



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Coordination and Planning, Interinstitutional Relations Unit

Commissioner Andor
Conference on Shared Social Responsibility
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Ladies and gentlemen,

Today's conference clearly highlighted the complementary nature of the work our two institutions are delivering.

It also confirmed the importance of mobilizing the moral capital of citizens, and not only their economic capacities. It is rightly that the draft Charter on shared social responsibilities insists on this need

The Commission warmly welcomes the concept of social shared responsibilities underlying the Council of Europe's Plan on Social Cohesion.

In times of considerable change and uncertainty as the ones we have been through the need for sustainable inclusive societies built on participation and trust becomes a priority. We clearly share this goal.

The Europe 2020 Strategy too embodies the notion of shared social responsibility in its philosophy and execution.

The strategy relies on an integrated approach and reporting across policy spheres – economic, social and employment. And it urges the engagement and response of all those who can help deliver, whether at EU national or sub-national level.

Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State will adopt its own national targets in each of these areas.

As an integral part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Employment Strategy encourages measures to meet three of the five headline targets by 2020:

- 75% of people aged 20-64 in work
- school drop-out rates below 10%, and at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education
- at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Concrete actions at EU and national levels will underpin the EU 2020 strategy. As an EU contribution to the joint efforts towards reaching these objectives, the Commission presented a number of Flagship Initiatives, including the EU platform against poverty and social exclusion which you discussed earlier today.

In designing the new Europe 2020 strategy we have proposed significant changes to the new governance structure. One of the most important issues for the Commission was to ensure a better involvement of the European Council in Europe 2020. Only Heads of State and Government, representing the highest political level, can provide the impetus for reform while at the same time ensuring that strategies are followed by adequate reforms and the necessary budgetary allocations.

Another major priority in the new strategy is to strengthen the involvement of key stakeholders in assessing and evaluating progress. The Commission has called on Member States to establish real partnerships, closely associating parliaments as well as social partners and representatives of civil society in the elaboration of national reform programmes and their implementation. I believe that such an involvement is fundamental for the success of the new strategy.

While we are beginning to see signs that our economies are slowly recovering from the crisis, its' impact continues to be felt by many Europeans across the continent.

The statistics are stark:

There are 5 million more unemployed than at the beginning of the crisis and many more households have seen their income drop;

More than one in five young Europeans cannot find a job, increasing their chances of long-term exclusion; and

Over 80 million people in the EU live at risk of poverty.

It is vital, therefore, that we jointly step up our efforts to tackle poverty. We need develop innovative approaches and we need to put the fight against poverty at the heart of the political agenda.

Much of the responsibility for areas linked to poverty lies with the Member States: for example, social protection systems, health, education and housing.

Nonetheless, we know that there is a strong European dimension. Three quarters of our citizens (74%) believe that the EU has an important role to play.

As I already mentioned, EU leaders agreed to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. Member States must now ensure the follow up through their own national targets reflecting the specific situation of their country and to underpin them with the relevant policy measures.

23 Member States have so far set national targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, but these targets do not meet yet the level of commitment agreed by the European Council. If no further effort is made, the sum of national ambitions will hardly reach 15 million people, against a collective aim of 20 million.

As for the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, it will contribute therein by

- stepping up coordination between a wider range of partners into the fight against exclusion
- focusing resources where they make the most impact,
- putting forward ideas for innovation and improvements that can help us all work better.

Allow me to spend a moment on this last point.

In the context of the Platform against poverty, the Commission has settled a framework for a social innovation policy. This is very much in line with what was discussed today.

There is a need to complement economic and technological approaches with other complementary approaches if we want to promote well-being and inclusion in Europe. Social innovation should contribute to reduce negative externalities on some social groups or on the environment inferred by the current economic system.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Real progress will only be achievable with the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels – whether European, national or local.

Tackling poverty and social exclusion has to be part of our overall recovery strategy. It is not only a moral duty, but also an economic necessity.

I look forward to continue working together with all of you to make it happen.