:

- It **sets the reality of poverty within the context of each member state**, as it reflects an understanding of poverty as a relative condition. When the at-risk-of-poverty thresholds are applied to income levels in each member state, the results are generally consistent with public perceptions of the extent of poverty in each country. This in turn makes cross-country comparisons feasible and credible.
- It has been accepted as the main headline poverty indicator since the development of common EU indicators to measure poverty and social exclusion, and **endorsed by the Laeken European Council in December 2001**. The full set of “Laeken” indicators has subsequently been added to and deepened, including new material deprivation indications. Its adoption as a headline target will not diminish the need for the application of this full set of indicators to ensure more comprehensive monitoring of the reality of poverty, social exclusion and inequalities at national and EU level.

- It has been **used for years in many EU processes** (like the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion, and the EU Sustainable Development strategy) and institutions (like Eurostat) to quantify poverty in Europe

We hope we can count on your support during the June summit.

Yours sincerely,



Conny Reuter
President



Roshan Di Puppò
Director