Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe: Promoting an Equal, Open and Inclusive Society

Thursday 24th May 2018
Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels
Overview

In the context of growing consumption and expanding economy, poverty, accompanied by social division, is an important problem in our societies. It is estimated that the 8 richest men of the planet own the same wealth as a half of the world population (Oxfam). Moreover, according to Eurostat, one out of four European is exposed to the risk of poverty. A very alarming fact is that 26.4% of children are in the situation of precarity. Under these circumstances, the European Union's objective to lift 20 million people out of poverty by 2020 seems crucial.

The issues of poverty and social inclusion were addressed in November 2017 by the EU Heads of State during a Social Summit, the first of its kind in 20 years. While this long break shows a lack of engagement to address these topics at the very top level, the meeting sent a positive signal, since it also saw the official proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, aiming to ensure more equality and better protection of EU citizens' social rights. Other important initiatives such as the OMC (Open Method of Coordination for social protection), the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, European Social Fund, the Employment and Social Innovation programme and Social Investment Package are also contributing to the goals of Europe 2020 Strategy. The priority of this Strategy is to reduce poverty by 25%. In parallel, the Commission currently has 16 active partnership agreements with non-governmental organisations, supporting them with operating grants to pursue relevant projects.

National divisions hinder the efforts at the European level. Political actors still do not have a common agreement on the definitions and criteria of poverty. The fight against poverty is a national competence, as poverty itself results from the interaction of policies in different sectors, such as employment, taxation system and education. Finding the right balance between the partners and their competences, collecting all the necessary data and establishing common guidelines seems to be key to advance on the European level. Ensuring that all social groups are included and that the potential of both businesses and public institutions is fully employed to fight the diverse faces of poverty remains an important task for national leaders.

This timely symposium will review policy actions taken against poverty in the EU. Delegates will have an opportunity to analyse the first developments of the European Pillar of Social Rights and reflect on everyone's role in contributing in it and other similar initiatives. Participants will hold debates over the definition of poverty, assess possible solutions to boost social inclusion and share best practice from local initiatives.

Why Attend?

- Examine the European legislation and initiatives aiming to fight poverty
- Assess good practice and review lessons learned from local initiatives
- Reflect on the challenges of social inclusion and consider possible solutions on different levels
- Discuss the role of the public and private sector in the fight against poverty
- Analyse the pros and cons of minimum wages
- Gain insights into national and local policies to improve the quality of life
- Learn about Social Business benefits and opportunities
- Identify the vulnerable groups exposed to the risks of poverty and the ways to support them
- Debate the best ways of cooperation between international social stakeholders

Who Should Attend?

- Ministries of Employment and Social Affairs
- Social Services
- Employment Agencies
- Youth Organisations
- Social Funds
- Training Managers
- Recruitment Advisers
- Human Rights Groups
- Trade Unions
- Research Institutes
- Social Innovation Centres
- National Departments for Social and Family Affairs
- Social Advisers
- Voluntary Organisations
- Local Authorities
- Employment and Social Inclusion Institutes
- Labour Economy Research Centres
- Labour Market Institutes
- Academics
- PhD Candidates
- European Social Organisational Science Consultancies
- European Employment Associations
- Social Partners
- Pension Organisations
- Associations of Social Enterprises
- Sheltered Employment and Labour Integration Organisations
- Physical and Social Rehabilitation Centres
- Disabled People's Rehabilitation and Employment Unions
- Vocational Training Centres
- Innovation and Personal Development Centres
- Special Employment Unions

Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Avenue du Boulevard 17
1210 Brussels
Belgium
Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe: Promoting an Equal, Open and Inclusive Society

Programme

09:15  Registration and Morning Refreshments

10:00  Chair’s Welcome and Opening Remarks

10:10  Looking into European Initiatives to Fight Poverty and Social Exclusion
    • Introducing the European Pillar on Social Rights: an Innovation for Greater Social Inclusion
    • Finding the Balance between Member States’ Competences and EU Aid: Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Other Examples
    • Employing European Funds in National Social Affairs
    • Reflecting on the Relevance of the Main Poverty Indicators: Monetary Poverty, Severe Material Deprivation, Very Low Work Intensity

10:40  First Round of Discussions

11:00  Morning Coffee Break

11:30  Unlocking the Economic Industries’ Potential to Promote Social Inclusion
    • Debating the Efficiency of the Minimum Wage and Possible Alternatives
    • Analysing the Role of Local Authorities to Fight Poverty in their Communities and to Boost the Incentives for Local Economies in this Field
    • Empowering Social Economy Enterprises to Provide Inclusive Employment
    • Promoting a Cross-Sector Approach and Partnerships in Order to Address the Problem on Different Institutional Levels

12:00  Second Round of Discussions

12:30  Networking Lunch

13:30  Considering the Demographic Changes as an Important Element of Poverty: Statistics and New Challenges
    • Measuring the Impact of Migration on Poverty and Homelessness
    • Adapting to the Realities of Ageing Societies: Ensuring Sufficient Economic Coverage in National Budgets
    • Fighting Child Poverty: Prioritising Actions
    • Safeguarding Minorities on the Edge of Social Exclusion

14:00  Third Round of Discussions

14:30  Afternoon Coffee Break

14:50  Looking Into the Causes of Poverty and Placing the Problem in a Broader Context
    • Analysing the Links Between Mental Illnesses, Addictions and Extreme Poverty
    • Reflecting on Different Criteria to Define Poverty in Europe and other Geographical Zones
    • Achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Eliminating Extreme Poverty
    • Putting together the Efforts of Social Partners: Opening to International Cooperation and Sharing Best Practice

15:20  Fourth Round of Discussions

15:50  Chair’s Summary and Closing Comments

16:00  Networking Reception

16:30  Close

* Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice *

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Event Details

Date:  Thursday 24th May 2018
Time:  10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue:  Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels

Speakers Include:

Jean-Maurice Frère, Expert, Task Force Sustainable Development, Federal Planning Bureau
Torsten Müller, Senior Researcher, ETUI
Andy Deacon, Policy Coordinator, Climate Alliance
David McNair, Executive Director Global Policy, ONE Campaign
Abriel Schieffelers, Communications and Training Manager, Oasis Belgium

Forthcoming Events

Promoting Cultural and Creative Industries: Maximising their Economic and Social Contribution in the EU
27th March 2018

Building a Brighter Future: Promoting, Protecting and Improving Young People’s Mental Health in Europe
28th March 2018

Digital Skills for Everyone: Accelerating Europe’s Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth
5th April 2018

Fostering Gender Equality in the Workplace: Developing Inclusive Labour Markets for Women Across the EU
10th April 2018

The Future of Tourism in the EU: Fostering Sustainability and Digitisation
12th April 2018

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