



Comments on the Commission working document

EFSC

Consultation on the future "EU 2020" strategy

The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 would have provided a unique opportunity to highlight the need to better realize the social inclusion of marginalized groups in the society among which street children and unaccompanied minors are the most vulnerable ones. It is important to recognize this problem, and to define a common strategy. Unfortunately this challenge has not been met by this strategy paper.

As mentioned in the 2020-working document "delivering this sustainable growth requires agreement to an agenda that puts people and responsibility first". Referring to the economical, financial and therefore social crisis that hit Europe, the EU 2020 strategy underlines the importance of building up a society that recognizes the problem of social inclusion and integration that it is actually facing although this is not sufficiently stressed throughout the text in comparison with the obviously predominant key priorities related to economic growth or single market related principles such as competition. To mention 'inclusive societies' without mentioning in a concrete way the socially most vulnerable groups such as marginalized children, is not convincing.

The integration of an increasing immigration population, social exclusion, child poverty, and the extensive gap between poor and rich countries and citizens are the most urgent problems of this society hit by the crisis. Those issues have to be recognized in the development policies and need to be taken into account in all the key priorities for EU 2020.

1) Creating values by basing growth on knowledge

The development of the professional and society's skills has to pass through the recognition of the fundamental rights of each person, in particular for the vulnerable categories.

Access to education, to all public services, as well as preventive actions through families have to be taken first in the developing strategies.

The right to education has to be respected for every human being independently of his/her ethnical and national belonging.

Particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as street children, are almost totally excluded from social, education, and health services. A strategy on Europe 2020 must claim the total eradication of such extremely excluded children as one of the foremost objectives to achieve in order to speak about 'inclusive societies' in Europe.

As underlined by the EU 2020 strategy, strengthening education is one of the most effective ways to fight inequality and poverty and to contribute to Europe's economic and productivity

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growth, as well as for creating jobs beyond the humanitarian and social objective that no citizen can be excluded from such knowledge

Raising and improving the quality of Europe's universities to make them the best universities in the world, as well as a greater mobility of the students, should enlarge the social gap existing between those who can have access to education and social services and those who are totally excluded from it.

"Knowledge is the engine for sustainable growth", but education must be strengthened in a horizontal way and not principally in a vertical way.

2) Empowering people in inclusive societies

Social inclusion has to be the top priority of each countries structural fund programs.

Every country has to improve protection policies for marginalized children and street children.

The 2020 strategy document recognizes that " for the transformation of the EU into a smarter, greener, more competitive economy" the key effort will be essential to prevent people from falling out of the system, being excluded, and to insure social cohesion. Here the document should become more concrete, mentioning the most vulnerable groups such as long term unemployed people, excluded children such as street children and unaccompanied children as well as children suffering from poverty, elderly people, handicapped and homeless people and migrants.

Skills are an important element for Europe's economic and productivity growth and for job creation, if everyone has access to skill acquisition – this applies in particular to young people and children coming from a disadvantaged social background.

The productivity growth has to pass through the recognition of social problems and has to support social actors and NGOs working with vulnerable groups to help them with access to education, professional training and jobs.

The structural funds must become much more easily accessible for social inclusion organizations and NGOs who work directly with persons living in poverty and in precarious conditions such as street children or unaccompanied minors.

There should be a stronger impact on practical support to be provided to those social NGOs through capacity building, professional training, exchange of best practices on an EU-wide level, intercultural exchanges, and data collection.

A specific Action Programme on the European level must be adopted to support actions both on the levels of prevention and integration to improve in a sustainable way the living situation of extremely marginalized children of our society and street children in particular.

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3) Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy

As mentioned in the EU 2020 strategy in order to make the economy more productive it is important to reduce the pressure on resources. It is therefore important to enlarge the number of resources in terms of working resources not only investing merely in the rich part of our society but giving to poor and vulnerable categories the possibility of increasing the productivity.

It is fundamental to promote a fair distribution of resources in order to reduce the gap between rich and poor.

The development of transport and energy infrastructures and of industrial policy has to go hand by hand with the development of social, educational and medical structures for all citizens.

To fight against inequality, poverty, racism, and social exclusion is a pre-requisite for progress both on the levels of economic growth and social cohesion as its counterpart in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty.

National policies have to be developed and based on inclusion and not on the exclusion criteria.

Only a well structured society that puts people as a priority considering the needs of an innovative, integrative, ecological and socially inclusive future will inspire to have a real economical growth.

Both on the EU and global level the eradication of the extreme social exclusion of citizens, in particular of children such as street children must become an integral element of the future “EU 2020” Strategy to foster a real social Europe able to transform the basic humanitarian values of Europe into social reality and in the same time remain economically competitive in the global context.

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