



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social Protection and Integration
Inclusion, Social Policy Aspects of Migration, Streamlining of Social Policies

2010 EUROPEAN YEAR

FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Participatory forum: *Building together a Europe for all, Circus against social exclusion*

18 – 20 October 2010, Halles des Schaerbeek, Brussels

CONCEPT PAPER

1. Background: a strategic moment for the future of social inclusion policies

The October Focus Week participatory forum will take place at a strategic moment for the future of social inclusion policies in Europe.

It will mark the last quarter of the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, as well as the end of DG EMPL's Circus Campaign "*Do you know what Social Europe can do for you?*". Both have contributed to raising awareness and steering debate around the reality of poverty in today's EU and more generally "social Europe", as well as highlighting good practices and calling to action.

In addition, against the backdrop of the worst social crisis in the EU's history, intense debates are expected regarding future action, in particular through the implementation of recovery plans, *Europe 2020* and the *European Platform Against Poverty*. A Communication from the European Commission on the latter is expected during the last quarter of 2010.

2. Objective: providing a space for information, exchange and debates on initiatives to combat poverty in a European context

The Forum will be a space for information, interaction and debate around initiatives to combat poverty and social exclusion in the EU.

Its specificity will lie in its participatory character, its strong focus on innovative projects and ability to involve "unusual" actors. It will also build bridges between the communication and the political facets of the European Year 2010.

More specifically, the forum should:

- inform about policies and programmes supported by the EU;
- highlight examples of initiatives developed in a European context (such as those supported by PROGRESS, structural funds, the EY2010 as well as programmes developed by other DGs);
- foster exchange, mutual learning and promote initiatives between “unusual” actors including stakeholders less traditionally engaged in social inclusion issues;
- provide space for debate, thus preparing the ground for post- EY2010 and the implementation of the Platform Against Poverty. However, developing recommendations will not be the primary focus of this event.

3. Building bridges between participants from various horizons

Up to 400 participants are expected each day, coming from various horizons. Specific focus will be put on involving local partners and audiences, as well as building bridges with actors from various policy areas:

- EU policy- and decision-makers: European Commission, MEPs, Belgian Presidency, EESC, CoR, Council;
- Representatives from EY2010 National Implementing Bodies;
- Key stakeholders (NGOs, social partners, foundations, cooperatives, education actors, corporate sector) and their local partners/members;
- People experiencing poverty and social exclusion;
- Local and regional authorities;
- Public at large, in particular Brussels residents as well as children and young people;
- Media and press.

4. Thematic focus and link with circus projects

A red thread will be the role of circus as a tool for empowerment, which has been central to the *Social Europe* campaign. This will translate in evening performances and daily animations highlighting non formal education projects, as well as in the visual arrangements of the venue.

Yet the overall event will have a broader scope and focus on poverty and social exclusion as multidimensional phenomena. In order to ensure consistency with past and future actions, the following themes will be explored during this event:

- Participation and empowerment – which have been central to actions developed within the OMC as well as the European Year 2010;

- Mainstreaming the fight against poverty, building synergies with other thematic areas at the heart of Europe 2020;
- Thematic priorities which have been at the heart of the Social OMC (some of which have been already announced as being central to the Platform Against Poverty): active inclusion, child poverty, homelessness and housing exclusion, overcoming discrimination and increasing the integration of vulnerable groups, financial inclusion;
- Communication and awareness-raising – key dimensions of the European Year 2010 and the *Social Europe* campaign.

5. Programme

The forum will be organized around a series of information and discussion spaces, which will happen simultaneously (see agenda in ANNEX).

Information stands

Up to 20 ongoing information stands (table, chairs and display of materials) will be available for the various partners to present and promote their activities. Priority for the use of stands will be given to members of the EU stakeholder expert group and their local partners, other EU institutions, as well as DGs involved in the event.

A specific stand will be devoted to the EY2010 and highlight examples of projects and documentation provided by NIBs. The stand will also feature video materials developed for the EY2010.

Thematic workshops

One hour workshops will provide an opportunity to present and debate EU actions and programmes, in particular in the context of *Europe 2020* and the *Platform against Poverty*. Interpretation will be provided in EN/FR/NL.

To ensure strong added value vis-à-vis with the Annual Round Table and other events organized during the last quarter of 2010, a strong focus will be put on mainstreaming social inclusion, engaging new actors or strengthening synergies, as well as on discussing EU financial programmes.

The following themes are thus proposed: role of business, environmental challenges and poverty, financial inclusion, social inclusion of migrants, health, education and transition to work.

Each workshop will involve the presentation of an innovative project, which should serve as a starting point for debate. Four types of speakers could be involved in each debate: project promoter or participant, representative from the DG managing the financial programme, NGO or social partner active in the area, representative from EU institution or body.

Open space sessions

Specific space will be devoted to participatory sessions (of up to 30 participants), which will be proposed and organised by partners. Up to 15 such open space sessions can be organised.

The open space sessions may have various objectives (information, awareness-raising, training, debating, exchanging) and can potentially cover the whole scope of issues mentioned above (point 4). Strong focus should be put on exchange and interaction with participants.

Circus performance and animations

Each evening, a circus performance will take place and bring together all participants, as well as be partly open to the public.

It will be mostly composed of sequences performed by non-professionals who took part in education programmes run by the following organizations: Ecole du Cirque de Bruxelles, Cabuwazi (Berlin), Belfast Community Centre (Northern Ireland), Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (Paris), Mêle tes Potes (Bruxelles) (*others still to be added*).

In addition, during the day (and in particular the afternoon of 19 October) the audience will be engaged in interactive animations involving participants in these programmes.

Common dinner with Round Table participants

On 18th October, a dinner will be organized together with the Belgian Presidency, involving participants to the Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion. It will be followed by a circus performance.

6. Preparation

A steering group has been set up, composed of Vincent Wauters (Director of the Brussels Circus' School), Benoît Van Oost (Director, La Maison Du Cirque) and representatives from the European Commission (DG EMPL, E2 and H3).

Representatives from the EU stakeholders experts groups (ESAN, European Micro-Finance Network, European Youth Forum, EY2010 NGO coalition, Social Inclusion Regional Group) are actively involved in the preparation. Other members of the EU stakeholders expert group will be regularly informed and invited to participate.

The Belgian presidency, as well as representatives from the Halles de Schaerbeek, will be actively involved in the preparation.

	Monday 18	Tuesday 19	Wednesday 20			
9.30 - 13.00	<i>Setting up and rehearsal</i>		Thematic workshop Thematic workshop	Thematic workshop Thematic workshop	Open space sessions	
13.30 – 15.30	<i>Setting up and rehearsal</i>	14.30 Opening plenary – Combating poverty in the EU	Thematic workshop	Circus animations	Open space sessions	
15.30 –17.30	<i>Setting up and rehearsal</i>	Open space sessions	Open space sessions	Thematic workshop	Circus animations	Open space sessions
Evening	18.30 Press conference 19.00 Cocktail 19.30 Opening performance 20.30 Dinner with Round Table participants	20.30 Performance (open to public)	17.30 Performance (open to public)			