

Child Poverty – a European Challenge!

Documentation

of the European
Expert Conference

31 August – 1 September 2009

Berlin

AGF

■ Arbeitsgemeinschaft
■ der deutschen
■ Familienorganisationen e.V.

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OPENING

Dr des Andrea Despot
Deputy Head Europäische Akademie Berlin

*Dear ladies and gentlemen,
dear participants, dear supporters of the cause,*

On the occasion of the opening of the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs' (AGF) symposium "Child Poverty - a European Challenge" I take this opportunity of welcoming you warmly to the European Academy in Berlin.

I'm Andrea Despot, I am the Deputy Head of the European Academy Berlin and I'm going to accompany you through the first half of this day. Before we listen to the opening statement by Mrs Schwab, I wish to point out that we are going to listen to three very special words of welcome. The first greeting will be by State Secretary Gerd Hoofe. He works at the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. He will be followed by Mr Matthias Petschke. He is the Head of the EU Commission Representation here in Berlin. And representing the Swedish side, which of course is currently presiding over the EU Council, is Mr Joakim Pettersson, the political adviser in the Swedish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, who will address us with a word of welcome. Now I would like to hand the floor to you, Mrs Schwab. Mrs Schwab is the Chairwoman of the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF) and also the Chairwoman of the Single Parents Association (VAMV). In this capacity she is of course especially involved in improving the precarious situation in which single parents often find themselves. Mrs Schwab, the floor is yours.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Edith Schwab
Chairwoman

Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen
Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V., Berlin

Ms Despot, thank you for your kind introduction and for welcoming us today at this beautiful venue. I warmly welcome State Secretary Hoofe, Mr Pettschke and Mr Pettersson.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants, I welcome you most sincerely to this European symposium!

As Chairwoman of the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF) I am delighted about the great interest demonstrated by you in this symposium. Not only does the number of experts and decision-makers present here today by far exceed our initial expectations, but also the wide spectrum of institutions and European countries represented by you is noteworthy. In this manner a promising mix of representatives of civic organisations on the one hand, and members of national and European governmental bodies as well as political institutions on the other hand have gathered here at the European Academy in Berlin. In total 17 of the current 27 European Member States are represented, in addition Switzerland and Croatia. Your presence, ladies and gentlemen, provides clear proof of the fact that the topic of child poverty is of social importance across Europe and of such explosive intensity that even politics can no longer turn a blind eye.

We, the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF), have been involved for a longer time with the urgent and wide-ranging problem of child poverty. Initially the situation in Germany stood in the foreground. More than 17% of children and youths in Germany were threatened by poverty in the year 2006 or already lived in poverty. Especially affected are children from single parent families, from families with more than two children as well as from families with a migration background. According to the figures of the (German) Ministry of Family Affairs more than every third child growing up in Germany with only one parent or in families with a migrant background is affected by poverty. In families with a higher number of children every seventh child is regarded as poor. Children whose parents are unemployed, however, run the highest risk of being poor. More than half of the children in this group live in poverty in Germany¹.

However, the problem of poverty is not only a national one. Presently about 19 million children and youths in the European Union live below the poverty line. 19 million. That means that about every fifth child in Europe is affected by poverty. In view of the current financial and economic crisis and its impact on the labour market as well as on the European budgets we must assume that this figure will increase even further in the near future. Not only I experience as a scandal the fact that in one of the richest regions of the world children have to grow up in poverty. And even though this poverty is predominantly so-called relative poverty, the disadvantages experienced individually by the children and youths affected leave deep marks. As such children from poorer backgrounds achieve good school leaving results less frequently, they often live in cramped conditions and in difficult social circumstances. They get into conflict with the police more often, often possess fewer social contacts and suffer more often from health ailments. It is much more difficult for children and youths to enter and establish themselves in society and to contribute towards creating and maintaining it. Children and youths who grow up in poverty experience multiple forms of social exclusion. These also take effect when they become adults and don't only promote the inheritance of poverty, but also a complete lack of future prospects and societal isolation. Whether and how one succeeds in enabling children to participate fully in society and to provide them the best opportunities at the start of their lives, is not only crucial for the personal life history of those affected, but also for the development of the European community as a whole. According to Gordon Brown, children form 20% of our population, but are 100% our future. "Child poverty - a European challenge!" - the theme of our two-day event, is indicative of our view that in reality a bigger effort is required to solve the problem of child poverty in Europe. Although the numbers and facts on the poverty situation of children and youths in the EU have been known for a long time, national governments have been hesitant in committing themselves to the issue. Detailed strategies for a sustainable reduction of poverty are rare. And even where this is the case, they don't produce long-term positive change. Certainly the responsibility for the elimination of child poverty in our view is not only that of single Member States. The issue increasingly has a significant European dimension and that for mainly two reasons: Firstly, the same factors of risk often lead to child poverty across Europe. Secondly, there is a clear commitment of the European Union to combat social exclusion. As such especially the children of single parents and from families with three or more children are affected

¹ Source: Dossier: Poverty Risks for Children and Youths in Germany. Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), May 2008

by poverty in the European Union. The risk for children and youths from households with a low or non-existent income as well as for children from families of ethnic minorities or with a migration background is also markedly higher. There are often a number of overlaps in the case of these groups which further heighten the risk of poverty for the children affected. These correspondencies indicate that child poverty has a European profile beyond its respective national dimensions.

The Treaty of Amsterdam finally provided the point where the European Union committed itself to the task of combating the social exclusion of its citizens. At the Council meetings of the years 2000 and 2006 the EU confirmed and further specified this commitment. And if this is to be more than paying mere lipservice, the EU must also see the elimination of child poverty as its political task. The focal point, which was set in the year 2007 in the context of the framework of the Open Method of Coordination, as well as the proclamation of the Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 are a first welcome step. The actors involved at the national and European levels are therefore faced by the challenge to develop effective and sustainable strategies for the reduction of child poverty. The goal of our symposium “Child poverty – a European challenge!” is to support this process and to submit concrete proposals for combating child poverty and its future prevention in the European Union. For this purpose we have developed the position paper, which you received ahead of this symposium today. This position paper is to be seen as a catalog of demands addressed to the decision-makers at the European and national levels. In its development it is far from complete, on the contrary, in the form in which you have it, it represents the status quo ad interim of our thematic discussions to date. It resulted from our preceding conference in November 2008 to which we invited experts from several European countries on the topic of child poverty. At the centre of this conference was the exchange of ideas regarding the extent of child poverty and how to cope with it within the Member States as well as in the EU as a whole. Together with the experts we discussed the shortcomings and possible solutions for success on the central political level in small workshops and in the final podium discussion identified the most important political action fields for combating child poverty.

Based on the suggestions and criticisms received, we, the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF), compiled the position paper, which you have in your hands. Over the next two days our draft is to be further developed by your substantial inputs. We would appreciate your benefiting it with your experiences and knowledge in order to – where it may be neces-

sary – increase the position paper’s impact and to turn it into an effective tool of political discourse regarding child poverty. For this reason we have asked those addressing us at this symposium to consider our position paper in their preparations and to comment on the demands articulated in it. Our purpose is to develop a convincing position paper valid for the whole of Europe which you as much as we can use for political lobbying at the national and European levels.

The position paper uses four central questions for the purpose of orientation:

- Firstly: what are the most important political challenges in view of the poverty situation of children and youths in the European Union?
- Secondly: what must appropriate political responses to these challenges look like?
- Thirdly: which possibilities exist at the European level to contribute to the solutions of child poverty?
- And fourthly: How can the EU support national efforts in combating child poverty?

In responding to these questions we focused on five political domains, which in our view are essential for combating child poverty in a sustainable and comprehensive manner. *Education, the labour market and employment, social security as well as taxes and social benefit contributions.*

Education in our view enjoys a key role in the fight against poverty. A comprehensive, early and tailor-made education focused on the development of the individual personality contributes markedly to poverty prevention. It increases the initial chances of those children affected by poverty, eases their later entry into the labour market and thus contributes to breaking the cycle of hereditary poverty. Educational success should not be dependent on social origin and the financial abilities of the families. Mechanisms of social exclusion within national education systems must be broken down to enhance the future opportunities of children and youths in a sustainable manner. The problem of child poverty, however, in reality is too complex to combat it effectively by concentrating only on a single political domain. Instead a separate strategy, which encompasses a multitude of measures in different areas and whose results must be checked regularly, is essential. With the aid of the position paper we want to support the development of such a political strategy. Jointly with you we would like to check the answers so far provided and to discuss once again the most important political challenges, the appropriate political responses as well as the required support measures at the European level. Complementary contributions and consequential impulses will be recorded by the members of the working group “position paper” established exclusively for the

purpose of this symposium and will be incorporated in the existing paper.

The results of our work will be presented by the members of the working group on Tuesday under the agenda item “Ways into the future – for a Europe without poverty!”

We hope that many of you will rediscover yourself in the position paper that has been supplemented with your ideas and thoughts, and that the catalog of demands compiled as a result of our symposium will enjoy the broad support of all participants. It is our hope that the updated position paper will as far as possible find a place in the political work of all those present – at the European and national level – and will be further completed by more individual demands. Ladies and gentlemen, we must fight to sensitise politics on a permanent basis for the topic of child poverty! Eliminating child poverty in Europe must become a political task of the first order. That would not only be an expression of the recognition, of the dignity and of the rights of children and youths, but also an investment in the future of Europe! This is my wish for all of us, namely, that this European symposium will radiate beyond the year 2010 and will inspire us anew in our efforts to combat child poverty. *Thank you.*

WORDS OF WELCOME

Gerd Hoofe

State Secretary Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
(BMFSFJ), Berlin

Word of Welcome by Gerd Hoofe, State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, on the occasion of the European Symposium “Child Poverty – a European Challenge” of the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF) on 31 August 2009

Dear Mrs Schwab, dear Mr Petschke, dear Mr Petersson, ladies and gentlemen,

Already in the year 2000 at the Lisbon Summit the heads of state and of government set themselves the objective of moving forward decisively on the elimination of poverty in Europe – a well-determined objective. And the “European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” provides the opportunity of tying in directly with this objective and raising especially the public awareness for the manifold causes and effects of poverty.

In Germany we will pay attention primarily to especially women and children in 2010.

We shall therefore make child poverty and the development opportunities of children the centrepiece of our national strategy for the European Year 2010.

With your symposium “Child Poverty – a European Challenge” you have positioned yourself centre-stage on this topic. This is indeed laudible and much appreciated by us, we support it.

“Child poverty has many faces” – this claim has become one of the standing phrases of the research on poverty.

Undisputable is the fact that:

Poverty is more than just a lack of money.

Proved, however, is the fact that there is a correlation between low income and an increase in the risk of being disadvantaged in other areas of life like housing, nutrition, health, social contacts, leisure time, culture or education.

Measured in terms of income, children in practically all countries within Europe run a disproportionately high risk of poverty.

Although children do not necessarily have bleak future prospects because little money is available in the family, the fact, on the other hand, remains: income poverty presents a central element of risk when it comes to the development of opportunities in the life of children.

International comparisons do not always differentiate sufficiently; however results show that despite all trepidations Germany succeeds relatively

well in combating child poverty. The poverty risk quota is more or less halved by targeted official financial support. In doing so, Germany, when compared with the rest of Europe, has a rather low poverty risk quota in respect of children.

And when I look at the current figures of the ifo-Institute regarding the effect of the improved supplementary child allowance (KIZ), the increase in housing allowance (Wohngeld) and family allowance (Kindergeld), then, despite all prophecies of doom, further successful steps have been taken in the area of family benefits to prevent or reduce family poverty. The study published last week by the ifo-Institute thus confirms all along the correctness of the family policy measures undertaken over the last 12 months in the face of the economic crisis.

Poverty in Germany is also less persistent than elsewhere: only about two percent of the population lives in poverty two years in succession, and therefore only half as many as the OECD-average.

These results however must not allow us to become complacent. It remains unsatisfactory that we in Germany still do not even touch those countries that combat poverty most successfully. (Source: Eurostat EU SILC 2007) (Example)

I refer here, primarily, to the Scandinavian countries.

We have evaluated the experiences of these countries and have determined that

- targeted financial assistance,
 - good conditions for marrying family and vocation, as well as
 - good and early education
- are essential to support families effectively, rectify disadvantages and combat family- and child poverty with good success.

For this reason, too, we changed our family policy and for the purposes of a basic concept concentrated on a mutually agreed upon and differentiated mixture of money, infrastructure and time.

Targeted official financial transfers and tax measures are – and this is undisputable – of existential importance especially for socially deprived families. The income situation of families threatened by poverty is markedly improved in a direct manner.

Part of this is, firstly, the **parental allowance (Elterngeld)**. Like no other official form of support the parental allowance offers families a strong backing in the first year after the birth of a child and guarantees that income does not diminish at that moment when it is most needed.

Demonstrably the parental allowance maintains the employment propensity of parents and supports the re-entry of mothers in the labour market. The latest study on the parental allowance confirms that the parental allowance indeed strengthens the position of low-income recipients

and prevents the drastic collapse of income in the second year of a child's life after receiving the parental allowance.

The promotion of the employment propensity of parents is also the fundamental idea behind the **improved supplementary child allowance (verbesserter Kinderzuschlag)**. The supplementary child allowance is instrumental in preventing low-income families from becoming recipients of Hartz IV. The supplementary child allowance enables them to stand on their own two legs. Since further developing it in October 2008 the number of children reached, has risen to approximately a quarter of a million, 150,000 more than to date. We have made big progress. Further steps must follow and have already been conceptualised for the next legislative period.

On 1 January 2009 the **family allowance (Kindergeld)** was **increased** and further **graded**. The increase of the family allowance is important for all families; in a very targeted manner the clearer grading uses the specific social conditions of families with many children as its orientation. The family allowance always makes an important contribution to increasing the income of a household and to the reduction in the risk of poverty (share of the family allowance in household income rises from 15% to 16.3%). In total the increase provides relief of 2.2bn Euro per annum for families with children.

Further financial relief is provided

- by the special school support-package (Schulbedarfspaket) for needy pupils attending general and vocational schools;
- by the child bonus of 100 Euro for all families qualifying for the family allowance without it being considered when calculating social benefits;
- through the marked increase in the standard rate of basic social care and welfare benefits for children aged 6 to 13 (by € 35,00) by 17%.

Family households today have a markedly higher income than one year ago – in part by 10% and more (recipients of basic social benefits + 5.1%, families with middle- and higher income + 2.5%).

This can be ascribed primarily to the above-mentioned improvements in family policy related benefits → increased supplementary child allowance and housing allowance, increased family allowance and once-off child bonus as well as higher rates for children in the case of Hartz IV and the school support-package.

Especially families with low income benefit:

The risks of poverty amongst families and children are reduced. More children are not dependent on the benefits of basic social allowances. Improvement in benefits do not bypass needy families. The propensity for employment is maintained. Families with a higher number of children are amongst the winners.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The **stabilisation** of family income, **prevention of poverty** and **compatibility** of family and job enjoy increased importance especially in times of economic difficulty.

Child poverty, however, is not only caused by low income, but also manifests itself in the educational and participatory opportunities of children and youths, and also expresses itself in the access to the labour market, housing and health care.

And therefore it is also clear that a single batch of causes does not exist, but matters are related and interdependent. That means, too, that strategies to combat child poverty must consider this background in devising the thrust thereof and that the lever must be applied at various points to achieve short-, medium- and long term effects.

Germany is challenged in a very particular manner as far as the correlation between social origin and educational opportunities of children and youths generally and those with a migration background specifically is concerned. At this point there are undoubtedly some painful shortcomings to admit. This correlation must be broken. Poverty should not be hereditary. We cannot afford to give up on young people. Each and every one of them is needed.

For this reason we advocate a tailor-made and qualification-based expansion of child care as from the first year of life, a family-friendly working environment that strengthens the marriage between family and vocation, and a purposeful educational and labour market integration of disadvantaged young people over and above the transfer of financial benefits.

An early and good education is the best insurance against discrimination, social exclusion, poverty and unemployment.

Quality in this regard thus means supporting and challenging every child.

Combating child poverty is not a hopeless fight, but never-ending. We possess good instruments on which we can build, instruments that have been developed successfully because of new inputs regarding family policy, that however require further steps in order to stay on track and not to jeopardise that which has been achieved but to further expand on it. It would make sense to introduce a partial parental allowance (Teilelterngeld) or to introduce a stronger child component in tax law. Additional measures in the low income field, e.g. further developing the supplementary child allowance, are also required.

Simultaneously we should not lose sight of seriously disadvantaged youths.

In this regard it concerns, on the one hand, assistance to those who do not profit from the system providing assistance to schoolleavers entering the labour market or do not gain access at all.

On the other hand it is about increasing the occupational abilities of disadvantaged youths

through the acquisition of skills and the improvement of their social cohesion in loco.

I am pleased about the fact that we are focusing increasingly on these aspects in European youth policy and undertake serious joint efforts in this regard. Germany has involved itself extraordinarily and will continue its involvement.

Ladies and gentlemen, I already referred at the beginning of my speech to the fact that “child poverty has many faces”. And there are neither panaceas nor isolated successful measures to combat child poverty. The clearly identifiable trigger mechanisms of child poverty rather require a broad approach, and in the mixture of instruments and effects, differentiated solutions at all levels. Successful European examples of this do exist.

Last but not least it depends on the cooperation of all the political and societal actors in Germany as well as in Europe as provided for in the decisions of Lisbon and subsequently of Nice.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced of the fact that this conference will make its contribution. I hope for important impulses for even better concepts and strategies, for a mutual understanding of the challenge that faces us and for continued shared efforts.

Thank you for your commitment!

WORDS OF WELCOME

Matthias Petschke
Head of the European Commission
Representation in Germany, Berlin

Word of Welcome on the occasion of the European Symposium “Child Poverty – a European Challenge” on 31 August 2009

1. Introduction

The fight against poverty and social exclusion forms part of the most important goals of the European Union and its Member States.

I would therefore like to thank the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF) for raising this important topic of child poverty. The European Commission Representation in Germany gladly supports the symposium “Child Poverty – a European Challenge”.

2. Background

In 2006 the Commission passed a communication which aims to implement a comprehensive strategy for the Protection of Children’s Rights in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.¹ In doing so, the fight against poverty and the social exclusion of children is accorded special significance. For: children are especially affected by poverty and social exclusion – 19% of children in the EU – i.e. about 19 million children – are regarded as being threatened by poverty, in Germany it is 12%, in countries like Italy, Poland or Rumania it is 25% and more.

10% of children live in families without an employed parent. These values have not improved since the year 2000. Most affected are children with a migrant background, members of ethnic minorities and children who come from difficult family circumstances.²

Even though we succeeded in creating excessive prosperity in the European Union over the last years, not everyone has benefited from it. As proved by the Commission’s regular observation of the social situation, the situation for those groups of persons who require special protection has not improved. People once trapped by poverty seldom escape from it. The

current economic crisis could further complicate the situation. An increase in the number of those threatened by poverty is likely.

3. Combating poverty in the EU

Since 2001 the EU has been committed to combating child poverty within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination. The Member States agree in respectively determining their most effective political measures and strategies in the areas of social protection and social integration, and to pass this information on to others to enable shared learning.

In 2006 the European Council requested Member States “to take up the necessary measures to reduce child poverty in a considerable manner and in so doing to provide children with the same opportunities regardless of their origin.”⁴

The latest national reports on social protection and for social integration (2008 – 2010), which are compiled regularly in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination, show that Member States attach a high value to combating poverty among children. However, the high number of children living in poverty means that much more has to be done. In the renewed Social Agenda of 2008 the Commission subsequently encouraged laying down quantitative and qualitative goals.

As the social weakness and the unemployment of parents are the most important causes of child poverty, the European Commission determined three fundamental goals:⁵

- Return to the job market for parents must be made easier;
- The financial minimum of the welfare allowance must be sufficiently appropriate;
- First class, affordable child care facilities as well as other social services must be accessible to all.

As underlined in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, family policy must be more responsive to societal and social changes. This applies especially to the growing number of single mothers or fathers who are exposed to a high risk of poverty.

Child poverty can however not be viewed in isolation, but has to be contained by more social, economic and societal measures. Hence not only the material aspects are of importance for the well-being of children and youths. Especially health and education must be added – areas accorded priority in the Lisbon Strategy and the Social Agenda.

¹ Communication of the Commission with a view to an EU Children’s Rights Strategy KOM(2006) 367

² Thematic study on political measures to combat child poverty. The EU social protection and social integration process. Result of strategic studies – 10th European Communities, Luxembourg 2008

³ Communication of the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Proposal for the joint report on social protection and social integration 2009 KOM (2009) 58

⁴ European Council: Conclusions of the Chair of 23/24 March 2006

⁵ Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A renewed social agenda: opportunities, access and solidarity in the Europe of the 21st century KOM (2008) 412

We must undertake more to contain the social exclusion of children from disadvantaged and marginalised social groups. Therefore Member States are called upon to devote themselves to the weakest amongst the children: disabled children, children from migrant families, from ethnic minorities – especially Roma families. Equally children looked after in institutions of care deserve our attention.

4. The economic crisis

Given the economic crisis it will be of special importance to create employment measures in the coming years.

On 3 June 2009 the Commission published the communiqué “**Shared Commitment for Employment**” at the end of its employment summit.⁶

In it the Commission recommends that efforts by Member States should focus on the following points:

- Maintenance of jobs, creation of new jobs and promotion of mobility;
- Improvement of competencies and their adaptation to the demands of the labour market;
- Easing the access to employment.

It is of special importance to offer young people training and occupational possibilities, which they need in order not to miss entry into the labour market. Hence the Member States supported by the Commission, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the social partners must ensure that at least 5 million young Europeans can start a first class apprenticeship by the end of 2010. Companies should continue offering practical training despite the crisis, strategies to reduce the number of early schoolleavers must be developed rapidly. Young unemployed should obtain a training- or occupational opportunity after a maximum of two months.

5. The foreign policy dimension

According to estimates 165 million children in the age group of 5 to 14 are affected by child labour internationally. The Commission supports international measures through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights to strengthen the rights of children and contain child labour.

Combating child labour as a central theme of the EU Human Rights Agenda must be applied at all levels and requires concentrated action by governments, business and the international community. In working towards the abolishment of all forms of child labour, the EU pursues a comprehensive approach through a dialogue in the areas of politics, trade, development and education. We appeal to all partner countries to

ratify the respective agreements of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Trade preferences are in principle only granted to those third countries which apply the international human rights and labour law conventions.

Across the world 72 million children do not attend school - of these 57% are girls. And that when education is the key to escape poverty. The Commission has also undertaken a number of actions in this regard and submitted an action plan for the consideration of children’s rights in the relationship with third states to the Council. At this time a study is being conducted which concerns itself with the most effective use of the available resources in the fight against child poverty. In the development assistance programmes general and free primary school education is promoted and demanded.

6. The year 2010

2010 will be an important year for EU social policy: in the framework of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion numerous activities will be undertaken in order to bring the relevant actors together.

In renewing the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs in 2010, the EU, in addition, wants to determine a new framework for European economic and social policies.

When the strategy for growth and jobs was brought to life in March 2000, heads of state and of government of the EU committed themselves “to move forward decisively on the elimination of poverty” until the year 2010.⁷ They agreed to undertake endeavours to promote broader access to knowledge and life opportunities and to fight unemployment.

And still there are too many people without access to basic services like health care. According to current data about 79 million Europeans live below the poverty line. This is not compatible with the EU principles of solidarity and social justice.

As a response to this the year 2010 was declared the “European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion”. In the strategic framework paper to the European year the following guiding principles were laid down:⁸

- All human beings have the **right to live in dignity** and to share in society.
- **The public and the private sector jointly carry the responsibility** for combating poverty and social exclusion.
- **Eliminating poverty to strengthen social cohesion** benefits all.
- To achieve this goal **the commitment of all social levels** is required.

⁶ Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A shared commitment for employment KOM (2009) 257

⁷ European Council: Conclusions of the Chair of 23/24 March 2000

⁸ European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) – Strategic framework paper; <http://2010againstpoverty.ec.europa.eu>, European Commission, Brussels

In the Union's budget 17m Euro is provided for consciousness building measures.

The instrument for the promotion of direct measures is the European Social Fund (ESF). In Germany alone the ESF appropriation for 2007 – 2013 entails about 9.4 billion Euro. Of these, 35% is used for "improving occupational access as well as the social integration of disadvantaged persons". Admittedly these measures do not form a direct part of combating child poverty. However, an increase in occupation and the successful fight against unemployment are preconditions for reducing the risk of poverty.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to mention the Position Paper on Combating and Preventing Child Poverty in the EU, which has been submitted by the Com-

mission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF). The political challenges in the fields of education, the labour market, social protection, tax systems as well as transparency and data collection elucidated therein point to the comprehensiveness of the agenda. The Commission Services will take a careful look at the contents of the position paper.

The European Commission is fully aware of the importance and the urgency of the topic and will continue its fight against child poverty in and outside the EU within the framework of its responsibilities. It will support Member States, whose contributions are of decisive importance, in their efforts. The upcoming European Year offers the opportunity to bundle existing activities, take up new initiatives and strengthen the awareness in public.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Joakim Pettersson
Political advisor to the Minister for Health
and Social Affairs, Stockholm

Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants,

I am honoured to be here today to contribute to the opening of this conference on child poverty on behalf of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. I would like to congratulate the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs for choosing this important topic for the conference. The fight against poverty is a major priority for the Swedish Presidency. We give our full support to this initiative.

As you have already heard, in the European Union 78 million people are living under conditions that can be described as poverty. 19 million of these are children. Poverty is a serious problem for our societies, and the problem of child poverty is especially urgent. This is because children have little opportunities to influence their own living conditions, and it is also because children are the future of our society. Poverty is a problem

that is inherited from generation to generation. We know from studies that there is strong correlation between a childhood in poverty and an adulthood with poor health, poor education, and poor income. This is a tragedy for the people who are concerned, and it constitutes a great loss for our societies in economic terms.

The fight against poverty has become even more urgent due to the current economic crisis. In order to reduce the social consequences of the crisis, we need to implement active inclusion strategies to prevent that a situation for people who are already excluded from the labour market will become worse. Active inclusion strategies will ensure dignified living conditions for all, including children. We must also keep in mind the long-term perspective and prevent the crisis from resulting in new groups being excluded from the labour market. Our long-term commitment to promote growth, employment, and social cohesion will also have a decisive effect on the poverty in the European Union. The Swedish Presidency will address these issues at two events that will take place in Stockholm in October: the annual round table on poverty and social exclusion and a high-level conference on labour market inclusion.

It is broadly recognised that gainful employment is the most effective way to combat poverty on a permanent basis. Employment will also have a decisive effect on child poverty. The Nordic countries can provide a good example in this re-

spect with the lowest rates of child poverty in the European Union and traditionally high-employment rates among both men and women. Family policies can be an effective instrument in the fight against child poverty. This can be done by providing financial support to families and by giving parents influence over their situation and the opportunity to participate in the labour market. A flexible system of statutory parental leave with compensation for income loss will enable parents to maintain their attachment to the labour market when they care for small children. Available, affordable, and flexible childcare services are crucial for the parents' possibilities to enter and to remain in the labour market.

However, it is important that family policies in some cases will also enable parents to make choices that otherwise would not be financially sustainable for the families, but are of the best interest of their child. This could be policies that allow a smooth transition from parental leave to work. The ongoing discussion on different policies for reconciliation of work and family life is very important for the development of family policies in the Member States. We need to keep up this work and we need to have a discussion focused on the best interest of the child in family policies.

The well-being of children in our societies is an important value in itself. This is clearly stated in the UN conventions on the rights of the child, where a right to an adequate standard of living is particularly pointed out. The Swedish Presidency of the European Union will raise the issue of children's rights at a high-level meeting in Stockholm on November 20. This will be an occasion to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the United Nations convention on the rights of the child. It will also be an opportunity for decision-makers to take forward the discussion on a EU strategy for children's rights. The meeting will also be dedicated to discussions on parents' balance between work and family life with a focus on the best interest of the child.

Now, moving from the perspective of the Swedish Presidency, I would like to give you a short overview of the situation of child poverty in Sweden. Sweden is a relatively extensive welfare state, but we still have too many children living under difficult economic conditions. The risk of poverty is particularly high among foreign born and single mothers. Child poverty in absolute terms has, however, been reduced by 50% since the last recession in the mid-90s. The relative child poverty in Sweden has increased somewhat since the mid-90s, due to the fact that differences in incomes have increased. In this context it is important to point out that the median income has increased for all types of households in Sweden in recent years.

The fight against child poverty is one of the challenges that the Swedish government is facing

at the moment as part of the consequences of the economic crisis. Our main priority in this situation is to increase the levels of employment and to reduce the exclusion from the labour market. The activation of individuals is an important part of our strategy to exit the crisis stronger, with favourable effects on child poverty. The discussion at the EU level, covering the fight against poverty, is an important matter for Sweden as Presidency, but also as a Member State. The cooperation at the EU level will help us and other Member States to improve our methods in order to make a decisive impact on poverty and social exclusion in the EU where children as a group are a priority.

Now, on behalf of the Swedish Presidency, I would like to encourage you to make good use of this opportunity to have a constructive and useful debate on the work to combat child poverty and to promote children's rights in the European Union.

Thank you.

CHILD POVERTY AND WELL-BEING IN THE EU: MEASUREMENT AND SOME RELATED KEY CHALLENGES

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The text below provides the main elements of the keynote speech delivered by Eric Marlier on 31 August 2009 in the context of the international conference on “Child Poverty: A European challenge” organised by AGF, the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (Berlin, 31 August 2009 & 1 September 2009).

1. Measuring poverty and social exclusion at national and EU levels: Why and how?

The European Commission as well as the 27 European Union (EU) Member States need commonly agreed indicators and other “statistics” *inter alia* to support their cooperation in various areas of social protection and social inclusion – the so-called “Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC)”, which was launched in 2000 as part of the *Lisbon Strategy*.

These Social OMC monitoring tools are needed for very specific purposes. In particular:

- to facilitate international comparisons of **actual performances** achieved by EU Member States through their national and sub-national social policies... and thus to improve mutual exchange and learning from good (and also bad) practices among Member States; and
- to measure national and EU progress towards **EU social objectives** that EU countries and the European Commission have jointly agreed for the Social OMC.

For monitoring tools to be fit for purpose, it is essential that their construction follows a **principle-based approach**: a specific methodological framework is required for developing the specific monitoring tools needed for the Social OMC. It is this approach that guided the adoption of the social indicators to be used in the context of the Social OMC. Some principles concern each individual indicator, whereas others concern the portfolio as a whole.²

The Social OMC monitoring tools are developed jointly by the European Commission and Member States on the basis of empirical and theoretical expertise. Their development is the responsibility of the **EU Social Protection Committee and its Indicators Sub-Group**, which gather together representatives from all 27 EU countries and from the European Commission. Work on these tools also benefits from important “external” contributions: independent academic reports produced for the European Commission and/or EU Presidencies; international conferences (EU Presidencies, European Commission...); studies commissioned by the European Commission (e.g. on child poverty and well-being, on homelessness, on over-indebtedness...); etc.

The portfolio of commonly agreed **monitoring tools for monitoring the social inclusion strand of the Social OMC** covers the following:

- The already agreed indicators cover financial poverty (incl. persistent poverty and poverty gap), income inequality, access to healthcare, education (early-school leavers, educational attainment of adult population and pupils’ literacy), joblessness, long-term unemployment, integration of immigrants on the LM... and since 2009: material deprivation and housing.
- On top of this, a specific slot, yet to be filled in, has been reserved for one or more “child well-being indicators” that should be child-focused (this is a follow-up of the work of EU Task-Force on Child Poverty and Well-Being).
- 11 “context information” statistics: impact of social transfers on poverty risk, Gini, making work pay, social assistance and poverty risk, health inequalities by socio-economic status...

So, good progress has been made since 2001 towards a multi-dimensional set of indicators even if further work is needed. The major challenge now is to make full use of the whole set.³

¹ See: www.ceps.lu.

² The methodological principles to be met by the Social OMC monitoring tools are consistent with those suggested in the independent academic study on EU indicators for social inclusion by Atkinson, Cantillon, Marlier and Nolan (2002) commissioned by the Belgian Presidency of the EU. Readers interested in a detailed discussion of these principles can refer to this study, where they were originally proposed. A document presenting in detail the EU agreed methodological principles to be met by the Social OMC monitoring tools and the most recent list of Social OMC indicators and “context information” is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=756&langId=en>. This list includes four portfolios of indicators and context information: one for the Social OMC as a whole (overarching portfolio) and one for each of the three social strands of the Social OMC (social inclusion, pensions and health portfolios).

³ For concrete proposals on this, see: Marlier, Atkinson, Cantillon and Nolan (2007).

2. Poverty and social exclusion of children in the EU: A few figures based *inter alia* on the latest income data available

Even though child poverty and social exclusion are obviously major challenges throughout the EU, the extent and severity varies widely from one country to the next (and indeed in many countries from region to region).

Here are a few examples drawing on EU indicators calculated from the 2007 wave of the *Community Statistical on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)*:⁴

- At EU-27 level, 20% of children are **at risk of (income) poverty**⁵ as compared to 16% for the total population. The risk is higher for children than for the total population in all countries except Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Slovenia (in Latvia it is identical: 21%). Child poverty risk reaches 30-33% in two countries (Bulgaria and Romania), it varies between 23 and 25% in five countries (Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK), and it is “only” 10-12% in five countries (Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Slovenia and Sweden).
- The national **at-risk-of-poverty thresholds** vary enormously across the EU. So, for a household consisting of 2 adults and 2 children, national thresholds (monthly amounts expressed in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS)⁶) range from less than 750 PPS in 8 countries (all these countries are newer Member States) to more than 1600 PPS in 12 countries (all older Member States, except for Cyprus). In Bulgaria and Romania, the corresponding national threshold is around 300-350 PPS, as opposed to around 2000 PPS in the UK and 3000 PPS in Luxembourg.
- The poverty risk rate would be much higher if there were no **social transfers**. On average for the EU as a whole, social transfers (excluding pensions) reduce the percentage of children at risk of poverty by 39%, which is a higher impact than for the overall population (35%). In Finland and Sweden, social transfers reduce child poverty risk by 64-67%. By contrast, in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Spain, this reduction is maximum 20% (also for the overall population). These figures reflect both the scale of expenditure level and the extent to which transfers are targeted on families with low income.

- It is essential to complement the information on poverty risk with information on the intensity of this risk: the **poverty risk gap**⁷ indicates “how poor the poor children are”. The poverty risk gap for children varies from 13% in Finland and 15% in France to 40% in Romania and 44% in Bulgaria. Bulgaria and Romania as well as Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Spain are countries where both child poverty risk *and* child poverty risk gap are higher than the EU average; Luxembourg and the United Kingdom are just on the border.
- The proportion of children affected by **material deprivation**⁸ is identical to that affected by (income) poverty risk (20%). However, material deprivation varies by a significantly larger extent across Member States: from 4-10% (in Luxembourg, the 3 Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Spain) up to 39-43% (in Hungary, Latvia and Poland), 57% (Romania) and 72% (Bulgaria) whereas the range for poverty risk rates is “only” from 10% to 33%. It is important to put in perspective poverty risk and material deprivation as these indicators contain complementary information (see Marlier et al, forthcoming). In 7 countries, the ratio between the proportion of child material deprivation and that of child poverty risk is higher than 1.6 (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Romania; highest ratios in Bulgaria (72%/30%=2.4) and Cyprus (28%/12%=2.3)). At the other extreme, this ratio is lower than 0.6 in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and Spain (the lowest ratio is in Luxembourg: 4%/20%=0.2).

Another example taken from an EU indicator calculated on the basis of the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS)⁹ is that of children living in **jobless households**. Living in a household where no-one is in paid employment is likely to significantly affect both the current living conditions of children and the conditions in which they will develop. Indeed, the absence of a working adult in the child’s household not only raises the question of potential financial problems; it can also limit current or future opportunities to participate fully in society. The 2007 EU LFS shows that almost 9.4% of EU children live in jobless households, a proportion ranging from 2.2-3.9% (in Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg and Slovenia) to 12.0%

⁴ See the web-site of Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Communities:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes>.

⁵ A child “at-risk-of-poverty” is a child who lives in a household “at-risk-of-poverty”, i.e. a household whose total equivalised income is below 60% of the median national equivalised household income. Children are persons aged below 18.

⁶ PPS are “artificial Euros” that correct for the differences in the cost of living in the different Member States.

⁷ The poverty risk gap measures the distance between the median equivalised income of people living below the poverty risk threshold and the value of that poverty risk threshold; it is expressed as a percentage of the threshold.

⁸ Originally proposed by Guio (2009), this indicator significantly improves the multi-dimensional coverage of the EU portfolio for social inclusion. Based on the limited information available from the EU-SILC data-set, it focuses on the proportion of people living in households who cannot afford at least 3 of the following 9 items: 1) coping with unexpected expenses; 2) one week annual holiday away from home; 3) avoiding arrears (in mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments); 4) a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day; 5) keeping the home adequately warm; 6) a washing machine; 7) a colour TV; 8) a telephone; 9) a car.

⁹ See Eurostat web-site.

in Belgium, 12.8% in Bulgaria, 13.9% in Hungary and 16.7% in the UK. As to the proportion of adults (18-59 year olds) living in jobless households, the EU average is almost identical (9.3%) but the range of national rates is smaller: from 4.7% in Cyprus to 12.3% in Belgium.

To better understand the extent to which parental employment contributes to the income of the household, one needs to look at how many adults work in the household and whether they work part-time or full-time, and during the whole year or only part of the year. For this, the EU has adopted a breakdown of the poverty risk by the **work intensity (WI) of the household**. This WI only takes account of working age adults. It varies from 0 (no-one in paid employment during the income reference year) to 1 (all working age adults in the household in full-time work for the whole income reference year). According to the 2007 wave of EU-SILC:

- Children living in households whose WI is 0 run a very high poverty risk: the EU average risk for these children is 70%, ranging from 47-49% in Denmark and Finland up to 81-90% in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.
- Even though children living in households with a WI of 1 run a much lower poverty risk, their poverty risk is still at 8% for the EU as a whole. This proportion varies from 3-4% (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Malta, Slovenia) to 11-13% (Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland) and 24% in Romania.
- For children living in households with a WI less than 1 but higher or equal to 0.5, the EU average is 22%, with national figures ranging from 11-12% (Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany) to 31-35% (Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain).

A key lesson from the Social OMC is the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty and social exclusion. This was stressed by several members of the EU Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion in their 2007 national reports on child poverty and social exclusion (Frazer and Marlier, 2007). For instance, the UK experts emphasised that “Child poverty matters because there is a mass of evidence, reviewed recently in an HM Treasury document, that poor children have constrained lives, poorer health, worse diets, colder and more dilapidated housing conditions, higher risks of accidents and injuries, more physical abuse, more bullying and less access to childcare. They also do less well at school and their outcomes in terms of skills and employment are worse. Recent work using data from the 1980 birth cohort survey shows that disadvantages at 22 months

continue to have an impact on employment and earnings right through to later life.” (Bradshaw and Bennett, 2007)

We cannot review here the evidence of this **multi-dimensional nature of child poverty and social exclusion** but it is important to keep this in mind when analysing individual social indicators on the situation of children and when comparing national results. It is also important to keep in mind that growing up in poverty limits personal development and has long-term consequences for the development and well-being of children and for their future health and well-being as adults. It increases their risk of being poor and experiencing unemployment and social exclusion as adults. The extent to which poverty is inherited from one generation to the next is a related and recurring theme. Evidence on the **long-term effect and intergenerational inheritance** is hard to collect but also needs to be carefully analysed.¹⁰

3. EU Task-Force on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being: Typology of countries

The “EU Task-Force on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being” (TF) was created by the EU Social Protection Committee (SPC) in Nov. 2006. Its final report was adopted by all 27 EU countries and the European Commission in January 2008 (Social Protection Committee, 2008) and it is therefore now part of EU “**acquis**” and **should be used as such** (which is not currently the case).

Most important: the TF report includes the *first actual benchmarking exercise* ever carried out at EU level – and it is still the only one to date... This exercise was based almost exclusively on the commonly agreed indicators adopted in the context of the Social OMC.

Even though there are other important topics addressed in the TF report, my main focus here is on this benchmarking exercise. The typology of Member States I will very briefly present is based on the TF methodology but with figures updated from 2005 to 2006.¹¹ The European Commission has commissioned a study which will *inter alia* update the TF typology to more recent figures (and possibly refine it), and also make suggestions to the SPC and its Indicators Sub-Group on possible child well-being indicators (see above). The results are expected to be published at the beginning of 2010 (Tarki and Aplica, forthcoming).

Construction of typology:

- First: in each Member State, child poverty risk (CPR) outcome is assessed by a score summarising the relative situation of children in country with regard to:

¹⁰ National updated figures (and breakdowns) for the various commonly agreed indicators used for monitoring the Social OMC are available from the Eurostat web-site.

¹¹ These 2006 figures are from Maquet and Guio, 2008. Note: the figures I have just presented were for 2007, but this typology is not available for the 2007 figures.

- poverty risk for overall population in country;
- average child poverty risk for EU as a whole; and
- average intensity of child poverty risk (i.e. poverty gap) at EU level.
- Second: National child poverty risk outcomes are put in perspective with other (relative) performances calculated in a similar way:
 - children in jobless households;
 - children in households with in-work poverty; and
- impact of social transfers (excl. pensions) on child poverty risk.

Four groups of (EU-25) countries have been identified by the TF according to the main challenge(s) they face (i.e. where Member States have the most “-” scores). It is in no way a “naming and shaming” exercise but rather a concrete example of the unique potential of a well thought of **contextualised benchmarking** conducted as part of the Social OMC.

GROUP A

	<u>Child poverty risk outcomes</u>	<u>Children living in jobless hhds</u>	<u>Children living in hhds confronted with in-work poverty risk</u>	<u>Impact of social transfers (excl. pensions) on child poverty risk</u>
AT	+	+	++	++
CY	+++	+	+++	+
DK	+++	+	+++	++
FI	+++	++	+++	+++
NL	+	+	+	+
SE	+	(++)	++	++
SI	++	+++	+++	++

Source: Maquet and Guio, 2008

Gruppe A (Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Sweden and Slovenia) is the best performers group in terms of child poverty risk outcomes. As you can see from this table, the best performing countries are those that **perform well and even very well on all fronts**. In these countries, households with children tend to combine:

- (relatively) low levels of joblessness;
- (relatively) low levels of in-work poverty risk; and
- (relatively) effective social transfers.

However, these countries should obviously not rest on their laurels. They need to continue to monitor and improve their performances – not only in terms of CPR outcome but also, more widely, in terms of child well-being which this typology does not take into account.

GROUP B

	<u>Child poverty risk outcomes</u>	<u>Children living in jobless hhds</u>	<u>Children living in hhds confronted with in-work poverty risk</u>	<u>Impact of social transfers (excl. pensions) on child poverty risk</u>
BE	+	--	+++	+
CZ	-	--	+	+
DE	++	--	+++	+++
EE	--	--	+	-
FR	++	-	++	++
IE	-	---	+	+
SK	-	---	+	+

Source: Maquet and Guio, 2008

Gruppe B (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, France, Ireland and Slovakia) consists of countries with relatively good to below average poverty risk outcomes. The main matter of concern here is the **high proportion of children living in jobless households**. Germany and France have managed to limit child poverty risk

(and indeed get ++ child poverty risk outcomes in the first column) thanks to relatively high and effective social transfers. In all these countries, policies aimed at making work pay and at improving access to quality jobs for those parents furthest away from the labour market may contribute significantly to reducing child poverty risk.

GROUP C

	<u>Child poverty risk outcomes</u>	<u>Children living in jobless hhds</u>	<u>Children living in hhds confronted with in-work poverty risk</u>	<u>Impact of social transfers (excl. pensions) on child poverty risk</u>
HU	---	---	-	+
MT	-	--	--	-
UK	--	---	--	+

Source: Maquet and Guio, 2008

Gruppe C (Hungary, Malta and the United Kingdom) comprises countries that record average or poor child poverty risk outcomes. These countries combine high levels of joblessness and in-work poverty risk among parents. (In the UK, joblessness mainly affects single-parent households while in Hungary and Malta it mainly affects couples with children.) In these countries, what may be needed is different policy mixes that would contribute to:

- giving parents in jobless households access to quality jobs; and/or
- enhancing the labour market participation of second earners.

The UK and Hungary manage to alleviate some of the child PR through social benefits, while in Malta it is primarily the strong family structures that contribute to reducing it.

GROUP D

	<u>Child poverty risk outcomes</u>	<u>Children living in jobless hhds</u>	<u>Children living in hhds confronted with in-work poverty risk</u>	<u>Impact of social transfers (excl. pensions) on child poverty risk</u>
EL	--	+++	--	---
ES	---	+	---	---
IT	---	++	---	--
LT	---	+	--	--
LU	--	+++	--	+
LV	---	-	--	--
PL	---	-	--	--
PT	--	+	--	--

Source: Maquet and Guio, 2008

Gruppe D (Greece, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, (Luxembourg), Latvia, Poland and Portugal) consists of countries recording relatively high levels of child poverty risk. While they have low to very low shares of children living in jobless households, they are characterised by very high levels of in-work poverty risk among families. The main factor of in-work poverty in these countries is the low work intensity combined with low pay. The very low impact of social

transfers is a major characteristic of these countries with the exception of LU (which is clearly an outlier in this typology). In several of these countries, family structures and intergenerational solidarity play a major role in mitigating these negative effects.

Countries in this group may need to adopt comprehensive strategies to provide better family income support and to facilitate access to quality jobs, especially for second earners.

4. EU Task-Force on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being: key recommendations on measurement and monitoring issues

Apart from an in-depth benchmarking exercise, the TF report also includes concrete recommendations. Recommendations...

- ... in favour of developing tools for adequate policy monitoring and policy impact assessment at (sub-)national levels
- ... on evidence-based objectives and policies, and on targeting
- ... for regular EU reporting on child poverty and child well-being (by the European Commission and EU countries)
- ... for indicators to better monitor the various dimensions of child well-being at country and EU levels (financial and non-financial aspects)
- ... for adequate statistical developments at (sub-)national and EU levels

These recommendations are thus also part of the EU *acquis* and should be used as such. So far, most of them still need to be concretely implemented.

5. Advancing EU social commitment

In order to truly advance the social commitment of Member States and the EU as a whole, a key objective of the 2010 EU Year against poverty and social exclusion should be to **make target setting a central and highly visible feature of the Social OMC**.

A system should be put in place whereby each individual country should enter a **dialogue with the Commission** to discuss and then adopt appropriate national (and possibly sub-national) outcome targets. These targets should be based on in-depth analytical work and should represent the country's commitment vis-à-vis the Union to move towards the EU overall objective of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion in general... and child poverty and social exclusion in particular. In some cases, intermediate outcome targets would also be needed. Outcome targets would need to be complemented with input targets as appropriate.

Once they have been adopted by individual Member States, these targets should then be widely publicised. Progress towards their achievement should be carefully and regularly monitored and should be reported on (**scoreboard**).

This dialogue between the Commission and individual countries should also involve the commitment of all Member States to improve their performance in each relevant social policy domain, including poverty risk, health, education, housing, employment, active inclusion etc. We urgently

need to see downward trends on all the key dimensions of poverty and social exclusion in every country – and in this context, progress on improving the social inclusion and well-being of children needs to be carefully monitored. The Social OMC indicators I have briefly introduced earlier have a key role to play here as they provide comparative tools for monitoring actual progress made in the various social dimensions by individual Member States and the EU as a whole.

These **national commitments to deliver**, which could be seen as a sort of “social delivery contract” between each country and the Union as a whole (represented by the Commission as the independent EU body), would be a very tangible step towards the Social Progress Pact and its related annual scoreboard evaluation called for by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). They would be fully in line with the spirit of the Social OMC and with the principle of subsidiarity, as the final decision on setting national targets would remain entirely with individual countries.

Seminars and peer reviews could be held to discuss (absence of) progress and enhance policy learning through properly contextualised benchmarking.

Finally, and directly linked to this issue, it is high time to introduce a **much more rigorous approach to policy monitoring and evaluation**, with an increased focus on actual outcomes rather than procedures and with more independent critical analysis of progress made in achieving objectives. In this context, I want to emphasise four key priorities:

- a) to incorporate the commonly agreed EU social indicators more systematically into the Member States' national monitoring and analytical frameworks with a view to enhancing mutual learning;
- b) to improve the statistical and analytical capacity at EU, national and sub-national levels;
- c) to develop social impact assessments in all the relevant policy domains and to use specific peer reviews and trans-national exchange projects to build knowledge in this complex area (in this regard, social experiments may be an important track to investigate); and
- d) to require all countries to have formal arrangements for truly involving civil society organisations and independent experts in monitoring and assessing social inclusion policies on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for your attention.

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CHILD POVERTY WITHIN THE EU FROM THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

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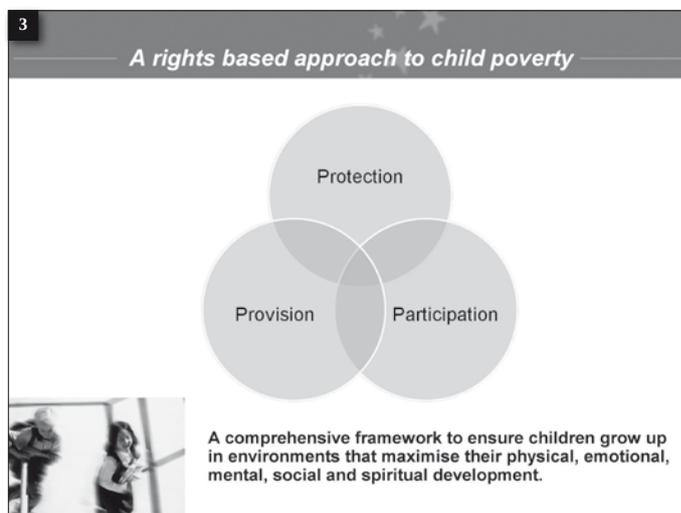
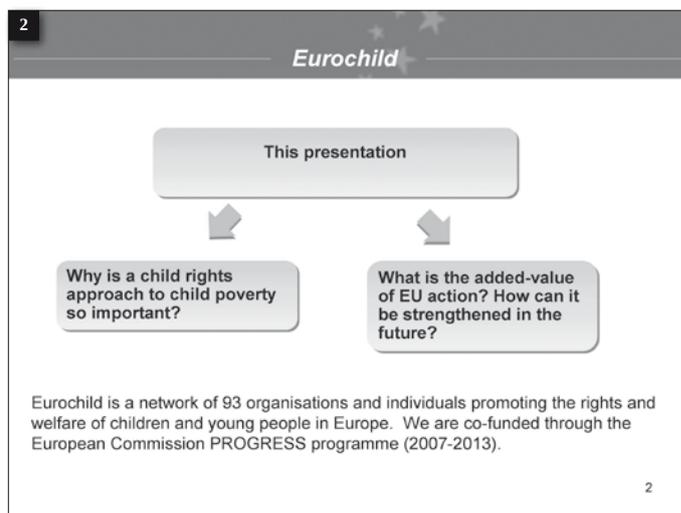
1 | Good afternoon everybody. Thank you very much to the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF) to invite Eurochild to be present at this important event. It is a very timely event. Next year 2010 is the European Year against poverty and social exclusion. We have heard about the 19 million children living at risk of poverty. The situation is probably a lot more serious amongst families and children today: faced with the financial, economic, and now social crisis. I think it is very important that we keep this issue on the top of the political agenda, and I welcome the position paper. I am going to develop my comments on that in this short presentation.

2 | My presentation will focus on two key aspects. Firstly to look at why we believe child rights approach to child poverty is so important. Secondly, I will look at what is the added value of action at European Union level, and how do we feel it can be strengthened in the future.

A brief introduction to Eurochild: We are a pan European network of organisations and individuals, promoting the rights and welfare of children. We have now 93 organisations in membership, covering all of the 27 Member States, and some neighbouring countries. We are co-funded through the PROGRESS programme, which is the European Union's funding programme, accompanying the Open Method of Coordination on social inclusion and social protection that you have heard mentioned already today.

3 | Why is a child rights approach so important to the issue of tackling child poverty?

The UN CRC was adopted in 1989 and is now the most ratified convention in the world - only the US is now going to sign; only Somalia remains out. It works across three areas: the protection of children, provision of services, and children's participation - very importantly. We believe that the Children's Rights Approach is fundamental, because it provides such a comprehensive framework for looking at children, ensuring that children grow up in environments that maximise their potential, both physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. It is a holistic perspective on children. The articles, if you read through the UN CRC, are very comprehensive and multidimensional, and everything has to link in



Why is it important?

➤ **Because it takes the child as a specific unit of analysis**

Child poverty is not synonymous with family poverty. A child's experience is much broader & a child's own view has its own value

➤ **Because it places the responsibility on 'duty bearers'**

Moves away from the notion of need to focus on the capacities of the rights-holder. More empowering.

➤ **Because it demands a holistic perspective**

Requires that measures are taken in a holistic and coordinated way.



together. Unfortunately, what we have seen now with the increasing perspective on child poverty is that we see the Child Rights agenda and the Child Poverty agenda almost developing on parallel lines, whenever the twain will meet. I was very pleased to hear from the Swedish Presidency this morning the importance of a Child Rights approach.

4 | What makes it different than in how we develop the policies? Because it looks at the child from a specific unit of analysis. So, it is not necessarily completely synonymous with family poverty. Of course family poverty is important, but a child has its own specific perspective, and it looks at other arenas for children more broadly: in education, in health, in environment, and in relationship with its peers. Very importantly, we want to stress the links to listening to children's own perspective. There are lots of good examples of how children's participation is working in practice, to see the children as citizens in their own rights from the earliest years.

A child rights perspective is also important, because it puts the onus on duty bearers. It is looking very much at the empowerment model, focusing away from a notion of need, which is a more traditional role looking at charity towards children, to seeing children, as I mentioned, as citizens in their own rights, and as active agents in their own development. Lastly, as I have already mentioned, it demands a holistic perspective. If you take the UN CRC as your point of entry, you are immediately confronted with looking at all of the different dimensions of child well-being.

5 | Here is one good practice example, and I am sure that there are many others. One of our members is Children in Wales, and they have been advocating very strongly with the government for a framework that looks at child poverty within a broader framework of child well-being. They have developed seven core aims, which are also linked to articles in the UN CRC. I should say that this presentation is based on a written speech. You will get a copy of that. It also includes the links to all of the UN CRC articles on which this framework is based.

Let's look at what is the added value of action at the European Union level. The Open Method of Coordination on social inclusion and social protection we see as a crucial tool.

6 | Eurochild has been monitoring the national strategy reports that Eric has just mentioned from the 27 Member States, since 2004. Most recently, we produced an analysis of the 2008- 2010 national strategy reports. You will find a synthesis report at the entrance of the hall. We have just now produced a short summary of the country on a country-by-country basis, looking at how Member States are performing in terms of achieving a child rights approach to tackling poverty. We believe that the national action plans are important. There needs to be an on-going reinforcement of the OMC, and now I am looking forward to 2010. This is a crucial opportunity for us to put child poverty higher up on the agenda with commitments from all of the Member States.

A good practice example

2008 Children and Young People's Well-being Monitor – Welsh Assembly Government

- Core Aim 1: Every child should have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development
- Core Aim 2: Every child and young person has access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including the acquisition of essential personal and social skills
- Core Aim 3: Enjoying the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
- Core Aim 4: All children have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- Core Aim 5: All children and young people are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised
- Core Aim 6: All children and young people should have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional well-being
- Core Aim 7: No child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty

Political action at EU level

Eurochild monitors and seeks to influence Member States' commitments to tackling child poverty in the Social Open Method of Coordination

Contributions to the OMC

NAPs follow-up



Report: Ending Child Poverty within the EU – a review of the 2008-2010 National Strategy Reports on Social Protection & Social Inclusion

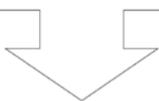


7

Past work under the Social OMC on child poverty

Study on child poverty & well-being in the EU, 2004
 Thematic priority under the Social OMC on child poverty, 2007

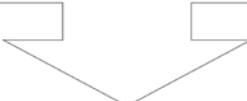
- EU-wide peer reviews
- Analysis of the network of non-governmental experts on social inclusion (2007)
- SPC Report on Child poverty and well-being in the EU, current status & way forward (2008)




8

On-going work under the Social OMC on child poverty

Study on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being in the EU
 OECD, quality proofing of international indicators to help select appropriate EU common indicators to measure child well-being




7 | Let's look back a little bit at where we are: Child poverty has risen up the political agenda since the 2000. This study that was carried out in 2004 by Petra Hoelscher is one important building block. But, then there was the 2007 thematic priority that Eric has mentioned, which resulted in the task-force report on child poverty and well-being. I would encourage everybody to look at that, because it is a very useful analysis and benchmarking exercise across all of the EU Member States. That was an important work in terms of getting greater knowledge base and consensus of the multidimensional approach to child poverty.

Unfortunately, what we found in the analysis of last year's report is that actually Member States, although they participated in the year and in the knowledge analysis, haven't to a great extent implemented the lessons that have been learned through that process. There is on-going work as Eric already mentioned that will hopefully give more resources and support for a broader approach to tackling child poverty.

8 | I mentioned that there is an on-going study on child poverty and child well-being that will come up with some recommendations on child well-being

ing indicators towards the end of the end of this year, hopefully for adoption next year. There is also strong collaboration between the European Union and OECD, which- as I understand- is quality proofing international data rather than indicators in order to help the EU select more appropriate indicators in measurement of child well-being in the future.

9 | In parallel to this agenda, linked to the Social OMC, what we also have seen is a greater visibility to children's rights on the EU agenda. In 2006 there was a EU communication adopted by the different commissioners on fundamental rights, but led by the justice department. It committed the EU to developing a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the European Union contributes to promoting and safeguarding children's rights in all internal and external actions. The progress since the adoption of that communication in 2006 has been disappointingly slow. There is the event of the Swedish Presidency now taking place on 20th November, and there is most recently a Stockholm communication, which also stresses that the EU will give priority to adopting this ambitious EU strategy on the rights of the child as a matter of priority.

We are looking forward to 2010, not just as the year in which there is reinforcement of the Social OMC, including the targets to tackle child poverty, but also for the launch of a comprehensive EU strategy on the rights of the child. This strategy also includes within it a cluster of actions focusing on child poverty. So there are two that are wholly complementary to one another and should be tackled together.

What are we advocating for in the future to strengthen the EU's role and to tackle child poverty and promote child well-being? We would like to see the adoption of a EU recommendation on child poverty and well-being, hopefully in 2010. But, if we can launch already a communication with a wide consultation that would engage all relevant stakeholders, we could launch that in 2010 with a recommendation in 2011. Recommendations were actually included in a communication of the European Commission in 2008 on the reinforcement of the OMC. And we also saw last year the adoption of a EU recommendation on active inclusion that has been mentioned several times today. This underlines some key guiding principals around the three pillars of employment, income, and services. We feel that there is already an important step forward how we can have within the framework of the OMC a stronger, more directive influence on Member State policy and convergence of views.

10 | What is important in terms of content for this EU recommendation? It should include quantitative targets. Eric has already inferred the need for

the social contracts at national level. We feel that we need a EU target to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Without that kind of visibility at EU level, it will always be the poor brother or sister of other strategies such as the employment strategy or the Lisbon growth in jobs, which have quantitative targets onto which Member States are held accountable on an annual basis onto which gain greater visibility. We would like to see a EU level target to eradicating child poverty. Our target at the moment would be for a 50% reduction of child poverty by 2020 - towards the long-term eradication of child poverty. Ideally, that should be 50% across all EU Member States.

We want to see that child poverty is integrated into overarching strategies for the well-being of children.

Next year Spain holds the EU Presidency from January to June. In Spain they are also launching a new framework for children. I think it is important to make sure that there is this overarching framework for children of which tackling poverty is one key dimension, but only one of the dimensions for improving well-being. This links to the whole issue of cross department, cross policy working. For us, you cannot tackle child poverty without looking at the housing dimension, without looking at health, education, leisure, and participation.

We want to see that there is much more consideration of what the views and experiences of children and their families are. We can only do this by means of much more participatory work. As I mentioned, there are very good examples of how children from a young age are participating and seen as protagonists in their own right, influencing the environment around them. There needs to be an on-going involvement. It is not a one-off event, but it needs to engage and empower children and families on an on-going basis.

Clearly we need to have public communication and much greater public awareness about the importance of tackling poverty and social exclusion and accountability. There are tools available, and I think that the annual scoreboard would be an excellent tool that we could all use, and it would be very publically accessible and easy to use. I think that there are many more tools that the EU can promote within such a recommendation. We also need to make sure that we are taking account of the situation of the most vulnerable children. When we look through the national strategy reports on social inclusion and social protection, there are often issues tackling family poverty. But, what about those children that are the most excluded, the unaccompanied minors, those children that are living without parental care in institutions? The risk is that their issues are forgotten in and amongst the broader issue of poverty and social exclusion. So we need to have targeted measures within the framework of a universal approach to child well-being.

9

+ the Child Rights Agenda

- **2006 Communication – Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child – COM(2006) 367**
This was the first EU policy document specifically on children's rights. It commits the EU to developing "a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the European Union contributes to promoting and safeguarding children's rights in all its internal and external actions and supports the efforts of the Member States in this field"
- **2009 Stockholm Communication – An Area of Freedom, Justice and Security Serving the Citizen - COM(2009) 262**
This recent Communication from DG Justice, Freedom and Security re-commits the EU to adopting "an ambitious EU strategy on the rights of the child" as a matter of priority.

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WHAT NEXT?

An EU Recommendation on child poverty and well-being

- Including quantitative targets
- Integrated into a over-arching strategy for children
- Linked clearly into all other relevant policies
- Based on the views and experiences of children and families – with on-going involvement
- Clearly communicated to ensure public awareness and accountability
- Takes account of the most vulnerable children

10

11 | In terms of specific measures, I am coming now to the position paper that AGF has developed. Obviously, you mentioned that it is work in progress. I think it is a good starting point. One thing that we are missing is: it is very important that we have it within an overall framework of children's rights.

Coming to the specific measures: it could be useful to use the pillars that were developed for the EU recommendation on active inclusion, looking at employment, income, and services. Obviously employment is much more than measures to tackle in-work poverty, but we clearly heard that that is a key issue. I think it is a third of children in Romania who have two parents working. That is an incredible figure to be addressed. We really have to look that it is not just about getting parents back into work; it is also about creating stable, permanent, well paid jobs that can enable people to live in dignity and give opportunities to children to develop in an optimal environment. In terms of income: maybe Michaela Moser, who is representing the EAPN network, will talk tomorrow about the possibility of a EU framework directive on minimum income. Many Member States already have legislation on minimum income, but that is by no means all. That is something that maybe we could work at within the European Year to look at what is the minimum income, particularly for families with children.

Then looking more broadly at services, you certainly develop some within the position paper. But, I think that there is much more there to be developed in terms of nutrition; clearly the whole area of early years: What might be the earliest age we can start working with children and families to make sure that they have the opportunities to the right choices? The whole issue of family and parenting support for us is absolutely crucial. In Eurochild we have a specific working group looking at early years, education and care, where we are trying to advocate for more universal services - at least from the age of one, where it is not just linking early years to employment. So, saying, "You can only access early year services if you are going to work." No, I think children need to have that kind of social stimulus, but we also need to engage families through those services. It is not the one or the other: mothers, fathers caring for children in the home or having childcare services. I think it needs to be a comprehensive framework for ensuring that children have the best opportunities from the earliest age.

That is what we are developing for our inputs towards the European Year 2010, hoping that there will be a wide consultation for a EU recommendation on child poverty and well-being, which will then also link in, as I mentioned, to the EU strategy on the rights of the child. I very much hope that with the high-level commitment and the engagement of all of the participants here

11

Specific measures?

An EU Recommendation on child poverty and well-being

- **Employment**
e.g. Measures to tackle in-work poverty
- **Income**
e.g. EU framework directive on minimum income
- **Services**
Including education, health, nutrition, housing, leisure, family support

11

Eurochild

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

How to find out more....

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and the high-level speakers that we can assume that there is a real acknowledgement of the urgency of this issue and a willingness to put it up on the top of the agenda. We, as Eurochild, are very willing to work with you to develop that position. Our inputs for the EU recommendation we will be developing with our members. We have a policy working group on September 17, and we have already developed a draft of our input to this EU recommendation that we will be working on with members, so to finalise that. I look forward to our future collaboration.

PANEL DISCUSSION

No Trace of Equal Opportunities – When will an effective Policy against Child Poverty get off the Ground?

Panellists:

William Lay, *Director COFACE, Brussels*

Dr Michaela Moser, *Vice President EAPN, Brussels/Vienna*

Gabriele Zimmer, *MEP, GUE/NGL*

Moderator:

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe, *Journalist, Weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT, Germany*

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Welcome to our podium discussion, which we will conduct with experts, some of whom work in Brussels and can give us a more accurate insight into what is possible in Brussels and what is already happening there.

In the days preceding the conference I noticed that most people just shook their heads on the topic of this symposium “Child poverty – a European challenge!”. This probably stems from the fact that most people have this image of the EU as being everything but a social organisation, but exactly the opposite, in the first instance committed to the interests of business and then possibly specifically the big conglomerates.

I think that the EU really has a big need to catch up as far as social issues are concerned. The topic of child poverty in this regard is certainly of crucial importance. The Lisbon Strategy already mentioned here has in fact set itself the goal to turn Europe into the most competitive and most dynamic economic zone in the world by the year 2010. However it is also mentioned there that bigger social cohesion and combating exclusion and discrimination would be tackled more convincingly until 2010. Unfortunately one finds – and this also is the title of our podium discussion – that to date equality of opportunity for children from all families is a mere dream.

And at this discussion we now want to ask what has become of the sustainable policy against child poverty. For this discussion I welcome on my left William Lay. Since 1983 he has been the director of COFACE, an umbrella body of family organisations in the EU. He works in Brussels advocating for children and families in relation with the EU institutions. I also welcome very warmly Michaela Moser. Michaela Moser joins us from the Austrian Conference on Poverty, which is a network against poverty and exclusion. Simultaneously Ms Moser is the Vice President of the European Anti-Poverty Network, in short EAPN. And last but not least I welcome Gabi Zimmer warmly. Gabi Zimmer, the former PDS chairwoman, has represented “Die Linke” in the European Parlia-

ment since 2004 and is involved especially in the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs. Unfortunately I have to tell you that Ms Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, whom we also invited today, cancelled at short notice.

Mr Lay, you have been active in Brussels for over 25 years and are committed to combating poverty and strengthening families. What is it like in Brussels, from the Brussels perspective? Here in Germany one has to say that the topic of child poverty in principle only became part of the awareness of people ten years ago, until then it was a taboo. What was the situation in Brussels, how was it across Europe?

William Lay: Thank you very much for giving me the floor first.

If you are asking me about the sort of memory that I have years ago on the issue and topic of poverty in general: In the 80s there was a first European programme on poverty, which was adopted by the Member States and implemented by the European Commission.

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Was it about child poverty?

William Lay: It was on poverty in general. Then there was a second programme, etc. I think we went up to three. Then, when there was a renewal needed, there was a blockage from one of the countries. As you know, you just mentioned in which country it was a taboo; it was Germany, in fact. It was just after the fall of the Berlin wall, and it was suggested that in Germany there was no poverty.

I remember, at that time we had a German President in COFACE, Albrecht Hasinger. Maybe someone in the room remembers him. He was approached by the European Commission to convince the German authorities that indeed there was poverty in Germany and that it was necessary to tackle this poverty. Indeed, as you said, it was “taboo”. Now, since about ten years the topic

of poverty has become very high on the agenda . I would say luckily, because there is no point in fighting poverty without talking about it and giving it visibility. We were talking about awareness raising, etc, and pressure to be put on the institutions, especially on Member State governments I would say.

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Did things become better in the last ten years?

William Lay: Yes, indeed; with the implementation of the OMC, etc. It has really changed. I must immediately add that this is all very necessary. But, as you already said in your introduction that social policy is a poor parent, if you may put it like that, at European level. It is more about economics, industry, trade, agriculture, etc.

But social policy is still very much a question of competence - in all social fields, in fact- even employment, which is maybe the most advanced policy in the social field at European level. But, in all policies relating to social issues it is the Member States that still have the main competence. Any progress made with the OMC, with the Lisbon Strategy, the social inclusion strategy, also in equal opportunities between men and women is very important and plays a role in the fight against poverty. As it was said many times, I think it is a comprehensive approach. This is something that we are now addressing, I think, really seriously. However, there are still quite a few nuts to crack to really make progress in policy terms.

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Ms Moser, do you see this similarly or are you rather sceptical as far as the developments of the last ten years are concerned? We here in Germany really have the impression - but this may have to do with our previous blindness - that child poverty has exploded enormously in the last ten years.

Dr Michaela Moser: If you follow e.g. the reports of the European meetings of people with experiences of poverty – this takes place annually in Brussels - one of the central points which is always brought up remains the lack of noticeable progress. There are perhaps numerous relevant political measures which are taken, but which don't necessarily reach the people for whom they were intended. We also must accept that some positive results as we saw, e.g. in the presentation by Mr Marlier, are under permanent threat in some countries - I can even speak in this case of e.g. Austria. That also means that for us as NGOs the last ten years were not only spent fighting for improvements but also to insure that where sensible positive measures exist, these are not cut. And I believe when one looks at this promise with the decisive contribution one also has to look at the Lisbon Strategy in toto. I believe that the thrust

now has to be a socially and also ecologically sustainable Europe. That has to impact on the total strategy, otherwise combating child poverty, combating poverty generally cannot really gain a foothold. I believe that this is an important lesson of the last ten years.

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Ms Zimmer, is the EU really the right institution to take on the fight against child poverty? Is the EU not in fact very restricted in its possibilities vis-à-vis national governments?

Gabriele Zimmer: Of course it is so. This, however, relates to the self-understanding on the part of the European Union itself. The European Union was not born out of the blue, but it is the product of political will or of numerous political wills which manifested themselves and developed over many years. I regard it as a problem especially in the discussion on the fight against poverty and against social exclusion always just to point out that it is an issue for the national states, and that the European Union has nothing to do with it. And we notice, of course, that e.g., also in the Commission changes have occurred in the relevant areas of responsibility. There are increasingly more people who say: "It can't be that the European Union is not even prepared to accept concrete goals for combating poverty and social exclusion". And in this regard the discussion in the European Parliament on this matter is also very interesting, and I do believe that we have made progress in the last legislative session in parliament.

On the one hand we had the report in 2008, for which I was co-responsible, on measures for combating poverty, social exclusion, especially child poverty in the European Union. After all, two thirds of the members of the European Parliament voted in favour of it. And for the first time we had a document of the European Parliament which clearly demanded: as a majority of members of the European Parliament we want clear goals in combating poverty, in combating child poverty

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: Mr Lay, we have a number of countries in the EU which have indeed been successful in the fight against child poverty and could serve as a role model for the rest of the countries. But Mr Hoofe, State Secretary in the Ministry of Family Affairs has said this morning that it is not possible to import panaceas. Do you also see it like that, or are there panaceas, which you could recommend to the other EU states?

William Lay: Yes, I would say, what has been happening in social policy, in general, in the European Union up to now has been mainly, because of the lack of competence, exchanges of experience and information. Going a bit further now with the Open Method of Coordination, etc, with objec-

tives, indicators, with peer reviews, reports, and so on. So, all this works towards learning from another and saying, “Well, in that country it is working; why is it not working in our country?” It is important that these exchanges happen. Each country has its own history and culture. You cannot compare the Scandinavian countries and their progressive policies with countries that have just come out of the communist period. The levels of development in each country are different. Also, the contents of social policy are different. The philosophy may be more traditional like the Mediterranean countries towards the family, whereas the Scandinavian countries will have a different approach to families.

Indeed, there are major differences, which don't always make things easy, but, in general, we can see that across the 50 odd years of the existence of the European Union, there has been major progress made in terms of social development, in general, for the European population. I would say that we mustn't be too pessimistic about the current picture in the EU,

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe: One is reminded of the Portuguese situation.

Portugal was Europe's poorhouse before accession to the EU. In the meantime we have other poorhouses, but Portugal has developed further over the years – with EU assistance – and hence improved the situation for Portuguese children. Nonetheless it does not help us that we always refer to the development in the standard of living and hence to economic developments. This has also been demonstrated by the questions posed by you in the audience. Here in Germany one demand is: All children should have equal opportunities of education. Is there a EU-discussion on educational equity as an important aspect in the fight against child poverty?

Dr Michaela Moser: Education of course enjoys high priority in combating poverty generally, and especially when we talk about child poverty. I believe, however, that it is important to apply a very comprehensive concept for education. On the one hand we have, and this naturally is very important, school- and pre-school education. That has already been mentioned today. In this regard there are serious problems in many countries, especially as far as the differences of access and quality are concerned. This is most important also in connection with the rise in the standard of living. But it has not improved equally for all people in the same country. The fact that a country grows wealthier, does not mean at all that everyone in that country can share equally in its wealth. I believe what is important, especially in view of the input regarding the rights of children, is to be aware of the subjective attachment (“Subjekthaftigkeit”) of children and also the importance of building

personality, the development of social competencies, to apply a broad concept for education in this regard. I see this very clearly in our environment and in working with people with experiences of poverty, which children with experiences of poverty have too.

I also believe that this knowledge about the world – how one moves in the world – is of growing importance in the labour market, but of course also for dealing with the challenges in one's own life.

Gabriele Zimmer: Education is not a policy matter for the European Union in this sense, but unfortunately it is treated very separately. So we have the issue of occupational training, which is being dealt with, e.g. in the Committee for Social Affairs and Employment. In the Committee for Culture and Education the issue of access to universities, tertiary education and the comparability of university degrees is discussed. But the total approach to education as a holistic approach unfortunately does not play a role in the European Union in this particular sense.

The issues of early childhood learning and education which are also discussed in the EU, where, from my point of view, one could utilise the OMC, i.e. the instrument to discuss the exchange of experiences, the generalisation of experiences of Member States, so that other states can use it as orientation. So I find that there is a lot that can be done.

William Lay: Yes, on education: as you said, education is really a national competence, but the European Union has taken a few decisions - even decided on a directive in the education field. There is a European directive on the schooling of migrant children, which was voted, I believe, in 1977 and updated a few years ago. We mustn't forget either, all the different European education programmes that have been set up, whether it be Comenius for secondary education, Leonardo for professional and vocational training, Erasmus for university level students, etc. I think these are very important issues, and the Commission, and the European Union in general, have gone as far as they can at the moment in terms of education.

In the further course of the discussion, during which Ulrike Meyer-Timpe also asked Eric Marlier and Jana Hainsworth onto the podium, the participants reconsidered the contents of the discussion and the speeches.

Ulrike Meyer-Timpe pointed out that **EU statistics** could lead to a relativisation of poverty perception, for example in a comparison between Germany and Romania, which could lead to a positive perception of child poverty in Germany. In his response Eric Marlier emphasised the ne-

cessity for real benchmarking. What needed to be examined, was what stood behind the poverty statistics of each state: whether there were states facing similar challenges or others which had either already coped with them successfully or had never had them. Benchmarking should help countries to better understand their own situation and to improve it.

Marion MacLeod (*Children in Scotland, UK*) expressed her concern whether **quantitative targets/indicators** made governments focus on those people who just failed to meet the target rather than those who needed a huge amount of investment and support before they were ever going to get near the target. She wanted to know, how the indicators could be qualified or modified to take account of this problem. Regarding this aspect Eric Marlier referred to several indicators: poverty gap, material deprivation, housing. So the poverty gap would be the measurement of the severity of poverty, it would give an idea of the median poor in each country. Now, the key challenge would not be to add more and more indicators, but the countries and the European Union would have to use these indicators to emphasise what would work and what wouldn't.

Günter Danhel (*Institut für Ehe und Familie, Austria*) challenged the discussion on the issue of placing greater emphasis on the political impact of children and families in the political and also congressional environment. As an example he mentioned the debate on introducing **a right to vote from birth** onwards, in the context of demographic developments.

Jana Hainsworth did not expect a huge amount of support from Eurochild members for giving parents the automatic right to vote on behalf of their children - which would be what the suggestion of Mr Danhel would finally lead to - even though the early participation of children in political debates would be welcomed.

The possibility of countries conducting surveys among children to obtain their views as well was mentioned by Eric Marlier.

James O'Brien (*Finland*) asked **for indicators to measure levels of poverty amongst children who live outside of households**, e.g. on the streets or in institutional care. There was no comparative information available between countries, explained Eric Marlier, but a few countries collected information of a more qualitative nature, for example on Roma children. There was a willingness on the part of both the European Union and the states to invest in statistical capacity building in order to better address measurement of this extremely deprived and excluded population.

Jana Hainsworth emphasised the ongoing work of Eurochild on the issue of children without pa-

rental care. She stressed the difficulty to get comparative figures, because, for example, countries defined residential care and foster care differently. Nevertheless, there was evidence, that those adults who were socially most excluded might have some experience about residential home care.

Ernest Geze (*Slovakia*) turned the discussion of child poverty to the question of **measurement of care and love**, aspects also being important for a child's development.

Michaela Moser referred to the possibility to conduct studies for the quality of the life of children and also to the fact that material- and social factors overlap strongly. She stressed, that the discussion about labour market policy and reproductive care work had become slightly out of fashion. Actually it should be about taking a close view of "work as a whole" (Adelheid Biesecker), e.g. considering the different work processes in which people were involved. Especially when bringing up children, supporting them, the aspect of care work and with that also labour market policy were very important. This was too often ignored in the political debate, also in the child poverty debate. It would have a very big effect, e.g. on policy regarding work time. The question posed itself how the aspect of care could be implemented sensibly in a social security system, which was very much focused on employment at the moment.

Marion MacLeod pointed out how important it was when working with individual children and families, to look not only at the things that risked bad outcomes for them, but at the factors in their lives and circumstances that might mitigate against these bad outcomes, especially because there was no clear evidence that wealth and happiness were highly correlated. It was important to look at these holistic indicators particularly at an individual level.

The experts agreed that love and care were not measurable as such.

Elvira Mendez (*Asociación Salud y Familia, Spain*) asked for political strategies and measurements for better health care and education for **irregular migrant children**. Gabriele Zimmer took up the point and explained that in the discussions on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and around the different proposals submitted by the Commission, it was repeatedly noticed that especially the aspect of children of male and female migrants was completely under-exposed. She stressed that much more attention had to be paid to the situation of these migrant children.

Hiltrud Stöcker-Zafari (*Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, Frankfurt/M.*) pointed out that Germany had signed the **UN Children's Rights Convention** only with certain caveats and

hence also had the option of treating children that weren't German passport bearers differently. She also stressed the fact, that migrant background was regarded as an indicator of poverty. It should be considered that due to the **lack of recognition given to foreign training certificates** access to the labour market was more difficult and these families were being kept in poverty as a kind of domestic policy.

Ute Gerhard (*Evangelische Aktionsgemeinschaft für Familienfragen, Berlin*) asked how it could really be possible - beyond the normal policy of the free market - to give **social issues and children's rights greater impetus at the EU level**, even if the EU was not responsible for all social issues. Gabriele Zimmer considered this to be an essential question, which related to the character, the development, the future of the European Union, and in which more people should involve themselves. This issue should not be left to governments alone, or to hoping that the European Parliament would solve it.

Kai Sachs (*Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Schleswig-Holstein*) stated that he missed the **participation of children and youths in political debates and on the congressional level** as partners with the same rights, so that their views could be considered and the issues not left exclusively to experts. Michaela Moser demanded greater participation of children and youths, which would go beyond mere questioning of their views. Jana Hainsworth also appreciated the fundamental change in the perception of children's own capacity and ability to participate fully in decisions that affected themselves. It should be asked, how children's own perception of well-being could be integrated into the monetary system. The lack of participation and the question of how to realise such participation were noticed as general desiderata by the discussants.

WELCOME

Peggi Liebisch
Managing Director
Verband alleinerziehender Mütter und Väter
– Bundesverband (VAMV) e.V., AGF e.V., Berlin

Dear participants,

I'm Peggi Liebisch. I'm managing director of the Single Parents' Association (VAMV) and today welcome you very sincerely on behalf of the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs (AGF), which has organised and is running this conference. I will lead you through this day and chair the discussion and also make organisational announcements. I hope that you had an enjoyable evening and a pleasant night. After having been given an overview of many areas, we will have the opportunity today for making more personal contributions. There is a seminar part today, which will take the form of a "Café Europe" in which you may want to participate actively.

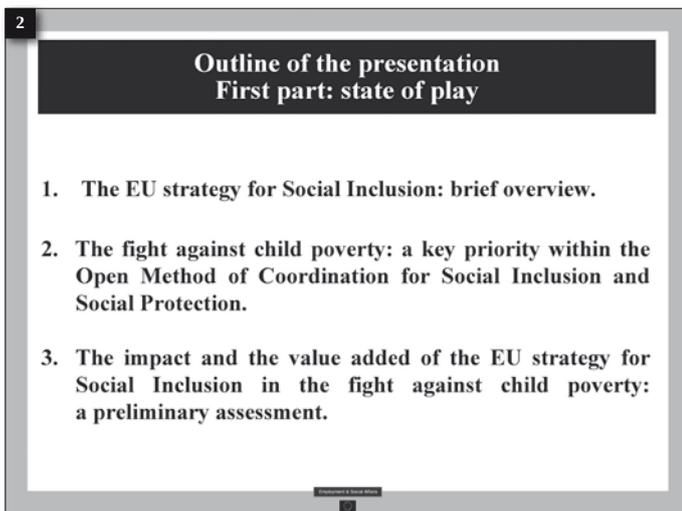
This morning we would like to hear two presentations: Our first speaker is Ms Antonia Carparelli from the EU Commission in Brussels. I am awaiting her presentation with great anticipation, because we were already given a few key points yesterday on what the EU Commission itself has set as a goal regarding combating poverty and especially combating child poverty. Ms Carparelli is the Director in the EU Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and Equality of Opportunity, and she will talk extensively about the EU's strategies in the fight against child poverty. A hearty word of welcome, Ms Carparelli!

EU STRATEGIES AGAINST CHILD POVERTY

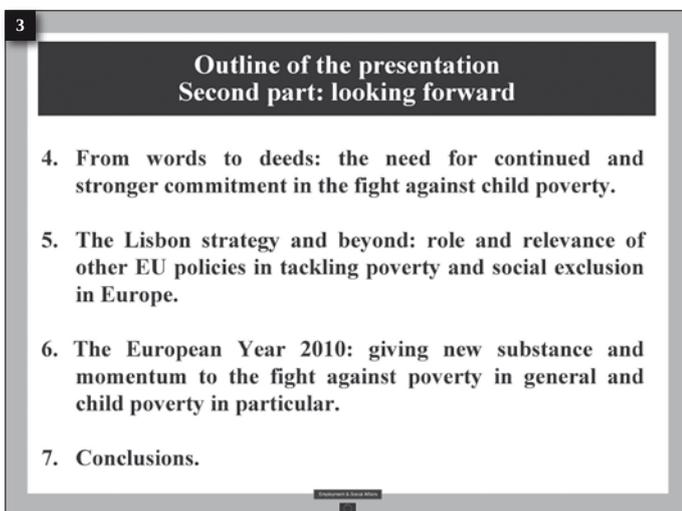
Antonia Carparelli
Head of Unit at the EU-Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and
Equal Opportunities, Brussels



1 | I would like to thank the Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs for organising this event in this wonderful place. I know that yesterday you had a very fruitful session with some insight already of what the European Union does in the field of fighting child poverty. Today I will give an overview of what the European strategy to fight child poverty is. For some of you this will be a repetition, I know, but I hope that there will be a sufficient number of people that will still find this repetition useful.



2 | 3 | I intend to organise my intervention in two parts. The first part is about the state of play, so basically a stocktaking of what has been done over the last ten years. In the second part I will look at key policy developments that are likely to influence the European strategy in the months and years to come.

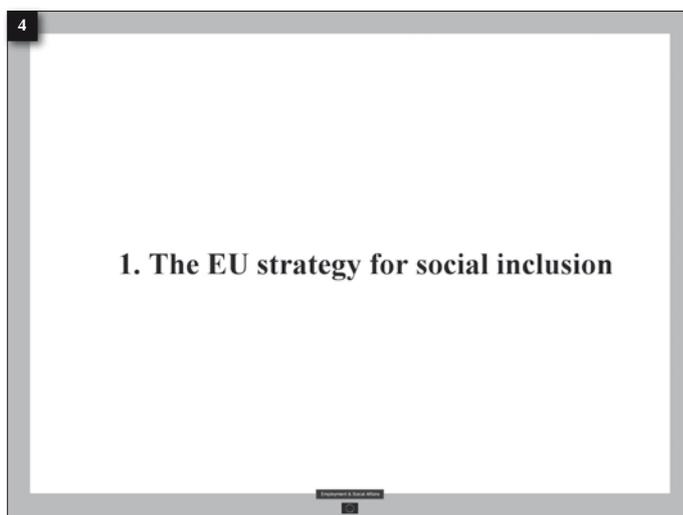


4 | So, let me start with the first part, which has to do with a presentation of the so-called Open Method of Coordination for Social Inclusion and Social Protection. This strategy has been in place for almost ten years now. It was initiated in coincidence with the launching of the Lisbon Strategy, when the heads of state and European ministers decided to give a higher profile to the long-standing commitment of the European Union to fight poverty and exclusion.

5 | The Open Method of Coordination is a voluntary method of cooperation because social protection is mainly a national competence, not a European competence. However, all ministers and heads of state agreed that there is a common interest in fighting poverty and exclusion. Therefore, there was a point in furthering European commitment in this field. The Open Method of Coordination is based on common objectives. Progress towards these objectives is monitored and assessed through common indicators. I know that you were lectured yesterday in greater detail by Eric Marlier who has actually been, I would say, a direct protagonist of this process of definition and construction of the common indicators.

Then it is about the translation of the European objectives in national strategies. The Member States are committed to present national reports and national strategies to fight poverty and social exclusion. These reports are now presented every three years. The process has been reformed over the last ten years. Now, it is organised as a three-year cycle. Every three years the Member States prepare their national strategies. They are jointly reviewed by the Member States and the Commission and are assessed in a joint report. It is not something which happens every three years and then stops, because there are two intermediate years which are focused on a more in-depth analysis and reporting on some of the themes that have emerged in the national strategies. The method was accompanied by a Community Action Programme, which provided financial support for the activities related to the Open Method of Coordination.

Since 2007 the Community Action Programme has been replaced by the PROGRESS programme. It finances studies, development of statistics, projects and support to European networks, because the “governance” dimension is an important one in the Open Method of Coordination. It also finances peer reviews, which are a core element of the Open Method of Coordination. These are exercises where some Member States present a best practice or a major issue they are facing and discuss it with other Member States. As I said, this may be repetition for many of you, but I hope that I have given the elements for a comprehensive reminder.



Main themes in the EU social inclusion process

- **Active inclusion** (Adequate Income support, Inclusive labour markets, Access to quality services)
- **Child poverty** (2007 Report on child poverty and well-being)
- **Housing exclusion and homelessness** (2009)
- **Social aspects of migration and social inclusion of ethnic minorities** (2010)
- **Other more specific themes** (Financial inclusion, Rural poverty, Extreme poverty)
- **Cross-cutting themes** (poverty and health, pension adequacy, social services).

6 | Another useful reminder may be a reference to the common objectives. In 2000, European ministers committed to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion. This commitment was articulated in the three common objectives for social inclusion, which were defined in 2001. Let me comment on the three objectives, because they follow a method which you will find also in the other areas of the Open Method of Coordination. The first one has to do with solidarity. So, it is about access for all to resources, rights, and services needed for participation in society. The second one has to do with effectiveness and efficiency. Because social inclusion is not only about solidarity, but it is also about active social inclusion and participation, because this is good for societies, “good for all”. We want to promote participation in the labour market, because this is not only good for the excluded, but also good for the society as a whole. The third objective has to do with governance, with good governance. So, policies have to be well coordinated, and the involvement of the people who are directly concerned is a crucial element of the strategy. I would like to underline this point, which was a new element in a way in the Open Method of Coordination - the idea to create the condition for good policies. We have to build bottom-up processes, so starting from the people who are most directly concerned.

The Open Method of Coordination, as I said, has been in place for almost ten years now. Throughout the period we have seen a number of themes emerging more forcefully than others I would say.

7 | Let me review the themes which have been on the agenda of the OMC more frequently and with more force. One of them is child poverty, and I will deal with it in greater detail in a few minutes. Let me give a rapid reference to the other themes. First of all, the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market: so, the problem of people who do not have access to the labour market and do not have access to adequate resources to live in dignity. The Commission has done a lot of work on this issue. I correct myself, the European Union has done a lot of work, because this is not only the Commission’s work, but it is also Member States’ work. It was just last year that the Commission issued an important piece of community “soft law”, a recommendation to Member States. The recommendation has to do with how to cope with the exclusion from labour market, from society, throughout adequate income support, provision of services, and possible integration in the labour market.

I am presenting here more or less the issues in chronological order, because they have also been the object of the thematic years when we have for one year devoted our work on this theme. The second issue, our main issue, is child poverty, which was the theme of the 2007 thematic year. It produced the report, which I suppose has been presented in great detail by Eric, who has been one of the authors of the report. Last year, 2008, was a full year cycle. So, members safely sent their reports. This year is a thematic year, which we are devoting to housing, exclusion, and homelessness. We have already, more or less, agreed with the social protection committee, which is the committee support- the main reference structure for the Open Method of Coordination. We have decided that the next year will be devoted to the social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities.

There are also other, more specific themes on which work is ongoing. Let me mention them rapidly. We also try to respond to the requests of Member States which feel particularly strong in some areas. This was the case of the rural poverty in some new Member States. It is the case of extreme poverty, financial inclusion. We have tried to build knowledge in these areas and to use our tools: peer reviews, exchanges of experience, conferences, studies, etc. Of course, we try to keep an eye on all the crosscutting themes related to the other two strands which are part of the OMC process. These are health, long-term care, and pension. There are strong links between the three areas.

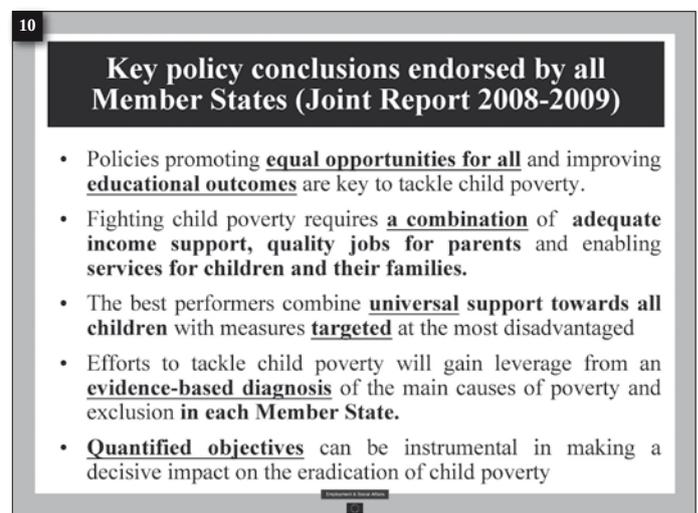
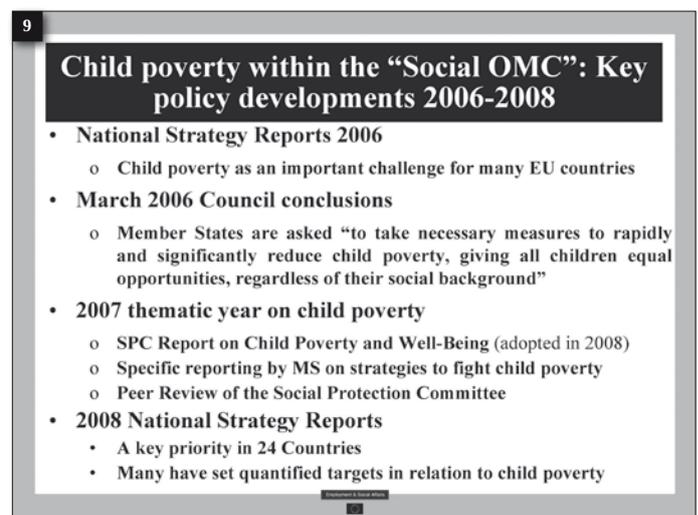
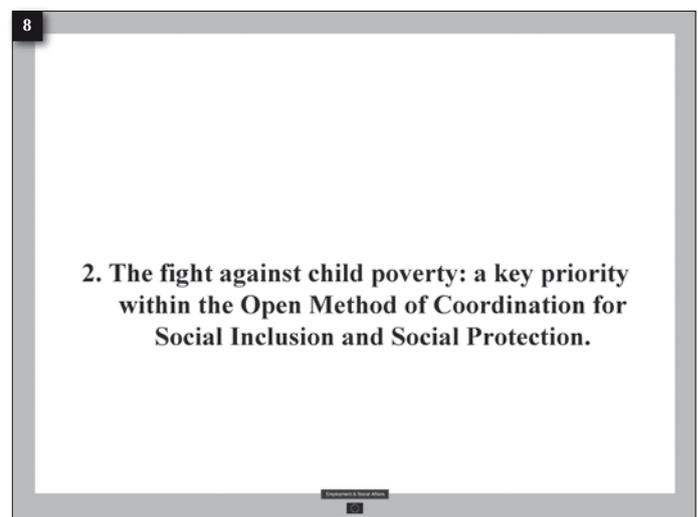
8 | Let me now focus more on what we have achieved through the Open Method of Coordination in the area of child poverty. As I said, this was since the beginning a key theme in the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

9 | There was an important pronouncement of the European Council in March 2006, which was also paralleled by the fact that in the national strategy report, child poverty did appear as an important issue. In the spring council of 2006, the heads of state asked Member States to take necessary measures to achieve a rapid and significant reduction of child poverty, giving all children equal opportunities regardless of their social background.

As a result, in 2007 Member States and the Commission worked together on the report which I already mentioned. The Member States accepted to make special reporting on their strategies to fight child poverty. The Social Protection Committee engaged in an in-depth peer review to examine these strategies. We are already seeing how this has moved the policy agenda in Member States that had not indicated this as a priority in their 2006 reports. Actually, in the national strategy reports 2008, 24 countries have signalled child poverty as a priority for them. 17 countries have set quantified targets in the fight against poverty. I would say that this is, at least on paper, a very important achievement.

10 | Maybe this has been touched upon yesterday, but it is useful to summarise the common wisdom that the Member States and the Commission have put together throughout this process. Here is a list of points which summarises the common understanding of the key elements that are needed to put into place effective policies to fight child poverty.

First of all, policies promoting equal opportunity for all and improving educational outcomes are key to tackle child poverty. Ensuring equal opportunities is particularly important in the educational field. Second, fighting child poverty requires a combination of adequate income support, quality jobs for parents, and enabling services for children and their families. Third, best performance countries combine universal support to all children with targeted interventions. So, a combination of a universal approach plus some specific intervention addressing the most disadvantaged seem to be the most effective approach to tackle child poverty. Fourth, efforts to tackle child poverty will gain leverage from an evidence-based diagnosis of the main causes of poverty and exclusion in each Member State. If the policies are based on an in-depth analysis of what are the roots, the reason behind child poverty, this gives effectiveness and credibility to the policies. Last but not least, quantified objectives can be instrumental in making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty. I would say, all Member States



have more or less agreed that these are key ingredients in the fight against poverty.

11 | 12 | I am moving now to the assessment of the process: how is it perceived both from Member States and from stakeholders? The Open Method of Coordination is the object of quite lively debates. Some people believe that it is more a talk show and that the results are not very visible. Others be-

11

3. The impact and the value added of the EU strategy for Social Inclusion in the fight against child poverty: a preliminary assessment

the Open Method of Coordination for social protection and social inclusion: the Commission, the Member States, but also the independent experts on which we rely, and the stakeholders. This was done ahead of the preparation of the renewed social agenda that the Commission presented - also in July 2008.

12

The “Social OMC” under scrutiny

First half of 2008

Commission undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the “Social OMC” ahead of the preparation of the Renewed Social Agenda, based on the work of the SPC, on the assessment of independent experts, and on stakeholders’ consultation.

July 2008

Commission Communication of 2 July 2008 – ‘*A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion*’ COM(2008)418 as part of the Renewed Social Agenda package

13 | What was the assessment of the Commission and of the Member States during this joint exercise? There was a common agreement that the Social Open Method of Coordination has increased awareness and influenced national policy agendas. It has helped the development of evidence-based policies. It has helped shaping a common approach to common challenges. It has supported mutual learning and benchmarking, and it has promoted stakeholders’ involvement.

13

Main achievements of the “Social OMC” *Overview*

In the Renewed Social Agenda the Commission reaffirms that the Social OMC is one of the most important instruments in support of social development in the EU and in Member States.

The Social OMC has:

- Increased awareness and influenced national policy agendas
- Fostered the development of evidence-based policies
- Helped shaping a shared approach to common challenges
- Supported mutual learning and transmission of best practices
- Promoted stakeholders involvement and participation

lieve that actually it is changing things. Probably the glass is half empty, half full, in the sense that it has created a lot of awareness and helped establishing structures for cooperation. We have concrete evidence of this. However, there is still a lot to be done. This is exactly the message that came out of a broad exercise - an evaluation exercise that the Commission conducted last year. In spring 2008 we went through an in-depth evaluation of

14 | More specifically in the field of child poverty, for some Member States child poverty was not at all an issue in policymaking. I will not engage here in a kind of name and shame exercise, but I clearly remember delegates of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) saying, “Until now it was not an issue on our national agenda”. We have tangible proof that the EU process has influenced national agendas.

Secondly, the indicators we have now give us the possibility to have a much better understanding of the reality and of trends. We also have evidence of the working of the *peer reviews*, of the mutual learning process through *peer reviews*. One of my first experiences when I joined my unit was a peer review on child poverty where Luxembourg, in this case I can name, presented the experience done with children of migrant background, introducing early schooling in this area, and checking over time the results, with surprisingly positive results through this programme, which was then taken on by some other Member States participating in the review. This was a clear case of mutual learning. We have also improved stakeholders’ involvement - both at European level and at national level. Although, as I said, we cannot say that progress has been even in all Member States, but we do see this becoming more and more effective in some Member States.

15 | We were quite honest in recognising that overall the potential of the Open Method of Coordination has been underused. We also identified a number of areas for improvement are needed, like boosting analytical capacity, reinforcing policy coordination - both across policies and between levels of governance: the national, the European, and the local level. We also realised that there still is a lot to improve with regards to mutual learning and stakeholders’ involvement. And also in creating better connections with other EU instruments like the structural funds.

16 | Now let’s come to an evaluation of what we have achieved in terms of concrete results for people: from processes to reality. I am sure Eric has shown you this graph yesterday- the latest data on child poverty in Europe.

17 | You will all recognise that there is no reason for complacency. 19 million poor children in the European Union; we all have in mind this figure, and we all think that this is a shame. This gives an idea of how much work is still needed. I can add some new elements, because we are now working on an important report. When I say “we”, I refer to the Commission, the social protection committee, and the indicators sub-group. We are making an assessment of the impact of growth on social outcomes. It is not only about the figures

14

Main achievements of the “Social OMC” (in the fight against child poverty)

- Child poverty has gained **importance in national agendas** and is now present in most national strategy. For some countries the issue as such had never been on the policy agenda. This also applies to enlargement and neighborhood countries.
- **Common indicators have been made available** and further work is being done (notably on material deprivation and on child well being). The target-setting approach has gained relevance.
- Mutual learning through peer reviews has taken place (e.g.: in the areas of pre-school education) and there is broader understanding of the **multidimensional nature of the issue**.
- **Stakeholders involvement in policy making has improved**, although in uneven manner across MS.

15

The “Social OMC” in perspective: main areas for improvement

But delivery on common objectives remains a challenge, both in general and in the specific field of child poverty. More can and should be done to fully realise the potential of the “Social OMC”.

Main areas for improvement:

- **Boosting analytical capacity** (more and more timely data, a broader use of indicators and target in policy making);
- **Reinforcing horizontal and vertical coordination** in policy making;
- **Strengthening the mutual learning process**, including through enhanced use of the main results of peer reviews;
- Sustaining quality and continuous **stakeholders’ involvement**;
- Using **other relevant instruments**, in particular the Structural Funds and community programmes.

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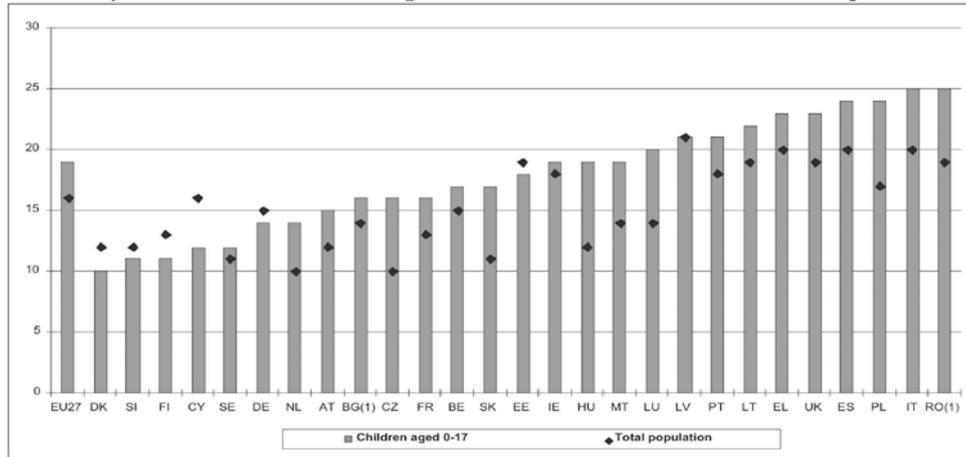
4. From words to deeds: the need for continued and stronger commitment in the fight against child poverty

I just presented; it is about trends. This is what really matters in policymaking. The good news is that we start to have now, time series - small time series. We start to have now the first data in a row. .

18 | We have headline indicators for the three years 2005-2007. What do they show? First of all, on average, poverty rates for children have remained broadly unchanged across Europe. This 19% has

19 million poor children in the EU

At-risk-of-poverty rate in the EU (%), children and total population, 2007
Poverty thresholds are 4 times higher in the richest countries than in the poorest



Source: SILC(2007) - income year 2006 (income year 2007 for IE and the UK); BG: National Household Budget Survey 2006; RO: National Household Budget Survey 2007

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From processes to results: is there evidence of improvements?

Latest data on child poverty give more than one reason for concern, not only when we look at the most recent figures, but also when we look at trends. Headline poverty indicators are now available for the period 2005-2007. They clearly show that:

- On average, in the period 2005-2007 at-risk-of-poverty rates for children have remained broadly unchanged at EU level (19%). While the risk of poverty has clearly declined in the new MS (from 25% to 21%), it has slightly increased in the EU 15, and some countries that were traditionally “good performers” have not managed to keep their good record.
- OECD data (with longer time-series, with the 50% threshold) suggest that child poverty remained stable or increased in most EU countries between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s.
- Even more worryingly, available data refer to 2007 and do not still reflect the impact of the crisis.

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been there for three years in a row: 2005, 2006 and 2007. Basically, in the years of good growth we have not managed to reduce it, to make an impact on poverty reduction. If we look again at trends, we see that there has been a decline of the relative poverty risk, which, I guess, you know how it is measured, because it was a matter for yesterday's session. It fell from 25% to 21% in new Member States, which is an achievement. However, why

the overall figure didn't change? Because in the old Member States, in the EU 15, some countries, which were traditionally good performers, have not managed to keep their good record. We can see - I won't name and shame all of them - but it may be interesting to know: Germany was one of the countries where the figures for child poverty went slightly down rather than improving over the last three years.

The need for continued and stronger policy commitment

Over the last two decades poverty risks seem to have shifted away from the elderly towards the younger people, and children in the first place.

This trend, which is visible in most advanced economies, is not only worrying from the point of view of social justice, but clearly points to policy inadequacies and inconsistencies in addressing the “demographic challenge”.

Despite increasing political awareness of the issue, policy intervention has not managed to curb the trend, which has apparently continued in most recent years.

The reasons that were behind the “alarm” launched in 2006 by the European Council are still there.

There is now extensive knowledge about the nature and the causes of child poverty, as well as about the policies and the tools that are needed to address the issue.

What is now needed is policy action and determination at all level of government.

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It is also interesting to know that we don't have common indicators for longer periods, but if we look at OECD data, which cover more or less two decades, they clearly show that child poverty remained stable or even increased in most European Union countries - between the mid-90s and the mid-2000s. Be aware, these are all old data, dating back to the period before the current economic crisis - on which, unfortunately, we don't have data on poverty, because data on poverty are only available with a delay of almost two years. But, what we know is the strong, very clear close link between unemployment and poverty; so, we can expect poverty data will certainly have not improved meanwhile.

19 | Basically, what we can conclude from the review of the data that we have? First of all, over the last two decades poverty risk seems to have shifted away from the elderly towards the younger people - children in the first place. One can see this very clearly in OECD data, but also in our recent indicators. This trend is clearly pointing to policy inadequacies and inconsistency in addressing the demographic challenge. It means that the policies are not reflecting the fact that basically children are becoming a very scarce resource. Despite the fact that there is large awareness of this issue - this is reflected in the alarm that was launched in 2006 by the European ministers - policies have not been able to reflect, to adapt to this increased awareness.

Here I conclude the first part.

20 | There will be a number of interesting developments that we need to watch in the coming months, not only in the field of social policy.

One of the lessons from the past ten years is that social policies are not enough to fight poverty. They need to be complemented by commitments in all relevant policies.

21 | The discussions which are already developing in the Parliament on the programme of the next Commission, are mainly focused on the future of the European strategy for “growth and jobs”. This is not surprising, as the economic crisis gives prominence to the economic situation.

It is fair to say that we should not underestimate the importance of sound and sustainable economic policy for the fight against poverty. Fighting poverty is about income distribution, but it is also about wealth creation. I would like to show here a graph with a new indicator.

5. Beyond the Social Inclusion process: role and relevance of other EU policies in tackling poverty and social exclusion



The importance of mainstreaming

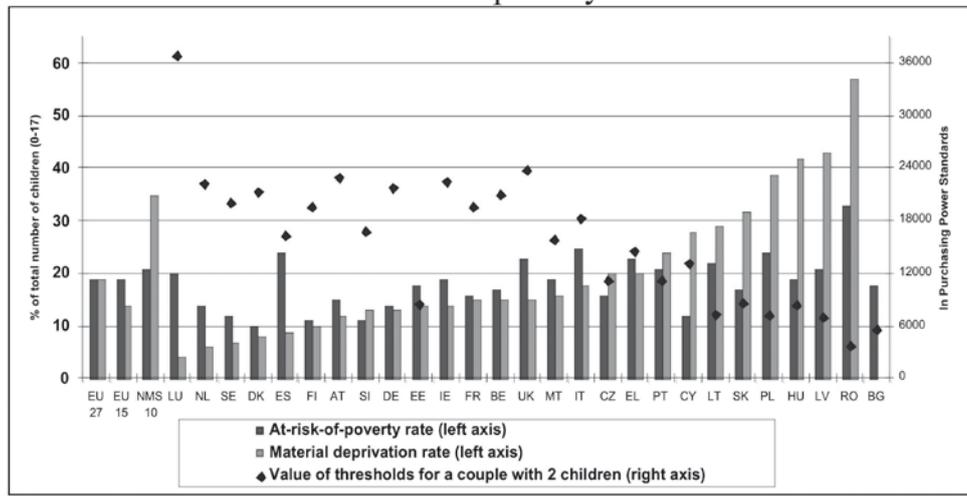
One important lesson from the experience of the past decade: fighting poverty and exclusion is not only a matter for social policies.

- Social policies have to do with income distribution. However, poverty reduction is not only about income re-distribution but also about wealth creation. This is particularly true for less rich countries.
- Sound and sustainable economic growth is essential to lift people out of poverty.
- Joblessness or marginality on the labour market remain the first cause of poverty and in most cases a decent job for the parent(s) is the most durable way to lift children out of poverty.
- Therefore, active labour market policies remain a reference instrument in the fight against poverty, including child poverty.
- We have also learned about the decisive role of education as well as how various forms of discrimination can lead to exclusion and poverty.
- This is why the contribution of the European Union to the fight against poverty goes well beyond the strategy for Social Inclusion and this is why mainstreaming is so important.



Material deprivation measures vs. at-risk of poverty rates

Highest deprivation rates in new Member States, incl. where at-risk-of-poverty rates are low



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Preparing for the Lisbon strategy post 2010

1. **The EU still needs an ambitious, effective, long-sighted strategy for growth and jobs**
2. **The economic crisis has emphasised the need to create the conditions for sustainable growth and job creation.**
3. **But fairness and social justice become even more important when resources are scarce...**
4. **Therefore, it is to be expected that the social objectives will have a greater profile in the EU strategy post 2010.**
5. **In a context of renewed commitment to social justice and sustainable development, the fight against child poverty is likely to be high on the EU agenda.**

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22 | This is another important achievement of the Open Method of Coordination. The elaboration of a new indicator, which is called “the material deprivation indicator”, is a recent development, which has required several years of research. It gives a completely different picture of the geography of poverty in Europe. It is not going to replace our headline indicator, but is important to understand why fighting poverty is not only a matter for social policies.

If you look here: the headline indicator that was in the previous graph, which is the red bar and the material deprivation rate is the blue bar. As you can see, there is a clear correlation between material deprivation and GDP per head. The material deprivation rate is higher, much higher in countries that have a lower GDP per head. This indicator is a Europe-wide indicator. How is it built? There is a list of items which are considered essential, not

6. The European Year 2010: giving new substance and momentum to the fight against poverty in general and child poverty in particular

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to be in a situation of deprivation. They have been identified through a bottom-up process, through a Euro-barometer survey. Here you have a mapping of what is the percentage of children, which are in a situation of material deprivation in various Member States.

Also in this case we have the time series for 2005-2007. What we can see is that over the last three years material deprivation rates have substantially decreased in new Member States and also, to some extent, in old Member States. So, while economic growth has not helped reducing relative poverty and it has not reduced inequalities over the last few years, it has nonetheless managed to reduce extreme poverty, the most severe form of deprivation, particularly in the new Member States in relatively poorer countries, but also in old Member States. This means that economic growth remains a key tool to fight poverty.

23 | That is why the European Union still needs an ambitious, effective, long-sighted growth and job strategy. I will say that the crisis has emphasised the need to create the conditions for sound and robust growth at European Union level. On the other hand - and our headline indicator is there to remind us - the value of social cohesion is a key feature of the European model. Fairness and social justice become even more important when resources are scarce.

The conclusion that we can draw from this presentation of the two realities, relative poverty and material deprivation indicators, is that fighting child poverty is not only crucial from the point of view of social justice, but also because it is a vital

investment in the future. We will have to watch developments in the Lisbon Strategy over the next few months. It is interesting that this will happen in a key year, which is the European Year against poverty and social exclusion.

24 | So, 2010 will be the European year against poverty.

The initial proposal came from the networks, and the Commission included this proposal in the Social Agenda 2005-2010. This has now become a reality and we are preparing for it. The legal instrument was presented by the Commission in 2007 and then was discussed and approved by the Council and the Parliament in 2008. The legal instrument is very clear on the overall objectives of the year. Which are: recognition of rights, shared responsibility, and participation, cohesion, commitment, and concrete action.

The European Year 2010

Overall objectives of the year: Recognition of rights, shared responsibility and participation, cohesion, commitment and concrete action.

Expected outcomes: increasing public awareness about poverty and social exclusion, new partnerships and initiatives, from the local to the EU level, impulse to policy action.

Preparation is well underway and most MS have presented their national programmes:

- Child poverty strong priority in many Member States (thematic priority in Germany's National Programme)
- Spanish and Belgian Presidencies very committed to the objectives of the Year and they already signalled their strong interest for furthering EU action in the field of child poverty



Child poverty in the Commission work programme for 2010

Follow-up on key policy messages endorsed by MS:

1. New data

- 2009 EU-SILC module on material deprivation includes 20 child specific items
- Developing indicators of child well-being (ECD/EC/UNICEF on child well-being 25-27 May 09: international databases to monitor child well-being)

2. New analytical evidence

- End November 09: Seminar on child poverty and well-being – results of on-going study financed by the EC
- Commission staff working paper on child poverty, with a strong focus on target setting

3. Focus on vulnerable children

- Within the context of thematic focus on migrants and ethnic minorities

4. New policy initiatives???



25 | What do we expect from this European Year? Of course, we expect an increased public awareness of the problem of poverty and social exclusion; a broadened commitment outside the circle of those who are traditionally fighting against poverty; a better involvement of the local level, and a higher visibility on the policy agenda. We have already seen that child poverty is a priority in the

national programmes, because we have received now almost all national programmes for the European Year. We are making the assessment. In all these programmes, child poverty is very visible. The Spanish and the Belgian Presidency, which are going to accompany the implementation of the European year, have both signalled their commitment to the issue of child poverty.

26 | What is the Commission preparing for 2010? First of all, we are, of course, following up to the messages that I read in the beginning, and that Member States have endorsed. We are furthering the analysis in the field of child poverty with the new data production, particularly to have more timely data. Of course, we are focusing on an issue that emerged as a prominent one in the child poverty report: the issue of targets. There will be a seminar now in November, and the Commission intends to prepare a commission staff working paper to make the point, to have a better understanding of how the setting up of quantitative targets is helping the fight against child poverty. We are proceeding with the production of new data. For example, we are perfecting the data on material deprivation to include child specific items. We are working with the OECD and UNICEF on child well-being.

As regards major policy initiatives at EU level, however, we will have to wait a bit until the political context is clarified. As you know, there is new Commission to come in January, more or less. There is a high degree of uncertainty due to the fact that we are waiting for the entering into the force of the Lisbon Treaty for the formal appointment of President Barroso, although there is the nomination of the heads of state and then, of course, the appointment of the Commission. Basically, the Commission services are waiting for the clarification of the political framework.

Let me conclude. I think there are three issues that will be present in our current and future work. First of all, we are sure that we have to work out all the policy implications of what we can call a paradigm shift. What is becoming a common wisdom is that the child has to be the object and the subject of policies. This is both an inbuilt awareness and a starting point for further work, in particular to create the link with the children rights agenda. I know that this was widely discussed yesterday.

A second point is a focus on particularly vulnerable children. The reason behind the trends we have seen, the worrying trends, are very much linked to new trends in globalisation, migration, but to some extent also to the change of the European Union and to enlargement. We are more and more confronted with forms of extreme poverty: in children with migrant background, in ethnic minorities, and in countries where welfare states are not developed enough to have addressed the basics of child poverty. This reinforces the point I already made: we need to continue with the universal approach, but within this, it is necessary to focus on particularly vulnerable groups. The list is not complete here. There are also children in institutional care, children of lone parents - the new forms of poverty, which point to high vulnerability. Last but not least, a strong focus on quality services. This is the lesson we have learned

from the work on active inclusion, where you can have very good principles for integration: the labour market, minimum income, etc. But, they will not work unless they are underpinned by effective integrated universal services. These are the three areas that we will look at in our future work. Thank you for your attention.

Peggi Liebisch:

Thank you very much Antonia Carparelli, that was most interesting and I have many questions. We will have a discussion afterwards, because we will first listen to Ms Moser. I am keen to hear your presentation, Ms Moser. You got to know Michaela Moser yesterday, she was a participant in the podium discussion. She is the Vice President of the EAPN, the European Anti-Poverty Networks. I am practically sure that her views are quite different. She will also present to us the view of the non-governmental organisations network of the EU strategies against child poverty. We await the speech eagerly.

CAN THE EU'S POVERTY POLICY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Dr Michaela Moser
Vice President EAPN, Brussels/Vienna

1 | Thank you too on my part for the invitation. Yesterday I mentioned some elements on the EAPN's approach also in connection with combating child poverty which for us stand in the foreground in the context of policies for combating poverty. The question that I was given by the organizers for this presentation was: What does the EU's policy of combating poverty bring about or effect? I cannot and don't want to provide a singular and final answer on this question. I believe – or I hope – that this chapter has not been concluded, but I wish to point out some successes and weaknesses, obstacles, and also opportunities, necessities and visions. I would like to make one preliminary remark however: I will talk very much about general policies to combat poverty and only at the end will I return once more to child poverty.

2 | I have given this slide the title "Poor children don't fall from heaven" because it is very important for us as the EAPN to always see the total context and the policy for combating poverty for what they are, in addition to the many specific groups and specific measures that are, of course, essential in combating poverty. Fortunately we have our member- and partner organisations: very good organisations, that are committed and specifically look after children's affairs, homelessness, people with psychological problems, in other words look after the different problems and the different risk groups and the specific measures. For us, being the total poverty network, it is very important to view it as a whole and to view or to underline that these fundamental strategies and measures for combating poverty are important and have very central effects – in this case on combating child poverty.

Poor children don't fall from heaven. They normally live in poor households or, for that matter, as mentioned already yesterday, not in households, but in institutions, which usually are not equipped as such to rescue them from poverty.

3 | In short, what is the EAPN? The EAPN is a network of Anti-Poverty Networks represented in 26 countries to date. Numerous European organisations belong to this network, which ensures that our comprehensive view always also includes specific needs, interests, and proposals



3



Das EAPN?



- Ein Netzwerk von Anti-Armut-Netzwerken in 26 Ländern und zahlreichen Europäische Organisationen
- Mit den Zielen:
 - Die Vermeidung und Bekämpfung von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung auf die politische Agenda der EU zu bringen bzw. dort zu halten
 - Die Wirksamkeit von Armutbekämpfungsmaßnahmen zu erhöhen
 - Sich mit und für Armutsbetroffene/n und deren Selbstorganisationen für ein soziales Europa für alle zu engagieren.

4



Wie kann die Lissabon Strategie ein Erfolg sein, wenn es, noch stets so viel Ungleichheit gibt?

Freundliche Worte über Solidarität verlieren immer mehr an Bedeutung, wenn nicht bald hohe Standards eingeführt werden.

Jobs zählen mehr als Menschenleben

Die öffentliche Meinung über Armutsbetroffene hat sich verschärft. Viele glauben, dass wir nur arbeitsscheu sind!

Wir möchten unsere Geschichten nicht noch tausendmal wiederholen müssen!

MigrantInnen sind von vielen Sozialleistungen ausgeschlossen

Viele von uns haben noch immer keine anständige Wohnmöglichkeit, und können nicht heizen. an eine Mindestsicherung zu kommen, gleicht einem Hindernislauf!

Was bringt die EU-Armutsbekämpfungspolitik?

by different groups or viewpoints of different problem situations in the sumtotal of our work. Our goals are to place the prevention and combating of poverty and social exclusion on the political agenda of the EU, to position them and also to keep them on the agenda. Again and again that requires special efforts, which we will see.

It is, however, also about increasing the effectiveness of measures to combat poverty. As we have heard, there is a large number of such measures. Not always do they reach their target. For us it is important to engage with and on behalf of persons affected by poverty, i.e. with people with experiences of poverty and their organisations in unison for a social Europe. Many member organisations of the EAPN or of national networks are service providers, are social organisations, welfare associations. They are, so to speak, specialists, social workers, whatever. But it is very important – and over the last years this has been strengthened in many countries – to cooperate in a targeted manner also with organisations of people with experiences of poverty established by themselves, and to repeatedly make clear – this was an important principle of the EAPN right from the start – that effective measures can only be implemented when those affected are directly being involved.

4 | Yes, what effect does the policy of combating poverty have for the EU? I have collected a few quotations from some of the European meetings of people with experiences of poverty. These are pessimistic, negative statements, as you will see. So the question or the thought is: how can the Lisbon Strategy be a success when so much inequality still exists? Even friendly words about solidarity increasingly lose their meaning if higher standards aren't going to be implemented soon.

- The idea that jobs count more than human lives was articulated;
- The experience that the public opinion about those affected by poverty has become increasingly negative and many believe that persons with poverty experiences, who live in poverty, are only work-shy. That many are therefore stigmatised and attacked.
- The sigh – one has to admit in this case – that persons with poverty experiences have to tell their story a thousand times more, hence to report the same experiences of the harsh reality again and again.
- And that even the analysis that male and female migrants are excluded from many welfare allowances, that many still are without proper housing, have no heating and that many do not have a minimum social security or the possibility of qualifying for an adequate income equals a bureaucratic steeplechase.

These are only some of the statements that people with poverty experiences have made. Naturally this list represents a negative selection. They are the experiences of those in whose cases even sensible measures, which are of course taken, don't take hold at all. I think that this, too, must prompt us to think and restricts the positive view one has of the available strategies and measures. There are very many people, who are not reached by these measures. There are many gaps, these measures are not effective enough.

Nonetheless, I would like to go back a little bit more. We briefly touched on the following during our discussion yesterday: Which competencies does the EU have at all, how can it position itself on social issues? This has in fact changed over time. This is also important, because it also means that it is not cast in stone.

5 | The fact that only weak recommendations emanate from the EU, does not mean that it must remain like that forever. We also notice that in the past it was even less possible: In the 70s, 80s there were the so-called EU Poverty Programmes, these were programmes especially for the promotion of research and exchanges on the issue of poverty questions. A very important milestone was the Treaty of Amsterdam, a clause of which, finally, enabled a coordination of social policies. So, in this regard in the past there was even less possible.

We can see that there is more or less an increase and, of course, there is room for improvement. Then came the Lisbon Strategy, we have heard a lot about it and will hear even more about the Open Method of Coordination connected with it: employment, social protection, social integration. Since 2006 there have been regularly strategic reports on these fields from all countries.

Within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy it is important to consider the so-called national reform programmes for employment and economic policies, even though we are mostly not so involved in these.

Since 2006 especially the EU Social Agenda has provided new impulses, from which I have taken the concept of active inclusion. It has already been mentioned, I will come back to it.

And 2010, importantly, there is the European Year for Combating Poverty, which also provides, to some extent, a window of opportunity. Combined with the fact that new institutions will exist, that a new commission is convening, that the parliament has just been elected, it provides an important opportunity for becoming involved with improved strategies.

6 | From our perspective some of the milestones are also stumbling blocks, e.g. the structural fund of which the social funds form part. There are of course many resources to move different things, in our view these resources are not always well applied. In a number of countries it is very difficult for non-governmental organisations, especially for smaller organisations, to have access to these resources, to co-determine how these resources are applied. So in our view this principle of participation, involving those affected or those being close to the affected or work with people with experiences of poverty, is inadequately accommodated. That is a stumbling block. Another stumbling block is the EU policy on service provision in respect of matters of general interest and social services. We have heard repeatedly how important these social services are. In this respect there has been a continuous struggle for a number of years by some groups to protect these social services, the provision of these services from, shall I say, a part of the free market, because we know that certain offers, when it involves the health of people, when it involves education don't function well for many, or don't all function well when they are merely subjected to the laws of the market. And the general structure of the EU policies on growth and employment remain a stumbling block; competition and innovation play an important role in this regard. Nothing against competition and innovation, when competition is for example about the best way to combat poverty or innovation. Growth and employment are nothing bad as such. However, one has to ask which growth is meant.

And I believe - in this aspect I see the growth policies of the EU more critical than my predecessor - that we need to look more accurately at what this growth policy achieves and whom it really serves. And in these times of crisis we must not forget that people are dismissed, that jobs are reduced. It is not only a current sign of crisis.

7 | Just briefly to the Lisbon Agenda, which can be depicted as a triangle. I tried to draw this triangle somewhat skewed, because it was somewhat skewed right from the start. Economic growth and employment higher, social cohesion always subjugated somewhat. There is this sentence "the Union should become the most competitive economic power in the world based on the most dynamic knowledge and with sustained economic growth", which is continued with the following complementary phrase which many often forget (forgot): "with more and improved jobs", and then the text becomes weaker and weaker "and with greater social cohesion". This part was and is in a lot of texts omitted. There also existed the threat



5

Die Armutsbekämpfungspolitik der EU

Einige Meilensteine

- **EU Poverty Programmes 1-3 (1975 - 1994)**
- **Vertrag von Amsterdam (1997)**
- **Die Lissabon Strategie 2000 (-2010)**

OMK Beschäftigung + OMK für Sozialschutz und Soziale Eingliederung
 seit 2006 Strategische Berichte für Sozialschutz und soziale Eingliederung
 (inkl. Pensionen, Gesundheit und Langzeitpflege)

+ NRP (Nat. Reformprogramme f. Beschäftigungs- und Wirtschaftspolitik)

- **Die EU Sozialagenda (2006-2010)**

Das Konzept der Aktiven Eingliederung (Active Inclusion):

- * Adäquates Mindesteinkommen
- * Qualitätvolle soziale Dienstleistungen
- * Aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik

- **2010 Europäisches Jahr der Armutsbekämpfung**



6

Die Armutsbekämpfungspolitik der EU

Meilensteine & Stolpersteine

- **EU Strukturfonds (neue Programmrunde 2007-2013)**
- **EU-Politik zu Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem Interesse und sozialen Dienstleistungen**

- **Generelle Ausrichtung der EU-Politik auf Wachstum und Beschäftigung Wettbewerb und Innovation**

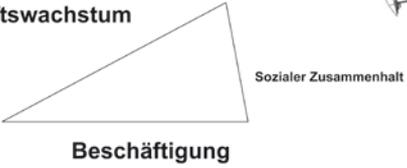


7

Die Lissabon Agenda



Wirtschaftswachstum



Beschäftigung

Sozialer Zusammenhalt

EU Rat Lissabon 2000:
 "Die Union soll zur wettbewerbsfähigsten und auf dem dynamischsten Wissen basierenden Wirtschaftsmacht der Welt werden, mit nachhaltigem Wirtschaftswachstum, mehr und besseren Arbeitsplätzen und stärkerem sozialen Zusammenhalt."

2005 Gefahr der Streichung der sozialen Säule
SOS Europe Kampagne: Save our social Europe!

8



Ziele von Nizza



1. Beteiligung am Arbeitsmarkt und Zugang zu Ressourcen, Gütern und Dienstleistungen
2. Prävention des von Armut und Ausgrenzung
3. Maßnahmen für die am stärksten Gefährdeten
4. Die Mobilisierung aller Akteure

EAPN Lobbying Papier 1999: Ein Europa für alle!

- Grantierter Zugang zu Rechten und Ressourcen
- Ein integrierter Ansatz der Armutsbekämpfung
- Partizipation der Betroffenen

9



Strategie der aktiven Eingliederung

Achten Sie auf das Adjektiv!

- 1) **Adäquate** monetäre Mindessicherung (Mindesteinkommen)
- 2) **Qualitätvolle** soziale Dienstleistungen
- 3) **Aktive und integrative** Arbeitsmarktpolitik

2009: EAPN-Kampagne für eine adäquate Mindestsicherung

www.adequateincome.eu



of the social pillar being scrapped from the so-called Midterm Review, a half-time evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy 2005. Barroso said at the time: We have two sick children – employment and growth – we can't also care about social cohesion. Then there was the campaign "Save Our Social Europe" at that time and it succeeded to save the social dimension – and, of course, it is more important than at any time before and is supported in the councils from the official side at least rhetorically – that social cohesion must continue to play an important role.

8 | These are the goals as originally formulated in Nice for the OMC. They were then restructured later – we saw this in the previous presentation. In these first formulations of the goals are a number of important principles e.g. the prevention of poverty and exclusion, which we cannot afford to lose sight of, and the measures for those who are most seriously threatened. The EAPN was relatively satisfied with these goals at that time. In the previous year we had published the paper "One Europe for all", which contained similar demands.

9 | With reference to the strategy of active inclusion – which we have heard about repeatedly in numerous inputs, it is not least about the small print – please pay especially attention to the particular adjective.

A Portuguese scientist has during a presentation at the EU Social Roundtable on the Azores some time ago brought to our attention and - I have memorised it and use it repeatedly: It is about adequate minimum monetary security, i.e. "minimum income". I translated it as minimum monetary security, because in German there is often the confusion with minimum wages. It is about rendering quality social services – in other words, the quality is decisive – and about active – I would say from our perspective – also integrative labour market policies.

Therefore, the "active" is not only to be understood as activation, but must also be seen as integrative. At the EAPN we have been engaged for some time – and this was referred to by Jana in her presentation yesterday – in promoting the conditions and the framework of guidelines in the direction of adequate income systems. In many countries adequate income systems do not exist at all, in many countries they aren't adequate. And we know that adequate income systems is a very important aspect of fighting poverty, also as far as child poverty is concerned. When there are shortages everywhere on the income side, these can only be rectified partially, and especially not in all areas, not even with the best possible provision of social services. And it is a fact that many people don't find an appropriate job on the labour market. So, all three aspects should meet and interact. But at the moment our EAPN campaign has made adequate income systems a priority. You can add your name in favour of adequate income systems in the whole of Europe under www.adequateincome.eu.

10 | Momentarily, I've indicated this, we are, as seen from our perspective, in a very central position, it is a time in which a number of matters could be decided: beyond Lisbon.

How will it continue after Lisbon, which runs until 2010? We think that Europe is also standing at the crossroads, a decision must be taken. A number of concepts exist, which perhaps could be combined, we will see. What follows is a somewhat exaggerated comparison or contrast: on the one hand there is one concept, sometimes also called Lisbon Plus, although arguably it could also be called Lisbon Minus, that reflects a strengthening of competition and innovation, strengthening foreign policy, actually strengthening everything we have had so far. Therefore a continuation in the same direction of thrust with a policy of growth and employment.

Or, on the other hand, there is the second concept, one that should not necessarily be seen as an opposing route: a social and sustainable Europe. But the question of course is where does one set the priorities for such a social and sustainable Europe? It implies a paradigm shift towards five pillars that are clearly defined and enjoy equality, i.e. the *economy, social affairs, employment* and, of course, *ecology* as well. And what has to manifest itself from our point of view is *global responsibility*, which is often short-changed in the debates on the continued development of the European Union. From the EAPN's perspective it is also about, and I believe that it is quite important, to engage many people in discussion about it.

11 | Which Europe do we want? It needs social progress. We believe that this social progress is possible even in this time of crisis. It is pretended that in times of crisis all bets have to be placed on the economy and growth. We know that the economy and growth do not produce social cohesion, as if by magic, but that something has to be done about it and that now is actually the time, in times of crisis, when social investments would be essential, however they are practically absent in economic packages. In order to combat poverty we require the reduction in stereotypes and a guaranteed access to basic rights. That I think is self-explanatory for all of you here.

We spoke briefly about the fact yesterday that we require improvements in democracy. We have not reached the zenith of our political system. We require stronger participatory elements, and there are many questions as far as the rights of minorities are concerned, naturally. A very important issue that has gained in importance in the EAPN over the last years, is the question of societal wealth. The Austrian network uses the following slogan: "Whoever talks about poverty, cannot remain silent on wealth": Therefore, the issue is about questions of distribution, about how the prevalent societal wealth can be distributed fairly.



10

«Beyond Lisbon»
Europa am Scheideweg

EAPN

Lisbon+ (oder eher Lisbon- ?)
Stärkung von Wettbewerb und Innovation
Stärkung der Außenpolitik

Ein soziales und nachhaltiges Europa
Alternativer Weg – Paradigmenwechsel
5 Säulen: Wirtschaft, Soziales, Beschäftigung
Ökologie, globale Verantwortung
Re-Demokratisierung und Umverteilung



11

Das Europa, das wir wollen!
Zentrale Botschaften des EAPN

EAPN

- Sozialer Fortschritt ist möglich
- auch in Zeiten der Krise!
- Es braucht den Abbau von Stereotypen und den garantierten Zugang zu Grundrechten
- Demokratiepolitische Verbesserungen sind notwendig.
- Der vorhandene gesellschaftliche Reichtum muss gerechter verteilt werden.
- Vermeidung und Bekämpfung von Armut sind ein gemeinsames lokales und globales Anliegen.

And finally it is also about the fact, that fighting poverty is a local and global matter. For us as a European network it is important - and I believe this rears its face again and again in the issue of child poverty - that children affected by poverty cannot be played off against each other here and in the southern countries, and that it isn't then said: "Just look at the way in which people live in Africa, children die of hunger, here we cannot speak of poverty." But it is about raising awareness, that the struggle is in the end the same one, a joint fight for a life without poverty.

12 | For the period beyond 2010 the EAPN has developed many demands and has published a comprehensive paper on these. In our view it is about building a new vision, this is needed by the European Union, it is needed especially by the people. "An EU we can trust", this is what we called it. In German it sounds very dramatic "Eine EU, der wir vertrauen können". But it is a fact that people - we saw this for example during the elections for the European Parliament - are losing their trust more and more, should they of course ever have had any trust, that this EU can deliver to them and also in the social field.

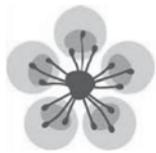


**Post 2010 - Eine neue Vision:
AN EU WE CAN TRUST**



- Menschen und Umweltinteressen - nicht Profite - haben Priorität
- Wirtschaft(spolitik) muss im Dienst sozialer und nachhaltiger Entwicklung stehen
- Die Bekämpfung von Armut, sozio-ökonomischer Ungleichheiten und sozialer Ausgrenzung und die Verteidigung von Grundrechten sind oberste Herausforderung und die Voraussetzung für Fortschritt

13



spring alliance

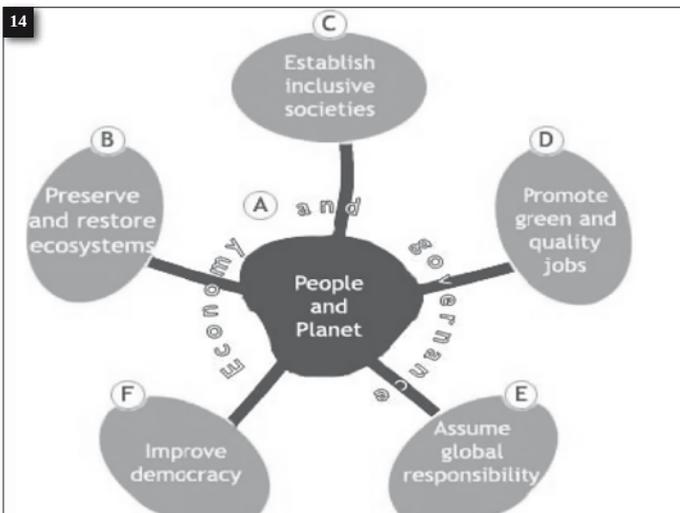
For a European Union that puts people and planet first.

Spring Alliance Manifesto

Eine Initiative von
European Environmental Bureau
Social Platform
CONCORD
European Trade Union Confederation

www.springalliance.eu

14



So, in this connection the fact that human and environmental interests enjoy priority and not profits, that economic policies are there to serve social and sustainable development and not vice versa must be placed in the foreground.

I believe that this is also a problem in the ongoing discussion: Instruments and goals are often confused. I think that one can argue about it productively, whether growth however is a relevant instrument to achieve social cohesion, a goal as a goal per se, leaves me much more sceptical. And the combating of poverty, socio-economic inequalities and social exclusion and the defence of basic rights are the central challenges and actually the pre-condition for all progress. In order to achieve such a fundamental change, one can nearly say paradigm shift in EU policy, which we regard as essential, requires strong alliances of course.

13 | In the last few months we have succeeded in doing something, which I believe, is already a step in the right direction. The social organisations – the EAPN is also a part of this social platform – the environmental organisations, the development organisations and the European labour unions got together and jointly issued a manifesto. The alliance of these groups calls itself the Spring Alliance, the manifesto is called the Spring Alliance Manifesto.

14 | This manifesto deals with the fact that economy, governance, politics should orientate themselves primarily according to the well-being of people and the actual sustainability of our environmental systems.

This is the central demand and then there are some further subordinated demands: The sustainability and partial rehabilitation of our already threatened ecological system to create an inclusive society. We have heard a lot about the detailed demands. It is also about socially and ecologically compatible jobs, “new jobs for new needs” is what it is called in the EAPN position paper. In the environmental, but also in the social field are many necessary activities, where employment could be created. The whole question of global responsibility must be included in the thinking process and democracy must be improved. I emphasised this earlier that we also require democratic policy developments urgently.

15 | Here we find the concrete demands of the EAPN, respectively their headings: What do we envisage in a concrete sense with reference to the strategies that will be developed after 2010? There will be a new strategy, that is for sure. We think that this strategy of social affairs and sustainability in which clear progress in the combating of poverty and inequalities is contained as a goal. A part of such a strategy should be something which we call a pact on social affairs or a social agreement, “social pact” how the EAPN promotes it. We want this pact because we believe that it is essential that all institutions of the European Union, i.e. the Commission, the Parliament, the Ministers Council - in other words, also the heads of state of all countries - jointly sign a social pact, which guarantees concrete improvements and hence also more rights and solidarity. This involves the creation of new employment opportunities, it is also about analysing more accurately the effects of growth policy especially also the question of inequality. There are many studies, a very interesting publication on this has just seen the light in England, which indicate that one can argue about growth for a long time and that there is a level of growth in the rich countries, where, once reached, more growth does not achieve anything and where the central question is one of distribution.

The question of distribution and therefore the question of social inequality has an incredibly large influence on many indicators of social cohesion and the “good life” in a society. From a social pact, which leads to more socio-economic equality not only people affected by poverty would profit, but also the whole of society, that would also be important to communicate. To discuss further details of this question we unfortunately don’t have the time now, but could eventually return to it during the discussion.

I would recommend to you the paper of the EAPN regarding “Post 2010”. It is available in English and French, and a whole list of detailed instruments and demands, which form part of the social pact, are described therein once again. It is also important to establish a dynamic partnership for the essential changes. This relates to the issue of “good governance”, i.e.: in which form can people participate? There are, this is correct, there are more and more positive initiatives, there have been a growing number of participatory processes and -possibilities in the last years, in this regard the EU strategy has made an important contribution in many countries - I can in any event confirm it as far as Austria is concerned. Our government, our ministries would never in their lives have considered involving the NGOs. Even today it is again and again the case that we are invited to a meeting and then find out that the Commission is paying a visit and on the Commission’s list there is a point five, stakeholder discussions, and a week prior to the visit the ministry then hush-hush arranges a stakeholder discussion. We are grateful for this, because that means we have a foot in the door, i.e. also in the Economics Ministry, on the mat-



Post 2010
Eine neue Vision: AN EU WE CAN TRUST
 Konkrete Forderungen des EAPN

1. Eine neue **EU-Strategie des Sozialen und der Nachhaltigkeit**, die Fortschritte in der Bekämpfung von Armut und Ungleichheiten als zentrale Ziele enthält.
2. Eine **Sozial-Pakt** der konkrete Verbesserungen, mehr Rechte und Solidarität garantiert .
3. Eine **dynamische Partnerschaft** für die notwendigen Veränderungen.

EAPN

Quelle: EAPN Positionspapier „An EU we can trust“ Download unter: <http://www.eapn.eu/images/docs/position%20paper%20post%202010%20final.pdf>

ter of national reform programmes where NGOs normally are not involved.

However, it is also about the fact that the involvement of the NGOs is naturally very important and sensible. It must especially include people with experiences of poverty themselves, for that, however, the required structures are needed. This means that the following must be clear: what are the rules of the game, what can one expect to be taken further – but also the question of resources must be resolved. For NGOs require resources in order to participate appropriately.

I would like to return once more to the theme of this conference now, to the narrower theme of child poverty.

16 | I think that all these steps which I have mentioned have a big effect also on the question of child poverty and would perhaps like to add a few concrete proposals to your position paper which I find could be considered, perhaps also to sharpen the blade, because a lot of it is already contained in the position paper.

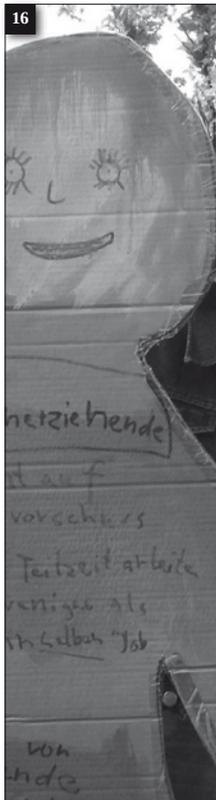
There is, on the one hand, the view of the individual and of the total context.

I believe that it is important to see the specific needs of children and also what is required to raise this in the different political fields, but it is also to be considered and argued how intensively the total context – and not only the socio-political, but also the economic and financial policy – influence the issue of child poverty.

The importance of the participation of children and parents, that is included I think, but it cannot be overemphasised.

Yesterday we also spoke a lot about how essential the participation of children is.

But it is also essential, equally essential, to involve parents in all proposals and strategies which are submitted on combating poverty. It requires, and this has been said quite often today, universal systems and specific measures, and it requires, I briefly referred to this in yesterday’s discussion, a just dis-



Arme Kinder fallen nicht vom Himmel! Vorschläge zum Positionspapiers

- Blick auf den/die Einzelne UND auf den Gesamtkontext
- Beteiligung von Kinder UND Eltern
- Universale Sozialsysteme UND spezifische Maßnahmen
- Gerechte Verteilung von Arbeit UND Einkommen
 - Adäquate Mindestsicherung
 - Verteilungsgerechte Reform des Steuer- und Abgabensystems
 - Das Ganze der Arbeit sehen!
 - Aufwertung und Integration von (Für-)Sorgetätigkeiten
 - Maßnahmen für Geschlechtergerechtigkeit
 - Innovative Arbeitsmarkt- und -zeitpolitik
 - Investition in soziale Dienstleistungen
- Fokus auf Teilhabe: notwendige demokratiepolitische Innovationen
UND Antidiskriminierungsmaßnahmen



tribution of labour and income. In this regard a view of the income situation is important, i.e. an adequate minimum income. Part of this is a reform of the tax systems, a reform which provides greater justice on the distribution side.

The issue of taxes is referred to in the paper, but I actually think that the required reforms far exceed this; just to mention the key words wealth, distribution of wealth. From where does the money come to finance social infrastructure and social security, who profits at the moment from a tax system? That, too, has an influence on the questions of combating child poverty. As far as the issue of employment is concerned: I mentioned yesterday that it is important to view labour as a whole, and not to take over this official convergence of the term labour and employment – I would recommend this to all NGOs. Especially when it relates to questions of child care, the bringing up of children, life with children. We know that there are lots of jobs and many of these unpaid. These jobs must be looked at, they must be given a higher value and integrated into considerations relating to the labour market and the socio-political sphere.

Quite often this goes far beyond the acceptable considerations on the work-life-balance.

Yes, even measures regarding gender equality form part of it. This is often overlooked when child poverty is talked about. The connection between child poverty and female poverty is a given and should not be lost sight of. Not in vain, we see this, amongst others, in the high rates of poverty amongst single parents, and in most cases single mothers. There is a majority, I think this too is important,

even when there are also single parent fathers – they should not be made invisible – but the reality is that the large majority of single parents remains women. And that this big majority is particularly affected by poverty.

We thus need an innovative labour market - and also a time policy. The time factor is very important as far as female poverty is concerned, and I think too in the case of child poverty. We heard yesterday that the question of care, of love, of attention, which can be given to children is relevant. And this does not only have - but also a lot - to do with the time being available. The investments in social services are also very important, when it concerns just distribution and accessibility to opportunities.

In addition, however, and this was also mentioned, and it is also an important point in your paper, which I would like to underline, a focus on equal access is needed.

In this regard it concerns democratic innovations on the one hand, I have said this, but also anti-discrimination and anti-stigmatisation measures. We must not overlook the fact that equality of opportunity is often rare.

Formally speaking, equal opportunities may exist, but it is very often the case that these discriminatory mechanisms make it impossible for people to seize these opportunities. We need chances and opportunities, but also the abilities to utilise these opportunities, otherwise the talk about equality of opportunity remains an empty shell when the possibilities do not exist or when one is not enabled to utilise an existing chance or when one is prevented because of discrimination, or because of stigmatisation.

Ein gutes Leben für alle!



Das eigenen Leben und nicht das einer/s anderen leben - Gesundheit - Gutes Wohnen, gute Ernährung - körperliche Integrität - Gefühle und Gedanken entwickeln und ausdrücken können - Sinne, Vorstellungskraft und Gedanken nutzen können - Praktische Vernunft entwickeln und sich eine Vorstellung vom eigenen guten Leben machen - Beziehungen zu Mitmenschen und zur Natur und zu Dingen herzustellen und zu pflegen - Zugehörigkeit und Respekt erfahren - für andere zu sorgen und umsorgt zu werden - Zeit und Möglichkeit für Muße und Spiel zu haben - zu lachen - sich arbeitend und handelnd in die Welt einschalten und diese mitgestalten können

17 | To conclude with a personal statement - during the preparations I was asked about my personal access or what my personal focus or proposals could be for a policy on combating poverty, also and especially for combating child poverty. It is very important from my point of view to shift the focus again and again away from poverty to a good life for all, for that matter to our common goal.

We should state clearly: it is not “only” – only in quotation marks – it is not only about measures regarding children affected by poverty and their parents, about poverty-affected adults, it is about all of us. It is about the totality of living together in a region, in one state, in Europe, on the whole world. And it is about which chances of realisation, which skills there are. I have written some of them down. It is more or less a list of opportunities for realisation as compiled by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum.

You will see, that many of these chances of realising can also be found in other documents, e.g. in the Peking Frauenplattform (a quite old but still relevant paper), or in studies like the comprehensive study by the World Bank, “Voices of the Poor”, where poverty-affected people on different continents are asked questions about a good life in group discussions.

Here and from other studies it becomes clear that internationally speaking there are no big differences on how people view a good life, what people require for a good life. There may be differences on the details, it ranges from bodily health and integrity, a roof over one’s head which most of us need, clothing, nutrition, to the possibility of developing ideas and feelings, to maintain relationships, also with the environment.

Besides, it is about engaging in one’s own life context, being able to work and act. It is also about – this is

often forgotten even in the case of this beloved work-life-balance - having time and the possibility for relaxation and play, this is a part of being a human being. This is possibly difficult to incorporate in EU strategies, but should for this reason not be lost sight of.

Apart from that it is important for all of us to experience a sense of belonging and respect and to care for others and to be cared for. These are all dimensions which we should keep in view even when it is about combating poverty, and especially, this is for me a very important issue, that we bear in mind that the goal of a good life for all is much more than solely the prevention of a single evil. We are people with ambitions, we want more.

18 | The last folio actually illustrates that a EU and also a world without poverty is possible. This remains a central issue for us as EAPN to believe in and to work towards. In practice we are, as mentioned here several times and is demanded by many, for the establishment of quantitative goals in the fight against poverty, i.e. guidelines to reduce poverty by XX %.

But it must be clear: the actual goal is the eradication of poverty, so that there isn’t any poverty any more. *Thank you.*

An EU - and a world! - free of poverty is possible!



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DISCUSSION OF THE SPEECHES

The speeches were followed by a discussion about the considerations of Antonia Carparelli and Dr Michaela Moser. Pegg Liebisch, Managing Director of the Verband alleinerziehender Mütter und Väter – Bundesverband (VAMV), was the moderator. She emphasized the paradigm shifts mentioned by both speakers. Antonia Carparelli would like for children to be viewed as both subjects and objects in the bringing about of policies; Michaela Moser for her part demanded a paradigm shift in the sense that the EU should in future have five columns each enjoying equal status, without the economy having a higher priority but being employed to serve social development.

The first round of questions and comments from the participants was introduced with the aforementioned summary. The speakers subsequently responded to these questions in summarizing fashion in two rounds.

First round of questions:

The OMC as an instrument was much appreciated by the conference participants in general. In this context Erika Biehn (*VAMV North Rhine Westphalia*) stated that affected associations in Germany could better participate in political processes now.

Gabi Schmidt (*Arbeitsministerium, North Rhine Westphalia*) pointed out that because of the streamlining process not a lot had remained of the OMC. She wanted to know whether anything could be re-regulated or how it fitted into the new Lisbon Strategy.

Ute Gerhard (*Evangelische Aktionsgemeinschaft für Familienfragen, Berlin*) wanted to know from Antonia Carparelli whether the visions of Michaela Moser could be realized, and also posed the question what the chances for a paradigm shift towards a more social Europe also beyond the year 2010 would be.

What indicators were used by the EAPN in determining the realization or not of its goals within Europe, Reinhard Loos (*Sachausschuss Familienlastenausgleich des Familienbundes der Katholiken*) asked. Furthermore he regarded the use of tax law as an instrument for structuring transfer policy critically. In the area of direct taxes only

little could be achieved as far as combating poverty was concerned.

Antonia Carparelli:

These are very difficult questions, not because they are intrinsically difficult, but because they would require some other respondents than I am, given that the policy orientation of the European Commission and of the European Union is not in my hands. I would even say it is not only in the hands of the heads of state; it is also in the hands of the voters.

I will take the questions in their order. First of all, I am pleased to hear that there is a perception that the Open Method of Coordination, the social inclusion strategy, has increased empowerment, because this was one of the main purposes of the strategy. As I said, there are no precise Union competences in the field of social inclusion and social protection. The Union can supplement and facilitate the work of Member States, but it has no direct powers. Nonetheless, what we do is quite crucial for Europe: to promote good governance, to empower people and develop virtuous dynamics in the Member States. This is a long process. We are taking the long way to reach the social goals, but it seems to be working – although not in the same way in all countries. Of course, it is a constant struggle, because the resources are limited. My presence here today is an example of what we try to do, by being present on the ground to make the social agenda grow throughout the Union.

What are the chances of having Michaela's vision as the vision for the new commission? Let me be completely honest. If I look at the very nice schemes of the manifesto, I miss the case which refers to the economy.– If we don't want to use the word "growth", let's say, "wealth, prosperity". Sorry, but this is important. Fighting poverty and social cohesion is not only about distribution. If you have nothing to distribute, people will fight one another. The prosperity agenda is an important agenda. Of course, you have to look at the quality. I am sure that the growth of the last decade has not always been a quality, a sustainable growth, but still we need mechanisms to create wealth. If people need houses, we need to build houses; this is growth. There are not enough houses. They are badly distributed, I am sure. I agree with you. There is a strong problem of income distribution. And we are only talking about income here, because our indicators do not include wealth, which would probably say even more. But, again, you need to create wealth to be able to distribute it in a fair manner.

What are the chances of an agenda, which is closer to what you say? I think that everything will depend on, first of all, the economic policies for the exit of the crisis. If there is a stronger orientation from policy leaders to give priority to fighting unemployment, to a fair sharing of the

cost of the crisis, then we may end up with a more cohesive Europe and with a more social European agenda for the future.

There is too little to say at this stage. But, in a few days, President Barroso will go to the Parliament to present his blueprint, and we may know more. My guess is that there will be more opening, because the overall culture, not only on the other side of the Atlantic, but also inside Europe, has become a bit more, if not critical, at least more reflective about the experience of recent years, mainly due to the economic crisis. Maybe you don't share this opinion, but I believe there is now scope for having a more social European agenda. This will also be consistent with a process that we have seen over the last few years. Because, when the last Commission started it was very growth orientated. Then, throughout the period things changed, and in 2008 we had the renewed social agenda.

In the long term, I fully agree with what you said. It is a process of the European Union becoming more and more social - from the anti-poverty programme, which was little more than paying lip services to the objective of reducing poverty, to the Open Method of Coordination. I think there has been an increasing integration of the social objectives in the goals of the European Union. Even if it is not measured from one year to another, it is happening.

The streamline: I don't agree with the critical judgement on the streamlining. I don't know whether everybody is aware. I didn't enter into the streamlining issue in my presentation, because I wanted to be short. Otherwise, instead of one hour I would have talked for two hours. This concept refers to what happened in 2005-2006 when the Commission made the proposal - and the Member States accepted - to integrate three open methods of coordination that covered different social issues (social inclusion, pensions and health and long-term care) in one single process, that is, the Social Protection Social Inclusion (SPSI) process. Be aware that there are plenty of open methods of coordination now developing. I see this as a structural change in the way the European Union works. The fact is that all policies start to have a European dimension. And because there is a problem of defence of sovereignty, comprehensible and sometimes less comprehensible by Member States, what we do is to create these links between the European dimension and the national dimensions through the Open Method of Coordination. We have open method of coordination for youth policy, for education, for justice and home affairs, etc. I think it is just a reflection of the fact that there is not one single policy that you can think as completely separated from the European Union action. We are becoming more and more integrated.

Let's come back to the 2005 streamlining when the open method of coordination pension, the open

method of coordination health and long-term care, and the open method coordination on fighting poverty and social inclusion were put together in one single process. I know this has been a painful process. Several stakeholders have seen this as a loss. They have complained that this was undermining the focus and the richness of the process. What I see (I wasn't there so I don't take responsibility for this) is that the merging of the three processes has drawn attention on the functioning of the welfare system as a whole. The fight against poverty is not seen anymore as an objective that is separated from the rest. It is part of the design, the functioning of the welfare system, which is made up of the health system. If you think of the debate in the US, a key point to fight poverty is the health system. The functioning of the health system has really pushed many people into poverty.

For the poverty of the elderly people the functioning of the pension system is crucial. I really see the fact that the three strands of the Open Method of Coordination are put together as an asset in the sense that we are now in the position to analyse how the overall design of a welfare system helps or does not help the reduction of poverty. It is true that the national action plans are now slimmer; they don't contain the same level of detail. This is not necessarily a loss, in the sense that we are more in control of some major objectives. Of course, it is always possible at national level to have a greater degree of articulation of the national plan. It does allow a better control of the process at the EU level.

Dr Michaela Moser:

Let me firstly say something on the OMC. What has remained over and should it not be criticised stronger?

Strengthening the method, an aspect which is repeatedly included on the list of demands of the EAPN, I did not refer to. I had three slides on this, but cancelled them. It is a question of central importance.

From the perspective of my personal experience, also in Austria: One of the central points is that the strategies are often not really national strategies. These are exercises in reporting to the European Union, unfortunately. And that I find is one of the weak points. Furthermore, there are many things in the detail, which must be improved. In this regard the "Post 2010" paper of the EAPN contains a long list. In addition, clearer goals as also formulated by Eric Marlier yesterday, namely testable quantitative goals: the whole question of implementation and how it is evaluated and observed, the structure of stakeholders' involvement, the whole question of mainstreaming in other policy areas.

There are minimal improvements - at least I observe these in Austria and partially base this also on what I know from colleagues in other

countries. However, I believe that when nothing changes as far as this fundamental commitment is concerned, these so-called internal improvements are only of limited help. Perhaps we can get back in this regard to the voters. In the end it is again a national matter. How do we succeed to exercise pressure on our governments so that these reports really become - partially they have never been such - national plans of action to combat poverty for greater social cohesion? Including the parts on pensions, on health and on long-term care? That to me seems to be central. To me these areas appear to be central at the moment - in this regard the EAPN's task list has, I believe, been expanded. Over the past years we have worked - and will continue to work - hard on all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. We will continue to keep it in view. Often it depends on the improvement of single policy areas and often very much on the detail. The people sense that. It remains important, because it is essential. Lastly, if nothing changes in the broad policies, in the total structure, it will remain limited. Therefore, we believe, or therefore we as the EAPN have started and in a sense have taken on a mammoth task, fortunately not alone, to keep an eye on these broad policies. The value of the OMC, the value of this report and the fact that it is not to be understood as a national action plan has something to do with the priority attached to the question of combating poverty within the total repertoire of government policy. And this value is very low, we see it in the current crisis. Of course it is important to combat unemployment, I have my doubts whether it will be as successful as our politicians promise at the moment and I find it reckless; I believe it is reckless and irresponsible not to institute supporting measures and to act as if one really believes that combating unemployment can be completely or partially achieved without requiring any further measures. That means knowing full well that people are condemned to greater misfortune. We as social organisations know exactly what happens when no preventative measures exist: people become jobless, initially they believe that they will find a job say after three months or after half a year. Some will hopefully be successful, others are not. The pressure on the families rises. Financial problems arise because many have debts. People move house, there are divorces, health problems, psychological problems. This increases dramatically, the fewer welfare structures there are, namely transfers, i.e. a minimum social security system that provides a buffer, but also social services, social infrastructure as well as counselling and support services. Not to invest in this infrastructure and these areas now, but to reduce them or to put them aside in my view is reckless. This means that a crisis policy which focuses only on employment, only covers a small segment of that which at the moment is threatened by a further crash or a manifestation of poverty.

I believe that we have to be aware of this and also have to confront the politicians with it. On the issue of growth: I believe that we in Europe cannot claim to have nothing to distribute. Many of our countries belong to the richest countries in the world, no discussion about this. Exactly this is of course my concern; even though there are a number of de-growth theories and policies. I myself have a relatively neutral relationship with growth. I also can't get particularly excited about no growth. But I believe that we have to take a closer look at growth policies. In Austria we have at present a very interesting project on the subject of "growth undergoing change", by the way initiated and also financed by the agriculture and environment ministry.

There was an interesting project in the UK called "Prosperity without Growth". And the question of which kind of growth in which kind of quality benefiting whom in which manner must be posed with greater conviction. The studies on inequality previously mentioned, illustrate very clearly that in rich societies, and a majority of European countries fall in this category, the quality of life and many of the themes we discussed here today depend on the question of distribution. Not necessarily, for example, when we look at criminality, teenage pregnancies, psychological health, drug abuse, etc.

Social mobility, i.e. educational opportunities do not necessarily depend on which society demonstrates the best growth rates, but on how much more just distribution is. That applies as from a certain level. Of course it is true that where no resources exist, nothing can be distributed, that stands beyond debate. It would be ridiculous to question this, but as from a certain level the distribution question is more relevant than the question regarding even more growth. For it remains a question, and this is ancient and goes back to the Club of Rome report on the limits of growth. I also believe that we have to ask ourselves the question on the limits of growth yet again.

Second round of questions:

There was a lack of pressure being applied to the Member States to ensure that there would be real policy reform explained Jana Hainsworth in the second round of questions. To achieve this goal the means of the European Social Fund and the Regional Development Fund could perhaps be used. How these means could be used more constructively for social cohesion objectives and not solely for integration into the labour market she wanted to know from the speakers.

Albin Nees (*Deutscher Familienverband, Berlin*) showed interest in Michaela Moser's assessment whether the principle of subsidiarity, which played a very big role in European social history

next to the principle of social solidarity, could be regarded as an obstacle or rather as an advantage on the path of a good life for all.

The problem, that initiatives that were launched at the European level and were actually supported by national governments seldom had arrived at local level was stressed by Kai Sachs (*Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Schleswig-Holstein*). He asked for ideas or experiences on how this situation could be improved especially regarding NGOs.

He also enquired about data for people with disabilities, assuming that these probably had major financial problems and were most likely to be threatened by poverty. As a third issue he pointed out that networking and cooperation structures between experts on poverty issues were not very good and wondered how a better cooperation could be achieved in this field.

Antonia Carparelli:

First, the remark from Jana, concerning: what are the tools to create more pressure on Member States? Of course, I fully agree that we have to try to use as far as possible the European funding to create incentives. We are working in this direction, but the debate is broader than that. As you know, Member States and the Parliament have a big role in defining the amount, the design, the functioning, and the destination of the structural funds. I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention on a report prepared on request of Commissioner Hübner before she decided to become a member of the European Parliament. The editor is an Italian economist who is called Barca and the report puts forward an ambitious proposal to reorient the structural funds on the objective of social inclusion. For me, that could be a very good reference point on how to make structural funds more functional to the objective of social cohesion and social inclusion. But I have to add that this is a personal position, as the debate in the Commission is still ongoing.

Another question concerned the fact that the Open Method of Coordination does not reach the local level. I admit that there are problems, which have to do with the fact that it is a young process. We have seen an increasing, although not impressive, mobilisation at the local level. For example, we have started very interesting projects with Eurocities, which is a network of cities. We have seen several regions in various countries getting an interest in this. It is not yet a structured process of connecting the different layers of governance. But, it is happening. We also have to be a bit patient and try to support these developments.

I would like to report a very interesting experience I had when I went to my region in the South of Italy last spring: the region had been organising for three years in a row an event, which is called "The Annual Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty"; something that we have organised for

eight, nine years at European level. So, they have taken that model and have applied it at regional level, involving every year people experiencing poverty, to get their voice heard in the policymaking process. Just an example of transmission of good practices.

You also mentioned the disabled. One cannot cover everything every time, but it was one of the groups on the list of the particularly vulnerable groups, which I mentioned. But I should add that we have very important legislation at European level on anti-discrimination. I believe this was one of the achievements of this Commission: to extend the anti-discrimination legislation to cover all disability. This was not an easy thing. Again, this is an example of how the European Union is influencing the national agenda, with the firms now forced to adapt their structures, to comply with EU legislation.

You are right about the problem of how to organise an effective networking. I must say that this has been a challenge at European level. The PROGRESS programme has certainly helped to create this network, to pull together national organisations - Michaela is here to talk about it. At the Commission, we have done our job in the sense of facilitating cooperation among national organisations with a view to create European networks. Of course, ideally, this should be reflected in national initiatives to pull together regional organisation, etc. Managing the complexity is one of the biggest challenges of today's policymaking on all sides. Good luck for this.

Before giving the floor to Michaela, I would like to comment on an issue that you have raised in the position paper, which for me is particularly important. It has to do with communication, transparency, and accountability. I think that in a situation where it is so difficult to ensure that social issues are high on the policy agenda, one thing which works and in which we should invest a lot, (when I say "we" it is the Commission, but it is also the stakeholders) is creating systematic occasions for communicating results. Now we have the indicators, both at European level and national level. Let's put a lot of energy into communicating facts and results. This is also what we are trying to do for the European Year 2010. Because there is very little that can create more commitment and more engagement than an intelligent use of information, communication, and media. I take the opportunity to signal in relation to the European Year 2010 that we will have a big conference on media and perceptions of poverty in October, for which we have prepared a special Euro-barometer on poverty in Europe. The idea is to have now a Euro-barometer on the perception of poverty on a regular basis each year that we could use in combination with more structured statistics to have exactly this kind of communication, which may also include generating angry reactions about lack of progress.

Dr Michaela Moser:

All right, on subsidiarity. It is a difficult topic. In the discussion I often reach the point where I sometimes say: actually the whole system has to be rebooted. Thus like a computer. It crashes, there is nothing you can do about it, you cannot reorganise it, best is to delete the whole hard disc and to start anew.

In starting anew I would be 100% for the principle of subsidiarity. We follow a bottom-up approach. We solve the problems there where they start and work towards greater unity so to speak. Unfortunately, starting the system anew is not possible, and I believe that we have to look at the principle of subsidiarity as well as the principle of solidarity anew and more precisely: How can we understand it today? What is understood in this regard by whom and which structures must come about to untangle it? At the moment I regard it as ambivalent. I believe that it would be important and I try to include this question in looking at the local level - what can be solved at the local level. On the one hand there is much to be invested here, on the other hand we should not overlook - possibly you in Germany know this as well as we do in Austria - that these federal structures also cause us many problems. It cannot possibly be that this in the end leads to chaotic conditions and to territorial battles, intransparencies or even areas without responsibilities. This means that, in principle, we have to untangle and analyse everything de novo. In Austria there is an example of an initiative by our government for the Year 2010 to make local anti-poverty plans. Unfortunately this is a top down situation. I don't know if the communities and the federal states know what they have to do, but I hope that some of them have the insight that it has to be solved at their level. I would go a step further regarding the principle of proposals for solutions and approaches emanating from affected groups themselves. There are a large number. Instruments for self-organisation and self-help are strengthened only minimally. They are not noticed, are in fact nearly overlooked. Stronger attention should be paid to this. And then I also believe, and there are far too few strategies in this regard, that we should look at the political organisation, for example at the communal level. We are often asked in the Austrian poverty network by community representatives and involved citizens: What can we do on the ground here in our town, in our village? And we see that there are possibilities, but we realise very quickly that there are limits of national politics. So we need more proposals on what can be done in reality on the one hand. Much can be done. In Austria there is - this is the prime example - there is a community in the Steiermark, Kapfenberg, which exploited this and I think it would be important to show this. What is possible within the framework of the existing systems? But

also: How must the system and its competencies be changed to create the most effective policy on combating poverty?

We can do a lot of things on the basis of existing networks. In our globalised world we have to take a macro approach. And in this regard I believe that many of the large framework conditions must be approached jointly, i.e. across the EU as well as globally. But we should not lose sight of the smaller units in our execution and in the immediate handling of the many needs. It is essentially a balancing act, but especially one of organising oneself anew and, I believe, of a new structure. As far as the taxes are concerned: I am not primarily concerned with the effect on family policy, undoubtedly there is this effect of taxes, but I regard this as fairly limited. I am concerned about the distribution effect. It is undisputed that taxes and an existing tax system have a distribution effect. And I think it is a general trend. But I also speak as somebody, who has learnt her lesson well, because Austria is very low down on the list as far as a wealth tax is concerned, even below the EU average. Over the last years income and wealth were taxed less and less, there were many reforms in our government. For example, inheritance tax was abolished in Austria last year and the amount involved not being received, is about the same as one would require to establish a new minimum social security system. While the abolition of inheritance tax is seen as a minor matter - these are amounts regarded as being irrelevant for the budget - the same amount, when required for the minimum social security system, suddenly is not so irrelevant.

So there are links. When it comes to taxes, there is of course always the question: where does one generate them, and how does one expend the money that one receives? So this is a fiscal policy question, but I think that the distribution effect of taxes is undisputed. If we want to reduce the social and economic inequalities, we have to take a close look at this, which of course places another big burden on our shoulders, because it is a very complex issue and a big task to create a truly just tax system.

On the goal of the EAPN, on our own indicators. Under which circumstances would 2010 be a successful year for us? This is a goal, which has been clear to us from the beginning: 2010 will be successful when, as we call it in the EAPN papers, a legacy exists, when there are effective consequences. I would not say that the Year 2010 was in vain, however, there will be no sustainable effect if it consists only of a series of nice events.

Naturally one should not underestimate what single events can achieve, but as a real goal, as a measurable goal it remains relevant for us that the results of the Year 2010 should include concrete and measurable, controllable political renewals.

Will there be a directive on adequate income for example? Will new goals be set regarding new principles for the OMC? Will single states really adopt national action plans for combating poverty, which do not merely function as exercises in report writing vis-à-vis the EU, but action plans to which a government commits itself in its government programme?

These are the political results, which we expect of the Year 2010 and which we will use to measure whether the Year 2010 is sustainable. Of course softer goals exist for the Year 2010 which are more difficult to measure, at least with the limited resources which we as NGOs have available. This refers to the whole question of creating awareness, which we can actually only evaluate and then measure. Which kind of events will take place? Will there really be events where one attempts reaching people at grassroots level, involving people with experiences of poverty in order for the kind of direct dialogue to come about that is often missing? Of course one can also research such a change in awareness and its long-term effects, but I can tell you now that we at EAPN don't have the resources to do such research. But we will certainly check and use it to measure the achievement of our own goals, amongst others in how far people with experiences of poverty were involved, and with which kind of events which kind of people were reached. And whether one was successful in not only talking again to the normal suspects, i.e. having discussions with the same people who in any event are involved in poverty, but to distribute information on a much wider basis.

We have at least one concrete goal for a bigger action where it will also be easier to measure whether it is successful. In October, probably on October 17, we intend to form a human chain around European institutions. Then one can check if this human chain contains gaps. Our director Fintan Farrell has already calculated how many people are required to encircle European institutions. It seems realistic, but it will be important that many organisations and movements participate. It is not only about encircling the institutions, but also to build up contact and to enter into a direct dialogue with representatives, co-workers of these institutions, i.e. officials of the Commission, with members of parliament within the framework of this action. It should be seen as an opportunity for dialogue and also as a signal. One can measure such actions in terms of their immediate execution. The long-term effects are not clearly measurable with our resources even if it were theoretically possible. In the end there is especially one central indicator to measure success not only for the Year 2010, but for our work as a whole at the EAPN, i.e. tangible change in the life of people with poverty experiences. Statistics is the one thing which we will continue to pursue, how the different figures develop, whether something is recordable. Once

there are better quantitative goals, it will become easier to monitor and also to criticise. We will remain in contact and seek contact and look for the feedback of people, women, men, children who live in poverty. And an indicator will always be: is there tangible change? Additionally to what the statistics say, is there tangible change in the lives of people with experiences of poverty?

WAYS FORWARD – FOR A EUROPE WITHOUT POVERTY!

Presentation of the European Position Paper on Combating Child Poverty
– Summary of the Café Europe and the procedural discussion –

Two successive working rounds, the so-called Cafés Europe, enabled the conference participants to collaborate in small groups. The purpose of the Cafés Europe was to amend and supplement the draft position paper on combating child poverty, already known to the participants.

The first Café Europe focused on an analysis of EU strategies and quite specifically on their usefulness especially for the practical work of non-governmental organisations. During the second Café Europe the conference participants examined the realisation of EU strategies, again by placing the focus on non-governmental organisations.

The results were presented by Helena Hiila and Stanislav Trnovec.

Helena Hiila:

Managing Director of Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland, Helsinki

Our aim is now to tell somehow to report or conclude the work that has been done in those European Cafés. I must say that it is not very easy work at all. But, every one of you, of course, can add whatever you want. Probably our report is not complete because of lack of time and also because there were so many ideas and initiatives. It is not possible to report them all here. But, maybe later in this paper it will be more complete.

To start about political challenges: we wanted to point out that this year of fighting poverty and social exclusion, especially when we are talking about child poverty, should not only be a task of one year. We should not only be interested in this matter next year, but we should consider it as a long-term development and change this. To be able to do that, we think that it should be seen as a very important, crucial issue in all policies of the European Union. In all funds, in all structures, everything that is done in the name of the European Union should be considered, whether it will increase or decrease child poverty. Otherwise, it is not possible to demolish this phenomenon from Europe.

It is very important to make sure that media bring the topic of child poverty to the broad public. I think here, every one of us can do something. Most of us here are representing NGOs, and, of

course, when we go home we should contact media and tell about this seminar and do it also after that seminar. All the time we see that this matter is not been taken seriously in the society where we are. We also want to say that when we are talking about child poverty, we are not only talking about the social problem. It is not only a social, political issue, but it is much broader as has been really highlighted in this background paper that we could hear beforehand. It may also be necessary to add that the situation of the most vulnerable children should be taken more seriously. Now we are talking about children who come from migrant families, ethnic minority families, but also about those children who don't have families at all: those who are living on streets, in institutions. Actually, we don't know very much about their circumstances. We should know more.

Then I come to the background paper to the paragraph education. We would like to add there the important issue: how we would avoid the phenomenon of dropouts of school? If a young person doesn't finalise his or her education, it is very much more possible that he or she ends up in poverty - compared to the situation of someone being well educated.

Then, talking about the labour market, I think, and we all think that Europe would need more family friendly labour policy. If we consider that whole Europe is getting older and we are lacking children and families who want to have children. That is the case where labour markets and the whole society should be developed more family friendly.

It also means that there are stronger considerations of family work in the situation of social security, especially as it mostly refers to women or mothers, actually very often single mothers. During these days we have heard that the group of single mothers is the one group that is in risk to end in poverty in all European Union countries. So, it means that there should be social contributions, for instance, in cases of shorter working hours or when a person, usually a woman because of family responsibilities is unable to work outside of home at certain times.

Some words about the role of the NGOs: NGOs, first of all, should be watchdogs. It is very important that NGOs remind the quest on child poverty and keep it on the agenda in media, lobbying de-

cision makers at all levels: at our national level, local level, but also at European Union level. Of course, that is why we have those European Union level NGOs like, for instance, COFACE and Eurochild. NGOs represent people, and they must also listen to the poor members of the society. They must provide information both at national and European Union level.

In many countries it has been planned this year to raise more awareness about poverty issues and about child poverty. We think that it is not enough to only raise awareness. Somehow, I personally think that it is a little bit like cheating poor people. If you just talk about it, we talk about the phenomenon, and we are talking, we have TV programmes, and we can read about the issue in the newspapers next year, but we don't really do anything at all. We were thinking that it should be good if the European Union could demand that every nation planned; there could be at least one concrete proposal how really to reduce this phenomenon of child poverty.

Finally, I would like to say that it is not enough that all these European Social Funds only concentrate on the fact of employment and labour market—even if they are very important issues. They are especially important when we are talking about poverty and child poverty. But, it is not enough. They should also be opened for other topics concerning social inclusion, children, education, etc. So, we really could here make, at least our group, a decision that we really want people's Europe - what is sustainable also by all means. Thank you very much.

Stanislav Trnovec:

President of Club of Large Families, Bratislava

I am very pleased that the position paper is based on a firm basis which permits further pursuit. Every such document bears the marks of the time in which it was written and reflects the momentary needs of those affected. For this reason it is essential to update such documents so that they stay "in line". It is a privilege for me to be involved in this work. I am a pessimist and therefore I have bad news for you. Poverty has been with us for as long as mankind has existed. For more than 5,000 years poverty was solved in some way or another; this is reflected in old documents from Hammurabi codex or in the Old Testament. And the EU also wanted to do this.

The EU was repeatedly expanded. Historically speaking the biggest leap was the accession of ten new countries in 2004. Ten more countries were added to the 15 Member States and, somewhat later, two more joined. The post-communist countries with their problems and experiences joined the ranks of the free countries. Their integration was met with changes, with euphoria, but also with disappointment. The problems of the post-

communist countries differ from those of the old countries. Germany is the only exception. The aid provided within the framework of German-German dialogue and which is still being rendered, can only be observed with great recognition by the remaining countries. This is not only a demonstration of the huge economic potential of Germany, but also especially one of human solidarity. Despite all the aid rendered, it has often met with negative reactions. Personal expectations are often equated with the expected developments. When the circumstances differ, this often leads to dissatisfaction.

As a citizen of a third country, I am not entitled to analyse the negative reactions. These have some characteristics, which are also to be observed in the remaining new countries. The EU has development strategies, which were worked out before the accession to the EU by the 12 new countries. It is natural that these strategies are not able to meet not only the needs, but also the experiences of the new countries optimally. The Lisbon Strategy and the Barcelona Agreement are both very ambitious documents, which reckon with general growth. The reality of the last days is vastly different. The crisis has had its worst effect on the national economies of the post-communist countries. Many of the goals mentioned in these documents are not even achieved by the old Member States themselves. A clear example of this is the fight against poverty. During the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, poverty in the EU increased despite comprehensive endeavours. The ambitions of the EU to get rid of child poverty are completely unrealistic. It should be the fundamental goal of the EU to eliminate child poverty completely, this is the decision of the European Parliament of October 9, 2008 (on the promotion of social integration and combating poverty including child poverty in the EU). Defining unrealistic goals leads to insulting the whole programme.

We convened today and yesterday to pose questions and to search for answers. The answers don't only relate to concrete situations which came about, but are in a sense connected to a vision. And I think that the most important thing is for us to observe the situation very exactly. Thereafter we can draw conclusions and only then we can take measures.

There is the question: how should one view poverty? It was said that the methods used currently are interesting from an analytical point of view, but they don't provide a complex picture. When observing poverty, one has to see the child in the background, in a real situation.

Secondly, we have to create such indicators that enable us to draw a comparison between countries. The results, when relative, provide us with the status in a particular country, but it is not transferable to other countries. The indicators must include such aspects that provide a realistic picture. The

measures which should then follow, should be implemented in every country. The question arises: who is to exert the pressure so that the governments, the organisations implement everything that is in the country? We have also spoken about how the governments or the organisations – in every country - are to be informed. Most of us here today are NGOs and as their representatives we should use the ideas discussed here. What is important? The position paper provides the foundation on which one can build. To be added are the little stones, and the product turns into a mosaic.

At the end of the Cafés Europe the conference participants agreed that the position paper was to be supplemented with the changes worked out during the conference, that it should then be distributed among the participants to be checked, and that, if required, last amendments would be considered. Afterwards the approved version should be sent to the organisations and associations in order to be signed by them and used in the political work.

FAREWELL ADDRESS

Edith Schwab
Chairwoman

Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen e.V., Berlin

Yes, my dear ladies and gentlemen. I won't review the entire symposium and summarise as I had originally anticipated doing in the first draft of my concluding remarks.

Over the past two days we have heard a lot on this topic, on the specific aspects of the topic, on the paper, which we want to produce and on the specific aspects, which are to be included in the paper. Permit me therefore to conclude with words that are somewhat different, and I do not hope to bore you. We have reached the end of our symposium "Child Poverty - a European Challenge" here in sunny, beautiful Berlin.

Two substantially intensive and exciting conference days lie behind us.

I think that all of us – even if we had been engaged with the topic intensively before – got to know new ideas, if not new views. And that is a good thing. Why do I say this? You all know this tunnel vision on circumstances and situations.

One thinks one knows everything. One thinks one knows the solutions. One turns a screw here, makes a change there, discussion takes place, brains overload. But the level of frustration is high, because the change wished or the improvements intended do not get kickstarted. The shortages apparent in this approach only become clear and are accompanied by the "aha-effect" when we change our perspective. We approach the matter from another position, from a different angle, perhaps from the view of a totally unprejudiced observer, who had never heard of these issues before - perhaps from the perspective of a child. Michaela Moser used the example of a computer crash earlier. In restoring it, one is given the chance to think anew, to set new focal points, etc. I liked this example very much, because it expresses exactly what I mean. Let us develop new ideas and perspectives, let us take these forward in public discussions, publicise them and implement them in the knowledge of people. Perhaps in this manner we can better succeed in improving things for the better. We have now been busy for two days with the depressing problems of child poverty - which even exists in a wealthy Europe. When I hear that e.g. also Switzerland - for us here in Germany the epitome of wealth - has the same problems of poverty as faced by the other European states, and that in Switzerland 98% of the wealth is accumulated in the hands of 2% of the population - a fact hitherto unknown to me - I

see that the problems stretch across Europe and are not restricted to the EU, but go far beyond, are very similar and are to be defined in a similar manner.

Our topic is child poverty, we speak, however, predominantly of wealth, economy, competition. A lot has been said about this today, and actually less was said about children. We are talking about promoting and challenging children, achievement must be worthwhile. Parents invest - if they can afford to spend - a small fortune on education, training and promotion of their children. This is really the question: What is the goal? Which values remain central for this undertaking? And the other question is: Who actually asks the children if they really prefer it this way? As already stated: I don't want to bore you and repeat things you have already heard.

Permit me therefore to take you on a short trip "down under". Those who know me know that for a number of years I have been an Australia fan. I remain fascinated by the culture of the Aborigines, a culture that is 30,000 years old. As is known, no written tradition of the indigenous culture exists, but there are fascinating world views from which we can take lessons for our problems here. These people lived from and thrived on their spirituality. Material things had absolutely no value for these people. They lived in the knowledge that every person is valuable and possesses at least one talent, which differentiates him/her from the others. Of course there was the tracker and the hunter, the one who could find water and the one who could light the fire. But there was also the storyteller, the herb specialist or perhaps only the listeners, i.e. people who could listen well when somebody else came with a message. But even that is an unmeasurable talent. Each of these talents was important and had equal value, and was recognised as such for life in the Outback over milleniums of years, namely, as being important and of equal value.

What can we learn from this culture?

A completely different view of people and of children, to view a child as a personality, to recognise that each child possesses talents, which must be recognised and which are to be supported and respected. To welcome the child to this world, to provide it with the security of belonging and being appreciated, to involve it in decisions about its interests. Not to speak about children, but to speak with them.

I really enjoyed visiting the photographic exhibition “Kinderwelten” (“Children’s worlds”) with you yesterday. These children with their clear views, with their pride having received recognition, for these children yesterday’s experience will no doubt have an impact on their whole life. They found out, that they, as a human being, have at least one talent that is recognised and appreciated. Nobody can rob them of this knowledge, not even if they nearly fail their maths.

We talk a lot about paradigm shifts, and, for that matter, in quite different contexts. Let us all work towards effecting this paradigm shift.

Children form 20% of our population, but are 100% our future. Please do not misunderstand me. Our task remains the provision of the required material basics for their growing up. It is our duty to do everything in our power to open up all those opportunities offered by our society: to provide them with security and peace, healthy nutrition, and a healthy environment, to provide good and especially friendly teachers to accompany them, to integrate them in all areas of society and, wherever possible, to involve them. We must not give up, stigmatise or even criminalise or socially write off one single child. Those born into this world are to be respected and supported. It makes little sense to encourage women to give birth to more children, and yet to refer regularly in the respective poverty - and wealth reports to stagnating or growing poverty.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed good that the topic of combating child poverty is on the agenda. The position paper produced by the AGF as a result of, at this stage, two international conferences should form the basis for continuing to work on this topic across Europe. The public debate is to be conducted, the positions reached are to be further discussed.

It should be our goal to improve the situation of children, both in the material sense as well as in the sense of the different view described above. To approach people and especially children with a different estimation can change our society positively.

I would like to thank you for accompanying me on this short excursion. And finally, I would like to thank all those who are present here, who wonderfully talked about things and engaged their thoughts, their knowledge, their know-how in the service of the course. We have had two wonderful days. I thank the speakers for their very valuable contributions, the participants in the podium discussion for the thought-provoking inputs and, of course, you all. I would like to thank the European Academy Berlin for the successful and uncomplicated cooperation, we have jointly entered into a new cooperation, which we would like to pursue further. A very special word of thanks goes to our excellent team of interpreters, which accompanied us over the days.

And, last but not least, I thank the AGF head office team for the preparations and execution of this symposium: Mr Jochen Schäfer, Ms Ivonne Famula and the co-workers of the office.

And, of course, I also thank the head offices and staff of the family associations being members of the AGF, because all of them made this wonderful symposium possible.

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She is currently in charge of the coordination of the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process as well as of the Report on Child Poverty. Ms Carparelli is also responsible for developing recommendations on Active Inclusion and the communication on "Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion". She joined the EU-Commission in 1993, working for the Departments for Economic and Financial Affairs as well as in the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Environment, Ms Margot Wallstrom. Since 2007 Ms Carparelli has worked in her current position.

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She is in charge of the planning and execution of seminars, conferences and international projects. Her focus lies on the external relations of the EU as well as on the processes of Europeanisation and democratisation of South East Europe. Before coming to the European Academy, Ms Andrea Despot worked as research assistant at the Institute for East European Studies of Freie Universität Berlin.

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She runs the Eurochild network of 70 members from 27 countries in Europe, promoting the rights and the welfare of children and young people. One of Ms. Hainsworth's key activities is to monitor and to give inputs into the EU's Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion and social protection from a child rights perspective. Besides, she was in charge of the 2008 annual conference on a child rights approach to child well-being in Budapest.

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Väestöliitto is a non-governmental umbrella organisation focusing on families. The organization has for 66 years been actively involved in influencing the society to take better into consideration the needs of the families. Väestöliitto carries out family political research and publishes annually the Family Barometer. Actual projects concentrate, among others, on better reconciliation of work and family life, peer support in the internet for parents with new born children, peer support for immigrant families and research concerning single parent families. Before her work for Väestöliitto, Ms. Hiila has for several years served government agencies on Social Welfare.

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From 2003 to 2005, he worked as Secretary of State at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Women, Family and Health in the federal state of Lower Saxony.

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He is promoting the family dimension of EU policies, programmes and Initiatives. Under the European Progress programme, his activities mainly focus on family as well as on the mutual learning between family organisations. Most of these policies are addressed from the perspective of the fight against poverty and social exclusion and the prevention thereof. Mr. Lay has been director of the COFACE since 1983.

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International scientific coordinator at the CEPS/INSTEAD Research Institute in Differdange, Luxembourg.

He is regularly called on as an international policy advisor, particularly on the EU cooperation in social protection and social inclusion. His main research activities include, among others, comparative socio-economic analysis especially on income, poverty and social exclusion, the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process as well as the implementation of international social surveys. Mr. Marlier chaired the EU Task Force on Child poverty and Child well-being, whose report was endorsed in January 2008 by the European Commission and all 27 EU countries.

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With her work for EAPN and DIE ARMUTSKONFERENZ Austria she is doing social lobbying at national and European level. Her focus lays on the topics Women and Poverty, Poverty and Over-Indebtedness, Poverty from an ethic perspective as well as on the development of concepts and indicators for a "Good Life".

Besides, Ms Moser is an author for professional journals and lecturer at universities in Austria.

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Matthias Petschke assumed office at the EU-Commission in 1995. There he worked initially as assistant to the general director at the GD Trade. Later on, he accepted the substitutional charge of the division responsible for the negotiations on free trade agreements. Since 2004, he has been head of division at the directorate for public procurement policy within the GD Internal Market and Services. Before, Matthias Petschke held the position as first secretary at the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the EU in Brussels. On 1st May 2009 he assumed his current office.

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Stanislav Trnovec

President of Club of Large Families in Bratislava, Slovakia.

His work concentrates on the value of parental work and its compensation in the pension system, poverty in families with children, the feminisation of poverty as well as the generational transmission of poverty and poverty in work. Sometimes, he prepares papers and documents for the EU-Commission. Mr. Trnovec is a member in the working group on Family and Social Policy at COFACE and member of the Council of the Slovakian government for gender equality.

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Through her work within the political group of the United European Left she tends to support the strengthening of Social Protection processes to prevent poverty and social exclusion. Her focus lays on topics such as the European Social Model, Poverty and Child Poverty, Health and the Lisbon Strategy. As a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Employment and Social Affairs, Ms Zimmer has prepared the report on poverty and social inclusion within the EU, which has been adopted by the Parliament in October 2008.

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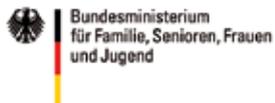
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