

European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

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The Commission reports on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion ('EY2010'), established by Decision No 1098/2008/EC. The report offers an overview of the implementation, results and overall achievements of the European Year, building on the conclusions of an external evaluation.

Financial execution: a budget of EUR 17.25 million went towards activities in 29 participating countries (EU 27 plus Iceland and Norway) and at European level.

Member States: National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) coordinated the EY2010 and managed EU funding at country level, in accordance with a National Programme devised in consultation with key stakeholders.

Overall, the 29 NIBs (27 Member States, Norway and Iceland) were granted a total of EUR 9.27 million from the EU budget, following the indirect centralised management procedure. In each country, the amount received had to be matched, at least, by a level equivalent to the EU grant. Some countries provided more than was requested. In addition, private funding was secured by calls for proposals, with a variable percentage co-funding requirement.

EU level: a budget of EUR 8 million was dedicated to initiatives at European level, most of them key European level activities. In the main they were fully funded, while others (opening and closing conferences) were 80 % co-financed. The report gives the key figures regarding the EY2010:

- around 900 co-funded activities promoted either by NIBs or by stakeholders; at least another 1800 national and local activities using the logo;
- around 40 EU events (organised by EU bodies or in partnership with large events);
- 164 Ambassadors (160 at national level and 4 at European level);
- 49 million viewers and listeners reached by broadcasted reports;
- over 400 000 unique visitors to the website;
- over 10 000 printed/online articles;
- 1200 entries to the Journalist Award competition and 60 winners;
- over 60 videos produced at EU level;
- 200 photographs from 18 European countries participating in the Art Partner Project;
- total budget of EUR 26.25 million.

Achievements of EY2010: the EY2010 succeeded in injecting new momentum into the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Europe. At a particularly challenging time for the economy and society, it opened many people's eyes to the reality of poverty and social exclusion in Europe, while triggering the need to find innovative, more efficient programmes.. The report highlights the following:

-A firm political commitment, despite a difficult economic context: the fight against poverty and social exclusion was acknowledged to be one of the key priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy. For the first time ever, this commitment is linked to a numerical target, namely to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. The EY2010 also contributed to domestic policy developments beyond Europe 2020, as a number of countries took this opportunity to develop or implement new policy initiatives, and to strengthen links with other policy themes (such as health, justice, antidiscrimination and finance).

However, while these developments represent a step forward in reinforcing the EU and Member States' commitment, they have to be seen in the light of the situation of the most vulnerable, which in many cases deteriorated in 2010.

-Development of new partnerships and alliances: the European Year provided a significant incentive to strengthen partnerships and involve new players, from the local to the European level. These alliances were built primarily between stakeholders (in particular NGOs and foundations) but also involved institutional players at various levels (local authorities, academics, cultural organisations, schools, etc.).

Moreover, the EY2010 provided an impetus to overcome traditional boundaries by involving players who, although perhaps less directly engaged in addressing poverty and social exclusion, still have a critical impact (e.g. business, media, public authorities beyond social inclusion departments, etc.). In some countries the involvement of the EY2010 'Ambassadors' has had a significant role in this respect. However, despite some positive examples, opportunities for strengthening links with social partners and the private sector were not fully exploited.

-Meeting the need for better communication: data show that information on the Year reached about one tenth of Europeans through the broadcast media, helping to raise awareness of the various faces of poverty in Europe and the EU's role. The EY2010 also generated wide press coverage. The initiative's impact on deconstructing stereotypes is more difficult to assess. Nevertheless, a number of key activities sparked off a necessary discussion on how best to report on a complex issue by combining the interests of those in poverty with the constraints of increasingly demanding journalistic work.

-Towards greater participation by those experiencing poverty: the European Year partly lived up to expectations by giving the floor to men and women directly concerned, making their voices heard in key events (opening and closing conferences, grassroots events, popular universities) and media work (video, conference on perceptions of poverty) and enhancing their presence as participants in such events.

-Complementing existing EU initiatives: the Year complemented existing EU initiatives and programmes in the field of social inclusion and reducing inequalities, such as the PROGRESS programme.

-Development of innovative approaches: a number of innovative approaches were tested during the Year: (i) using social media for communication; (ii) engaging with journalists; (iii) advanced participatory approaches to policy planning; (iv) evidence-based social policy and social entrepreneurship. Some initiatives forged links with other policy areas, namely health, justice and finance. The impact of these innovations is potentially significant and they could be further developed. However, current budget consolidation efforts will be a significant obstacle to any scaling up.

-Gender Mainstreaming: provisions were put in place to take the gender dimension into account, for example, in the governance of the Year and indirect evidence suggests that gender specific issues such as single parenthood and homelessness were addressed in a balanced manner.

The focus must now shift to **keeping up the momentum initiated by the Year**. With this end in view, the Commission will work together with the Council, the European Parliament and all key stakeholders to turn to account the instruments provided by the Europe 2020 strategy and the [European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#).

Subsequent European Years ([Volunteering in 2011](#), [Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations in 2012](#), and the [European Year of Citizens in 2013](#)) have close links with the themes addressed in 2010 and the lessons learned from the EY2010 could be applied in preparing and implementing them.