

MEMBER STATES URGED TO SUPPORT THE MOST DEPRIVED IN EUROPE

Brussels, 25 October 2012 - Eurodiaconia, Caritas Europa, Red Cross/EU Office, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Federation of Food Banks and FEANTSA call on EU Member States to show commitment to the Europe 2020 Strategy and fully support the European Commission's proposal of a Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, issued yesterday.¹

More Europeans than ever before are finding themselves in extreme poverty. About 40 million people in the European Union are not able to meet their everyday basic needs, including a lack of food, adequate housing and other basic necessities. Overall poverty is increasing in Europe with more and more people falling below the poverty line and struggling to access basic goods and services.

Material deprivation has a severe impact on the well-being of people and denies them a life lived in good health, in dignity and with respect for their fundamental rights.

Across Europe our members work daily with an increasing number of people experiencing extreme poverty. We know that without significant action that number will increase and the demand for assistance will increase. Providing assistance and support to meet basic needs requires substantial resources. Our members mobilise a broad spectrum of instruments including public funds and private sector funds. Yet there is much more need for solidarity with those living in extreme poverty and for making a real difference to their living conditions. Specific means must continue to be available for food aid along with other assistance if we are to ensure social inclusion. The presentation of this proposal acknowledges the need for the European Union to provide some concrete support to address extreme poverty and deprivation and work towards social cohesion in Europe. We welcome the proposed Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived as a strong signal to step up such efforts at EU and national level.

A clear overarching strategy to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion at EU level, combined with similar approaches in Member States is needed if we wish to reduce poverty and social exclusion by the Europe 2020 goal of 20 million by 2020. However, the Commission proposal would contribute to fighting extreme poverty and could serve as an entry point for people experiencing extreme poverty into complementary longer term inclusion and activation programmes such as the European Social Fund.

Member States must support and adopt this programme in the context of the Multi Annual Financial Framework, ensure its funding at a minimum of 2.5 Billion Euros over the proposed programming period. Most of all, Member States must show their commitment to fundamental rights, reducing poverty in Europe and European solidarity.

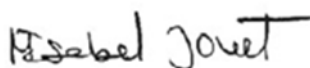


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¹<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1704&furtherNews=yes>