



Information and project development workshop:

The European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: EFSC joint action and projects of EFSC member organizations

13th May 2009

EFSC, Square Vergote 34, B-1030 Brussels

PRESS RELEASE

On the 13th of May 2009, the European Federation for Street Children (EFSC) organised an information and Project Development Workshop in preparation of the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The workshop aimed at informing EFSC members on the involvement and funding opportunities available under the Year creating a special task force for this purpose.

The 2009 activities of EFSC in preparation of the Year, i.e. the development of a factsheet on the situation of street children in 23 Member States, and a publication containing street children stories, were presented by EFSC Reinhold Müller, before launching the discussion on the member's proposals for the 2010 activities. He encouraged the member organisations to take advantage of the early information provided by EFSC which allow an early lobbying action towards their National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) for advocating that street children be a priority of the European Year 2010.

EFSC Member organisations at the workshop had the opportunity to meet with Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Policy Officer and member of the European Commission's task force for the European Year. She gave EFSC members some useful insights about the state of affairs in the preparation of the Year's activities at EU and Member States' level and made clear that projects funded by the Year's budget must be clearly targeted towards raising awareness in the priority areas of the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion. MEP Marie Panayatopoulos-Cassiotou intervened expressing her commitment towards making the Year a successful tool for the OMC on Social Inclusion, and in particular for the eradication of child poverty and social exclusion. The importance of direct early lobbying towards Member States is confirmed by the fact that some Member States have informed the European Commission that they will not be able to earmark a corresponding amount to the Commission's contribution, so that the total funding available at national level may be reduced.

Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), also stressed the fact that consultation with NGOs is one of the tasks of the NIBs of the European year, and encouraged NGO's involvement at both national and European level, to take an active role in developing contents for the communication strategy of the Year. At national level, EFSC member organisations will have an opportunity to link up with EAPN activities during the Focus Weeks and may be able to raise funds also from parallel sources of funding not directly linked to the Commission's sources and not subject to the same reporting procedures.

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EFSC member organisations presented their project proposals for the European Year 2010. Aware of the importance of exploiting the media for innovative awareness raising actions, they put the focus on the active involvement of children in the development of advocacy messages and in the selection of the aspects of their living situations to be highlighted. These activities will, as emerged in most proposals, address those who are traditionally not targeted by these actions. Parallel to this, a strong call for an accompanying lobbying action was made, where the reaction of the policy makers should be tracked in the long term for ensuring accountability.

Different media tools were proposed, ranging from travelling photo exhibitions, documentaries both by and on street children, 'Guerrilla'-Marketing (e.g. Youtube.com), websites and e-cards. Sports events and theatre activities were suggested to accompany the awareness-raising action. Many EFSC member organisations count on good contacts with nationally prominent media personalities and EFSC could catalyse this potential for maximising the EU value added and impact.

The key message which emerged from the discussion was "no pity, but solidarity", which could be adapted to the national context of EFSC member organisations and in particular to child beggars, with a view to breaking the stereotypes which hamper those children's self esteem and respect. EFSC joint awareness raising campaign will highlight the role of the family and the personal responsibility of everyone in protecting vulnerable children from poverty and social exclusion, also through voluntary work.

All these measures shall contribute to the main goal relating to street children:

Make the invisible visible!



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- *and relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large*

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