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## **EUROPE'S FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY**

On the opening day of the European Council (16 December) which saw members agree to amend the Lisbon Treaty to create a European stability mechanism - a permanent bail-out mechanism for Member States, the European Commission published "The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion".

The question is how the orientations in this document can be put into practice in a political environment that is conditioned by the austerity policies in European Member States? Certainly the governance questions remain to be seen, but the fight against poverty will only be successful if we take care of its root causes which are systemic and global!

2011 brings us the European Year on Volunteering, a Year that we will certainly support, but volunteering alone cannot fight poverty. The fight against poverty needs investment in social infrastructure through public policies, and it needs social NGOs which work as social service providers to be recognised for their role, their specific work and target groups. It is about social cohesion and redistribution, not only of wealth, but of responsibilities.

Let's make a real contribution to change in 2011!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

## **SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY TAKING SHAPE, BUT QUALITY WORK NOT KEY OBJECTIVE**

The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (EY 2010) has come to an end. The highlights include the adoption of the poverty reduction target under the EU 2020 Strategy, a guideline dedicated to social inclusion and fighting poverty as part of the Integrated Guidelines, and yesterday, the European Commission published a [communication](#), accompanied by a list of [initiatives](#) which it hopes will reduce poverty and social exclusion in the EU, within one of the EU 2020 Strategy's seven flagship initiatives: The European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The communication certainly addresses poverty in the right way: through its various facets, focusing on severe exclusion and new vulnerabilities, and identifying the need for cross-cutting policies. SOLIDAR welcomes the proposals, but regrets that quality work has not been defined as one of the objectives and that decent work is only mentioned with regard to the external dimension of EU policies. SOLIDAR will monitor the implementation of the Platform, in particular the announced structured partnerships - involving social NGOs and people experiencing poverty - to advance in the fight against poverty and the different facets of exclusion in our societies. [Read more about the communication...](#)

### **POLITICAL LEGACY OF EUROPEAN YEAR AGAINST POVERTY FOR EU MEMBER STATES**

SOLIDAR and its members Arbeiterwohlfahrt and Community Service Volunteers will be involved in the closing conference of the European Year 2010 Against Poverty and Social Exclusion today (17 December) in Brussels. The [Declaration on the European Year](#), adopted by Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs on 6 December, is a step in the right direction, but the proposals are often too timid and not far-reaching enough. [Read a brief analysis...](#)

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

### **NEW SOLIDAR HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION NETWORK BLOG**

The SOLIDAR Humanitarian Cooperation Network, made up of SOLIDAR member organisations working in humanitarian aid, is today launching a [blog](#). This blog is for SOLIDAR members working in humanitarian aid to share information and expertise and to exchange their viewpoints

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