

ENGLISH

Congreso Europeo sobre Pobreza
y Exclusión Social
**European Congress
on Poverty and Social Exclusion**

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**Political proposals
to European
decision-makers**

Political proposals to European decision-makers

We, Caritas representatives from all European countries, are convinced that **poverty is a scandal**. Especially during this European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, we urge the European leaders to work for a society where a new culture of **solidarity** and **co-responsibility** has the same value as individual freedom, and where **social justice** and the **fight against poverty** are key objectives for all political action. Poverty being multidimensional, it is necessary to intervene also on its non-material dimensions. The best way to prevent poverty and to fight against it is the **empowerment** and **social participation** of the poor.

With this in mind, we ask you to **adopt the proposed Europe 2020 strategy during the June European Council** together with strong and binding targets to be replicated at national level. We recommend you especially to:

- **Reduce by 30% the number of people living below the national poverty lines**, lifting over 25 million people out of poverty. To achieve this target, it is indispensable to implement the **Active Inclusion strategy** of social (re-)integration through employment in its original design, fully based on the three pillars of minimum income, access to services and active labour market policies. An **adequate basic income** must be guaranteed as a right for people who do not have sufficient resources for dignified living conditions. By 2020, equal access for all to quality social and healthcare services must be provided, for example through guaranteeing in every municipality in Europe a stock of **sufficient social housing** for people who cannot afford adequate accommodation. Another way could be supporting **Home Care** as an effective social service. **Decent and quality jobs** must be available for all people who are able to work. By 2020 the employment target of 75% must reach also those who are furthest away from the labour market: people with disabilities and at risk of social exclusion. A sufficient amount of protected employment is required to achieve this target. A European Pact on Inclusion and Employment could be adopted by all European stakeholders and be the leading example for National Pacts in all Member States.
- **Eradicate child poverty in Europe** and stop the intergenerational transmission of poverty. By 2020, the number of children living in families below the poverty line must be reduced by 70% compared to the 2010 level. One measure of ultimate importance for us is to **guarantee child allowances to every child**, regardless of the status of their parents.
- **Decisively improve education and training**. The EU Member States must guarantee an education system offering **every child the same chances** to achieve a professional or secondary school degree, as well as alternative educational pathways for different situations. The causal

relation between social background and school achievement must be minimised in every country, and we strongly support the target of bringing the share of early school leavers below 10%. Within the Europe 2020 employment goal, a **special target on reducing youth unemployment** should be set so as to spare young people from unemployment or, worse, long-time unemployment.

- **Mainstream** in all relevant policy areas the full **participation** and **integration of specific groups at risk of exclusion** such as migrants, ethnic minorities, people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and disabled persons. Regarding **migrants**, employment cannot be the only strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion and ensure their integration in receiving societies. The Europe 2020 strategy must therefore contain a concrete policy agenda, based on an equal rights approach and striking the right **balance between labour market measures** and social protection measures. This agenda must be clearly reflected in the new EU financial framework 2014-2020.
- **Ensure Policy Coherence for Development** so that the Europe 2020 Strategy is also a strategy for promoting the sustainable development of developing countries, balancing economic, ecological and social objectives. This would notably enable the EU to fulfil by 2015 its commitments towards the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals** and go far beyond them by 2020.
- **Achieve a substantial impact on climate change.** The development of industrialised nations has been the main cause of climate change, and yet it is the world's poorest communities who will most suffer its effects. By 2020, we strongly recommend going far beyond the «30/20/20» climate/energy targets.
- **Strongly improve the governance aspect of Europe 2020** by a true participation of all stakeholders, social partners and the whole civil society in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the strategy.

Together with an economic and political integration process, the EU also needs an equally important social integration process. May this Year 2010 witness a sincere, renewed and durable commitment to zeroing poverty in Europe and in the world.

