



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme
Europäisches Netz gegen Rassismus

2010 BUILDING A
EUROPE FOR ALL
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EVERY PERSON MATTERS - ENDING POVERTY FOR ALL

ENAR messages for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

Despite the fact that the European Union and its Member States have committed to making “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”, a significant proportion of the European population still lives in destitution and has no access to basic services. 80 million Europeans, i.e. 16% of the EU population, are at risk of poverty. Members of ethnic and religious minorities including migrants are especially exposed to this risk.

The 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion comes at an opportune time, just as the EU is discussing its strategy for the next decade (EU 2020). In addition, the current context of severe economic downturn makes it all the more urgent to address issues of poverty and social exclusion. In some EU countries, groups are falling into poverty because the state cannot provide for their needs anymore. The crisis, combined with the rise of far-right political influence, significantly increases the risk of members of ethnic and religious minorities, including migrants, being excluded and used as scapegoats.

In this context, the key objectives of the Year are to raise public awareness about these issues and renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion. The Year also aims to challenge stereotypes and collective perceptions of poverty. Therefore ENAR expects the year 2010 to:

1. Raise public awareness on the link between discrimination and exclusion

If the 2010 European Year is to effectively contribute to a decisive impact on eradicating poverty and social exclusion, it must address the link between discrimination and exclusion as well the impact of legal status on situations of exclusion, particularly in the case of migrants, refugees/asylum-seekers and Roma, Travellers and Sinti. It is indeed **crucial to reaffirm that poverty and social exclusion are also caused by structural inequalities and discrimination**, particularly in the fields of employment, education and housing. The year should promote equal treatment in education, employment, access to basic services and social assistance for all, irrespective of legal status. An **awareness raising campaign about the socio-economic rights of all persons residing in Europe** should be integrated in the year, as people living in poverty and suffering from discrimination are not always aware of their rights and how to claim them.

We expect the year to **raise awareness of the situation of disadvantaged ethnic and religious minorities and migrants experiencing poverty and social exclusion**. There should be a clear understanding and recognition that ethnic minorities are at a more serious risk of becoming socially excluded. However, victimisation should be avoided, and poverty should not be seen as an ethnic problem. Awareness raising should also focus on social solidarity, highlighting good practice examples of creative initiatives developed by migrant communities to get out of poverty.

2. Generate policy change addressing the needs of ethnic and religious minorities including migrants

- **Adopt a new overarching EU strategy that places the human dimension, equality, anti-discrimination and social cohesion at its heart**

We hope the Year will provide momentum to generate policy change, in particular in the framework of the post-Lisbon strategy reflection that will have a real impact on fighting inequalities. **ENAR calls the European Commission and Member States to adopt a new strategy for the EU 2020 based on fundamental rights, with a strong social pillar that places the human dimension, equality, anti-discrimination and social cohesion at its heart.**

Social and sustainable development, fundamental rights and equality should be essential pillars of the new strategy. Legislation, policy strategies and instruments proposed in the framework of the EU 2020 strategy will only be successful if they are coherent with these societal realities - growing inequalities, structural discrimination, erosion of fundamental social rights - and recognise the general trend across Europe which sees the need for interventions to enable those most disadvantaged to escape poverty and social exclusion. **ENAR strongly believes that a new social vision of how to best advance the well-being of all in our diverse societies must take into account the needs and experiences of communities across Europe that are vulnerable to racism and discrimination.**

Basic principles and policy commitments should be accompanied by **indicators which can measure the impact of policies on the most excluded including migrants and ethnic and religious minorities.** Statistics can reveal inequalities and can measure the impact of strategies put in place to overcome these inequalities. Monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic & religious minorities is one of the most effective ways for ensuring that the EU 2020 strategy improves their socio-economic life². ENAR calls on the EU

² The social and employment dimensions of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, What are the opportunities for monitoring and improving the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities?, ENAR, December 2009.

institutions to ensure better monitoring in the framework of the EU strategy, which should be accompanied by the setting of ambitious targets in the field of social inclusion and employment at the EU and national level. The Open Method of Coordination should be strengthened, with agreed specific, quantifiable objectives which each Member State is bound to respect.

Furthermore, the EU and its Member States will have to **ensure that the objectives of inclusion of ethnic & religious minorities, including migrants, and non-discrimination are mainstreamed in all relevant EU policies**, including in health, housing and education.

- **Develop specific policies to address the needs of communities vulnerable to racism and discrimination**

Specific policies to address the needs of ethnic and religious minority and migrant communities experiencing poverty and social exclusion must be developed, with **particular attention to those vulnerable to intersectional discrimination**, and especially women, children and the elderly. Reducing inequalities and preventing social exclusion will require inter alia **strengthening minimum income schemes, and guaranteeing equal access to quality universal services and social protection systems for all.**

Specific policy actions should include, inter alia:

- **De-linking migration control procedures to the access of basic social services**
- **Increasing diversity in the staff of public authorities and social services to help them get closer to minorities, better integrate their needs and fight against their exclusion**
- **Strengthening migrants and minorities' organisations, and consult them for policy making on matters pertaining to them**
- **Financing research and projects on the link between discrimination and poverty**