



Combating youth poverty:

It would be enough for everyone, if ...

Youth and European Social Work Forum

DECLARATION

"Europe 2020 is about what we need to do today and tomorrow to get the EU economy back on track. The crisis has exposed fundamental issues and unsustainable trends that we can not ignore any longer. Europe has a growth deficit which is putting our future at risk. We must decisively tackle our weaknesses and exploit our many strengths." said President Barroso about the launch of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

This is a fundamental issue for the whole society which requires a considerable effort in public policy. The 2008 report on social protection and social inclusion emphasises that 78 million citizens in the European Union, 19 million of which are children, are at risk of poverty. The European Union is one of the richest regions on this planet, still 17 % of Europeans have so few resources that they cannot meet their elementary needs.

The current European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion has to be the moment when the European Union reasserts and reinforces the initial commitment made when the Lisbon Strategy was launched with the aim of "making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty".

The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is also closely related to the EU 2020 Strategy targets, in particular to the objective to reduce number of people at risk of poverty by the year 2020. It is the responsibility of all and particularly of the EU Member States to reach these goals.

A key lever in the fight against poverty and the creation of equal opportunities is also anchored in Article 3 of the EU Treaty, in which the social market economy is explicitly mentioned as an EU objective. The social clause in Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU states: "In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health."

We need to constantly remind ourselves of these basic values and goals of the EU and, in particular, when it comes to the specific plight of young people.

Y.E.S. Forum

Wagenburgstr. 26-28, D-70184 Stuttgart

Tel: +49-711-164 89 22, E-mail: yes-info@yes-forum.eu

Through their social and youth work for - and with - young people, through the projects and the actions they implement in their everyday work, the member organisations of the Y.E.S. Forum:

- Contribute to making the voices and the lives of the poor and socially excluded children and young people heard when decisions are taken that affect them;
- Support socially excluded children and young people in developing their own potential and resources;
- Endeavour to secure a greater recognition of the essential role that social work plays in combating poverty, through not considering this work as an economic market activity.

The Y.E.S. Forum member organisations convening for their General Assembly 2010 in Berlin, expressed its support for the aims set by the European Union for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Based on the rich, direct experience of its members the Y.E.S. Forum calls upon the European and national stakeholders to:

- Recognise the fundamental rights of poor and socially excluded people to participate actively in society, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children and young people, and with special attention being paid to social and economical minorities such as Roma and other ethnic minorities;
- Identify and promote participation and the tools of integrative education as a central means of preventing and tackling youth poverty;
- Increase the public's adherence to social inclusion policies, by emphasising the collective responsibility which exists for combating poverty as well as by fostering the commitment of all public and private stakeholders;
- Promote a stronger cohesion in society and emphasise the undoubted advantages that a society without poverty can have for all;
- Assure higher sustainability of and better access to the EU and its national, regional and local funding with greater security for all actors engaged in youth and social work;
- Strengthen opportunities for intercultural dialogue and the fostering of mobility and transnational exchange with the advantages of learning from others and working abroad as a right for all young people.

Y.E.S. Forum General Assembly 2010, Berlin

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