



MEDIA ALERT



October 17th 2010 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Youth Appeal to Europe

"We have trouble understanding this world but we want to find our place in it"

Brussels - In the framework of the European Year 2010 to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion and to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on Sunday 17th October, a delegation of a hundred young Europeans from several countries will make an "Appeal to each person and to European officials", at the Commemorative Stone in Honour of the Victims of Extreme Poverty on the Esplanade of the European Parliament. This appeal is accompanied by proposals aimed at changing the situation of those who are most excluded.

This appeal is the result of an on-going broad reflection since May 2009 amongst young Europeans gathered by the International Movement ATD Fourth World. The young Europeans come from 10 European countries and have come together where they live, in their cities, in their areas and at national level. This summer during a pan-European meeting, they shared their experiences and opinions, and have collaborated about what positive and negative factors affecting their lives: school, professional training, work, family life, citizenship, violence and discrimination. They went to meet other youth in the streets, in their neighbourhoods, in schools or other associations.

Participants in this forum are between 16 and 30 years old, both men and women, including some with experience of living in extreme poverty and of social exclusion themselves. Others are already working or studying at university, some are young parents. All emphasise the opportunity to come together to think about and produce a common understanding despite differences in terms of culture, language, life experiences and education.

For these youths, taking part in these meetings is about building a Europe, which is not focused on money and economic interests alone, but a Europe that is based on the equal dignity of each person, where everyone has their place and a contribution to make.

The authors of this appeal want to contribute to the construction of a fairer, people-centred Europe. That is what they will declare this 17th October orally to policy makers, institutional leaders of the European Union, in the framework of the Belgian presidency of the EU, in Brussels.

PROGRAMME of the Gathering (access by Rue Belliard 77)

15.00: Welcome

16.00 to 17.00: "Village of tents"

Exhibition – animation – video "Dynamo 2010"

Dialogue between policy makers and European citizens

17.00 to 18.00: Around the Commemorative Stone

Youth Appeal to all people and to the Europeans responsible

Message of the representative delegate of the European Fourth World People's Universities

Musical Finale, together with the International Orchestra of Vetex

Other meetings will take place in cities throughout Europe on the same day. See the website: www.oct17.org

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Please note that this event is being organised by one of the European Commission's partners for the campaign. The views expressed during the event do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.



Background: the need for combating poverty and social exclusion

Each year, the European Union selects a theme of general interest aimed at raising public awareness and drawing national governments' attention to the related issues. Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion was chosen as the focus of the 2010 European Year to mark the 10-year Anniversary of the Lisbon Council when Heads of State and government committed to taking steps to make a decisive impact on the levels of poverty.

The social protection systems in the European Union are amongst the most highly-developed in the world and yet too many Europeans still live in poverty. The many forms this takes are complex, but figures speak for themselves:

- More than 84 million people live below the poverty line (set at 60% of their country's median income). This figure represents 17% of Europe's population.
- One European in ten lives in a household where nobody works.
- For 8% of Europeans, having a job is not enough to avoid poverty.
- Some 19 million children live under the threat of poverty and are disproportionately affected.

Objectives of the European Year:

- To recognize the fundamental right of people affected by poverty and social exclusion and to allow them to live in dignity and to take an active part in society;
- To promote public support for social inclusion policies and foster commitment by all public and private actors;
- To promote a more cohesive society, where it is recognized that society as a whole benefits from combating poverty;
- To renew the pledge of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to involve all stakeholders in the pursuit of that aim.

Actions:

Throughout 2010, several hundred activities are being organized, including awareness campaigns, innovative actions, creative solidarity schemes, discussions, conferences, and competitions, which highlight achievements and promote stories related to poverty and social exclusion. In addition, partnerships have been concluded with major event organisers in Europe, such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the Frankfurt Book Fair and the Perugia International Journalism Festival, to highlight just a few.

These European events involve a wide range of actors, including civil society organizations and those defending the interests of persons living in poverty, as well as social partners, and local and regional authorities.

At national level, programs have been developed for adapting the policy guidelines defined at European level to the issues and specific characteristics of each country and carried out locally. These national programs are published on the EY2010 website.

For further information please visit www.2010againstopoverty.eu

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