

MAY 2010

European Year shall help to reveal who is most at risk of poverty

The 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (EY2010) is supporting the work of the EU and its Member States to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by vulnerable groups in society.

Those most at risk of poverty include older people, large and single-parent families, children and young people, people with disabilities, immigrants and those from ethnic minorities (including Europe's 10 to 12 million strong Roma community). Across all of these groups, women are more exposed to poverty and social exclusion than men.

Compared to the majority of Europeans, people from vulnerable groups are far more likely to have to cope with poor housing, homelessness, un-

employment, low educational attainment, financial exclusion and over-indebtedness.

The reason why some sections of society are more at risk depends on a number of factors and circumstances.

For example, not earning enough despite being in paid employment can result in large and single-parent families living at or below the poverty line. Likewise, having limited or no access to adequate child-care can make it difficult for parents to meet the demands of both work and family life.

This situation contributes to the fact that about 19 million children in the EU live in poverty.

At the other end of the age scale, about 19% of EU residents

aged 65 and over are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This is often because their pensions do not adequately cover their living costs. Older people are also at great risk of social isolation, especially if they live alone.

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Spanish Presidency discusses Anti-discrimination directive



Two months before the end of the Spanish presidency the Minister of Equality Ms. Bibiana Aido held a meeting between EASPD and other relevant NGO's to discuss about the state of play regarding the proposal for a directive on the principle of equal treatment between persons, irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The directive includes also 'discrimination by association' (family members of a disabled

person) and 'by error' and the rights on education are clearer. With regard to disability the directive seems closer to the UN convention on the rights of persons with disability than the first draft was, although some member states still hesitate on its ratification for possible cost implications linked to accessibility of the public domain and transports or for reasons linked to the appropriateness of EU legislation on this domain.

The message was made very clear: some progress has been made but the ministerial taskforce still has a lot to achieve. The good news is that the current trio presidency (Spain, Belgium, Hungary) is committed to reach an agreement. During the EPSCO council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council) in June Spain will present a 'state of the art' document and try to remove barriers.

EASPD stresses importance of NGO Social Service providers at European Civic Days

During the European Civic Days organized by the Spanish presidency in Malaga from the 7th to 9th of May EASPD was represented by its Secretary General Luk Zelderloo.

The goal of the meeting was to create, develop and encourage the debate on the role that associations and NGO's can play in building a more social Europe and in consolidating European citizenship according to the community values. Over 600 people from all over Europe were actively involved in the discussions about equality, democracy, well-being, cultural

exchange and respect and promotion of fundamental rights. During his presentation Luk Zelderloo stressed the importance of NGO Social Service providers being the glue in our society and providing tools for social inclusion and social cohesion by mobilizing social capital in our communities at grassroots level. He highlighted the potential risk of using wrong public procurement instruments, not respecting the values and the specificity of the sector. Also the need for a well structured social dialogue to facilitate coping with the shortage of first line workers in some

countries, the need for retraining and the lack of attractiveness of our sector were discussed. The main problems faced by the social sector, identified by Luk Zelderloo, were as well included in the conference conclusions: a shift from the medical paradigm to the community based approach, the changing roles of authorities, the lack of stable legal frameworks and funding, a need for real stakeholder cooperation, new needs due to ageing and a shift in family patterns and a very fast technological evolution providing new opportunities and new risks.



Upcoming events

10-11 June 2010: The European Conference “Building Bridges. New Ways of Integrating People with Disabilities. General Labour Market and Changes in Sheltered Workshops” will take place in Marburg, Germany. The conference will cover all aspects of the daily life of persons with disabilities during their lifetime. More information on www.bruecken-bauen-marburg.de

7-8 October 2010: The EASPD Conference “Towards Community living: current realities, future challenges” will take place in Skopje, Macedonia . The general goal of the conference will be to facilitate the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, in the light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

3-5 November 2010: Gentle Teaching International organizes an international conference in Haarlem (NL). The conference “Relationships, the core of care giving” will contribute to the development of gentle teaching worldwide. More information on www.gentleteaching.nl

The Hungarian EASPD member SZIMBIOZIS-Foundation needs your help!

On May 6th a heavy rainfall caused consistent damage to a daycare center of the Szimbiozis Foundation based in Miskolc, Hungary. The Symbiosis Foundation operates in the whole North Hungarian Region and provides a wide range of services to people with intellectual

disabilities as well as to their parents. Their main aim is to improve the quality of their lives by supporting their rights on education, training, employment and social integration.

Szimbiozis would welcome any type of support in this critical situation and would be

glad to give you more details.

