



## **Response of the European Network against Racism (ENAR)**

### **Proposal by the European Commission to designate 2010 as the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

#### **Questionnaire Response**

**May 2007**

*The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a network of some 600 European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. Its establishment was a major outcome of the 1997 European Year against Racism. ENAR is determined to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national initiatives with European initiatives. Further information is available at: [www.enar-eu.org](http://www.enar-eu.org)*

ENAR strongly believes that if the 2010 European Year is to effectively follow-up the processes of the Lisbon Strategy and contribute to a decisive impact on eradicating poverty and social exclusion it must address the link between exclusion and discrimination. Similarly, addressing the impact of legal status on situations of exclusion is also of key importance, particularly in the case of migrants, refugees/asylum-seekers and Roma, Travellers and Sinti. Finally, in order to accurately reflect the experiences of those most directly affected and to address their needs in overcoming poverty and social exclusion, it is imperative that the Year is developed on the principle of full and meaningful participation, including inclusive national implementing bodies.

In the following response ENAR addresses those questions which are of most central relevance to our mandate. This response does not seek to address every question raised by the European Commission in detail.

ENAR is a member of the European Anti-Poverty Network, and consequently fully supports the response of EAPN to this consultation.

#### A. WHAT? OBJECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR

***1. Taking into account the results achieved so far by the European strategy to fight poverty and social exclusion, what are the main challenges/obstacles still to be addressed across the EU in combating poverty and social exclusion? How could the European Year highlight these? What should the Year's objectives be?***

Key Challenges and Objectives for the Year should include:

**Awareness-Raising:**

- Raising awareness among policy-makers, service providers and the general public of the causes, prevalence and multiple faces of poverty as well as dispelling common stereotypes and myths about those experiencing poverty
- Raising awareness of rights and policy tools available, including on the EU anti-discrimination framework.

**General Policy Development:**

- Moving beyond the basic labour market definition to promoting inclusion that is not just about fighting poverty but that applies to everyone, includes rights, equality and anti-discrimination, provides the opportunity to participate economically, culturally, socially and politically and reaches the outcome of a good quality of life, which implies minimum social standards
- Promoting a holistic, coherent policy approach to the fight against poverty and social exclusion which includes mainstreaming equality and social inclusion considerations beyond specific policy areas to all related policy areas, creating policy synergies among these related areas and avoiding conflicting policies

### **Addressing the link between discrimination and exclusion:**

- Reaffirming that poverty and social exclusion are also caused by structural inequalities and discrimination, raising awareness of and developing specific policy mechanisms to address this relationship
- Similarly, fighting poverty and social exclusion faced by ethnic and religious minority and migrant communities by developing precise and targeted policies. Not only are these groups more likely to experience exclusion, but experiences of exclusion are often more severe or extreme (specific policy recommendations from the final report of ENAR's *Ad Hoc expert group on social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged ethnic and religious minorities*<sup>1</sup> are available at: [http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/SOCIAL\\_INCLUSION/index.shtml](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/SOCIAL_INCLUSION/index.shtml))
- Furthermore, developing specific approaches tailored to the needs of groups vulnerable to discrimination, with particular attention to those vulnerable to intersectional discrimination such as for example, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, women, people with disabilities, and the elderly, as they are also among the most vulnerable to social exclusion
- Of particular importance to migrants, refugees/asylum-seekers and Roma, is the need to address the impact of legal status on situations of social exclusion, and to promote inclusion policies that are disassociated from legal status

### **Strengthening participation, ownership and political will:**

- Building ownership of and encouraging partnership on the fight against poverty and social exclusion among and between EU institutions, Member States, regional and local bodies, social partners, civil society and the general public
- promoting the full and meaningful participation of those most directly affected by poverty and social inclusion and the civil society organisations that represent them, by strengthening frameworks in such a way as to have them foster input, engagement and power-sharing in the decision-making process, as well as to overcome the barriers to participation that these specific groups may face
- In particular, the Year should be used to secure a real political commitment on the part of Member States to eradicate poverty and social exclusion in implementing the common objectives in a meaningful way

### ***2. How can the Year contribute to reiterate and strengthen the political commitment of the European Union and its Member States to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, and in particular to the preparation, in 2011, of a follow-up to the previous cycle of the Open Method of Coordination?***

In preparation of a follow-up to the previous cycle of the OMC, it is necessary to thoroughly take stock of what progress has been made (including examining exchanges of good practice), where progress remains to be made and what impact the processes of the Lisbon strategy have had on the situation of poverty and social exclusion since 2000. This process must be completed in advance of the 2010 year and with the participation of those affected so as to accurately reflect their experiences and to fully optimise on the year as an opportunity for moving forward.

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<sup>1</sup> On 15 and 16 March ENAR brought together key ENAR members, policy-makers and external experts from across the EU, to develop a working definition of social and economic inclusion, identify those barriers to inclusion which EU action can be effective in overcoming and clarify ENAR's future advocacy priorities in this area.

As mentioned in the objectives, ENAR believes that there is a need to promote a holistic, coherent policy approach which includes mainstreaming equality and social inclusion considerations beyond specific policy areas to all related policy areas, creating policy synergies among these related areas and avoiding conflicting policies. In this respect, ENAR supports the specific recommendations of the EAPN towards refreshing and linking the parallel processes of the Lisbon strategy. Mechanisms should be established to create synergies by strengthening the feeding-in process between the National Reform Programmes on Growth and Jobs and the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion.

We feel that the following suggestions on implementation made by the EAPN are particularly useful in this regard:

- Linking the NAP Inclusion process to the NRP more dynamically and ensuring a link to Structural Funds
- Revising the integrated guidelines for the NRP's to better support the NAPs Inclusion and to reflect throughout the role of the Lisbon Strategy in eradicating poverty and social inclusion
- Establishing cross cutting working parties involving all government departments.
- Involving national parliaments through the development of pilot Parliamentary Committees and Working Groups.
- Developing pilot regional and local action plans for social inclusion
- Broadening civil society participation including the participation of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion at all levels
- Developing a participative process model, tools and instruments which promote stakeholder involvement in a process to appraise new legislative proposals/ scrutinise the account taken of social impact assessments and assess the social impact once legislation is introduced.

***3. How can it draw most effectively on all lessons learnt in the context of implementing the OMC up until today, and also upon previous European Years and on other initiatives such as for example the gender equality roadmap and the European Youth Pact?***

As a major outcome of the 1997 European Year against Racism, ENAR is extremely conscious of the potential impact of these types of initiatives, and the lessons which can be drawn from them. ENAR recognises that there has been a 'proliferation' of European years over the last decade, however we remain convinced that such initiatives hold great value, and have the potential to contribute to real change. Drawing on our experience of the 1997 and 2007 years, as well as the preparation for the 2008 European Year on Intercultural Dialogue ENAR would emphasis the following criteria:

- The ambitions of the Year should be matched by appropriate funding and resources at both the national and European level.
- Awareness raising can be a key outcome, but particular attention must be given the awareness raising tools. In particular centrally led, consultant driven awareness campaigns have been criticised in previous Years for failing to reach their targets.
- Strong national implementation, with proactive strategies, need to be centrally monitored in order to ensure that they meet the overall objectives of the Year. The European Committee and the Commission should be in a position to comment on, and amend national plans.
- An emphasis on supporting local level, small scale, innovative initiatives, will help to ensure that the Year has an impact on those who directly experience discrimination and poverty.

- The Year should provide momentum in order to generate policy change. The European Commission should identify specific policy initiatives and activities which it envisages as outcomes of the Year.
- Adequate preparation is essential in the preparation of the Year, at both the national and European levels sufficient lead in time should be designated in order to fully ensure that the objectives of the Year will be reached in the most inclusive way possible.

**5. *In relation to the above-mentioned objectives, what do you see as the key message(s) of the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion? And how can this key message(s) be best communicated?***

Key messages should be aimed at both awareness-raising and the promotion of further policy development in this area. Preparation in advance of the Year should include consultation with and meaningful participation by key stakeholders to ensure that messages accurately reflect the needs and experiences of those most directly affected. However ENAR, in its experience consulting with ethnic and religious minorities and migrants, believes that key messages for these campaigns may include:

- The multiple faces and voices of poverty and social exclusion – testimonies and narratives may be useful in raising awareness of these elements as well as in dispelling stereotypes and myths concerning those experiencing poverty (of interest as a model may be the recent project by ECRE on ‘refugee stories’: <http://www.ecre.org/refugeestories/>)
- Reinforcing how anti-discrimination and equality underpins social inclusion – In so far as these are important prerequisites for social inclusion and cohesion, mechanisms to ensure these prerequisites (such as equality mainstreaming, participation of those most affected and rights-based approaches) must be included in the formation and implementation of policies to fight poverty and social exclusion
- The situation of poverty and social inclusion from Lisbon and beyond – what progress has been made since 2000 (tools, policies, impact), and what remains to be done, with a specific emphasis on steps forward
- EU Social cohesion and the European Social Model depend on the successful fight against poverty and social exclusion, and the promotion of social inclusion for all which is a collective responsibility on the part of Member States, policy-makers, public and private actors and the general public

As in previous European years, a communication toolkit (including posters, a website, slogans, and a logo) may be useful in conveying key messages and creating visibility. However, planning should include a careful analysis of the needs and access of target audiences (for example the internet may not be widely accessible to those experiencing poverty and social exclusion). Resources should be allotted so as to effectively reach as many people as possible. This may include developing a EU logo that can also be made nationally specific and the decision to forgo producing some promotional items (pens, pads of paper, lanyards, etc.) in favour of developing specific communication mechanisms targeted at overcoming difficulties associated with access for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Communication methods should include a balance of action at the EU and national levels utilising various forms of public media (ie. print, TV, radio) as well as more extensive actions such as documentaries or short films showcasing narratives/testimonies and events that focus on interaction between key actors and stakeholders. These actions can be made to be complimentary by focusing on documenting the current situation, its evolution since 2000 and most importantly, how best to move forward. These are topics which are relevant to and on which all key actors and stakeholders can participate and collaborate.

## **B. WHO? INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### ***1. How would you like the Year to involve your particular organisation?***

ENAR is a network of European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states. Its establishment was a major outcome of the 1997 European Year Against Racism. ENAR aims to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national initiatives with European initiatives.

In the planning and implementation of the actions and events for the year, ENAR looks forward to representing the situation of disadvantaged ethnic and religious minorities and migrants experiencing poverty and social exclusion. ENAR is particularly well-placed to consult with minorities and migrants concerning how they are affected by poverty and social exclusion and to contribute to the year, specifically in providing information on structural inequality and discrimination as causes of social exclusion.

Furthermore, in its role as a representative of these key vulnerable groups, ENAR welcomes opportunities to collaborate with other civil society organisations focused on poverty and social exclusion in actions aimed at promoting the participation of those most directly affected by these issues. An example of one such action is the National Roundtables that ENAR organised in preparation for the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (explained further below).

### ***2. What mechanisms can ensure that the Year encourages the participation in society of disadvantaged groups?***

**AND**

### ***3. How can the Year best involve – constructively, together – the various stakeholders – people experiencing poverty; NGOs; community groups; social partners; local/regional authorities; service providers; national authorities, citizens in general?***

In order for the Year to accurately reflect and address experiences of poverty and social exclusion, participation of those most directly affected as well as the organisations in which they participate must take place during each stage (planning, implementation, follow-up) and at various levels (EU and national). To ensure that such participation is full and meaningful, mechanisms must be designed in such a way as to foster input, engagement and power-sharing in the decision-making process, as well as to overcome the barriers to participation that these specific groups may face (such as cost).

This participation may take several forms, such as forums or targeted events that bring together and promote dialogue among and between key actors and stakeholders. The National Roundtables that ENAR and its National Coordinations organised in preparation of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All may serve as a useful example in this regard. In addition to events of this nature, ENAR feels very strongly that there is a need for more inclusive National Implementation Bodies. The Irish example below illustrates one way in which this might be achieved.

#### **Specific events – the example of ENAR's National Roundtables:**

The National Roundtables, 17 in total, took place in 2006 in advance of the 2007 Year and brought together NGOs and members of civil society working on anti-racism and anti-

discrimination, and individuals directly affected by these issues, as well as representatives of the National Implementing Bodies (NIB's) and policy-makers. The Roundtables aimed to:

- Promote a constructive dialogue among and between key actors and stakeholders involved in the 2007 Year,
- Inform anti-racist NGOs and, more broadly, NGOs working on the six discrimination grounds about the Year and its objectives, and formulate proposals for action,
- Collect their expectations and opinions about the challenges of the Year according to the national context,
- Provide a space for networking and exchanging ideas between NGOs and the NIB's on possible awareness-raising projects covering different discrimination grounds
- help the ENAR to formulate its ideas and reflections on how to contribute in a meaningful manner to the 2007 European Year for Equal Opportunities for All.

(the final report and more detailed information about this initiative is available at: <http://www.enar-eu.org/en/national/roundtables.shtml>)

### **Inclusive implementing bodies – an Irish example:**

Also in the context of the 2007 Year, the actions of the Irish National Implementing Body (NIB) serve as another example. In addition to a widespread consultation with stakeholders in developing the Irish strategy for the 2007 Year, the equality body in Ireland established an advisory committee to oversee and support the implementation of the strategy. Twelve of the 29 organisations involved in the Committee are from representative organisations for groups which experience discrimination.

## **C. HOW? OVERALL DESIGN, FRAMEWORK AND TYPES OF ACTIONS**

### ***1. What types of actions/initiatives would you consider useful for achieving the objectives of the Year at both EU and national and sub-national levels?***

The following activities may be useful in achieving the objectives of the Year:

- **Information / education campaigns** targeted at relevant audiences covering topics such as of the causes, prevalence and multiple faces of poverty; dispelling common stereotypes and myths; rights and policy tools available; next steps.
- **National Roundtables events** promoting constructive dialogue among and between key actors (policy-makers and National Implementing Bodies) and stakeholders (civil society and those directly affected by poverty and social exclusion).
- **Debates, Policy Seminars/Trainings at European and National levels** focused on evaluating existing tools, their impact on the situation since 2000, and moving forward by finding ways to refresh and renew existing policies and promote better implementation as well as develop proposals for new policy tools.
- **EU-wide comparative studies** documenting and analysing patterns in poverty and social exclusion overtime, as well as exploring the multiple dimensions of poverty and social exclusion (beyond mere economics), in particular their relationship with structural inequalities and discrimination.

### ***2. How can the Year best be framed and steered by the EU level? What kind of support (advice, technical assistance, guidelines, financial, etc) would you expect from the EU level in the implementation of the Year? What about corresponding support from Member State and local/regional level?***

A mix of both centralised and decentralised activities may be useful as the Year should promote policy coherence between and among actors and levels, while also maintaining the flexibility to be able to accommodate national specificities.

In terms of governance, the system used in previous Years seems useful, namely the establishment of an EU level Committee as well as National Implementing Bodies developing policy plans based on common guidelines. In this respect, ENAR asks that the Commission take note of the Irish example from the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (described above in B.2) and strongly encourage the establishment National Implementing Bodies that are inclusive and allow for the full and meaningful participation of those most directly affected by poverty and social exclusion and the civil society organisations which represent them.

The Commission should actively monitor the activities of the national bodies, and in particular their implementation of the European guidelines, and their inclusive participation of people experiencing poverty and the organisations that represent them.

***3. How can the Year link back in the most effective way to existing EU policies and strategies in a wide sense (e.g. gender equality issues; combating discriminations and promoting equal opportunities, etc.) and to results of previous European Years in issues related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion?***

The Year should aim at better highlighting the link between poverty and social exclusion on the one hand, and structural inequalities and discrimination on the other. ENAR's recent *Ad Hoc Expert Group on the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged ethnic and religious minorities* dealt specifically with this issue. (Detailed information about the group and the final report are available at: [http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/SOCIAL\\_INCLUSION/index.shtml](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/SOCIAL_INCLUSION/index.shtml))

The group generated a number of recommendations that may be useful in framing the types of activities listed above (see question C.1) and in particular emphasized the need to:

- Reaffirm that poverty and social exclusion are also caused by structural inequalities and discrimination, raise awareness of and develop specific policy mechanisms to address this relationship
- Fight poverty and social exclusion faced by ethnic and religious minority and migrant communities by developing precise and targeted policies.
- Address the impact of legal status on situations of social exclusion (particularly important in the case of migrants, refugees/asylum-seekers and Roma) and promote inclusion for regardless of legal status
- Promote inclusion that applies to everyone, includes rights, equality and anti-discrimination, provides the opportunity to participate economically, culturally, socially and politically and reaches the outcome of a good quality of life, which implies minimum social standards
- The Year should pay particular attention to the inclusion and integration of migrants, and in this regard it is crucial that DG Freedom, Security and Justice, play an active role in ensuring that the Year is integrated into ongoing work on migration and integration.
- In order to promote the active engagement off the full range of relevant European policy areas, ENAR would recommend the establishment of a DG interservice group to prepare the Year. The group could exchange information regarding, and promote, activities of different European Commission actors in the context of the 2010 Year.