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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: An integrated approach
- Council Conclusions (16 June 2016)

Delegations will find attached in the annex the Council Conclusions entitled "Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: An integrated approach," adopted by the EPSCO Council at its 3474th meeting held on 16 June 2016.

Combating poverty and social exclusion: An integrated approach
Council Conclusions

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT

1. The financial and economic crisis led to a cumulative rise of more than 4 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion despite efforts to reach the target set by the European Union in its Europe 2020 strategy to reduce this number by 20 million until 2020.
2. The Union committed itself to uphold the ambitious poverty and social exclusion target set in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Now that European economies are showing the first signs of recovery, it is time to turn the tide. Member States should step up their efforts to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The increasing divergences between and within Member States underline the importance of actions being taken throughout the Union.
3. Innovative active inclusion approaches and solutions, which combine adequate income support, access to quality services and inclusive labour markets, while ensuring equal opportunities for both women and men, are necessary to fight poverty and social exclusion effectively, especially in a context of fiscal sustainability constraints. The Union, the Member States and all relevant stakeholders possess a rich body of knowledge allowing for the implementation of effective policies by exchanging expertise, experience and best practices.

STRESSING THAT

4. Preventing and fighting poverty and social exclusion, especially in-work poverty, in an effective way requires acknowledging the multidimensional nature of poverty. This calls for an integrated approach also at the household level by considering each specific situation from a holistic perspective, ranging from a lack of income to social exclusion, and by recognising the role of and consequences for other life domains, such as employment, health and long-term care, reconciliation of work and family life, education and housing. This integrated approach should address the different risks of poverty for women and men throughout the life cycle, from early childhood to old age.
5. An integrated approach requires cooperation of stakeholders within all relevant public policy domains and across all required disciplines by connecting services between public parties, social partners, private partners, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the target groups. Cooperation should lead to a coordination of comprehensive and personalized, timely and continuous interventions aimed at the respective life domains.
6. An integrated approach fits in well with the Social Investment Package. The effectiveness of social protection systems could be improved by complementing universal systems with selective and individualised approaches targeted to those in need at the time they need it.

WELCOMING the exchange of experiences and best practices of integrated approaches to prevent and fight poverty and social exclusion;

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

7. Keep the prevention and fight against poverty and social exclusion high on the agenda and support Member States in their ambitions to deliver upon their respective national targets and translate the shared ambitions as set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy into concrete results, also by considering the added value of integrated approaches;

8. Continue to monitor the situation in the field of poverty and social exclusion in close cooperation with the Member States, while giving special consideration to innovative integrated approaches in its future work;
9. Engage with all relevant Union-level public and private actors and promote various opportunities of exchange for a better dialogue with social partners and civil society in order to stimulate the exchange of best practices with regard to innovative integrated approaches to combat poverty and social exclusion;
10. Encourage the active involvement of existing platforms, like the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, in the context of the European Semester and the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion;
11. Continue to develop shared tools together with the Member States and relevant stakeholders in order to stimulate the exchange of experiences, data and best practices with regard to integrated approaches and integrated services, following the example of the Social Investment Package and the European Platform for Investing in Children.

ENCOURAGES THE MEMBER STATES, taking into account their specific situations, TO

12. Recognise the value of applying an integrated approach and step up their efforts to preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion and reach their respective national poverty and social exclusion targets;
13. Address child poverty and promote children's well-being through multi-dimensional and integrated strategies, in accordance with the Commission Recommendation Investing in Children;

14. Combat poverty and social exclusion of other vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, elderly, youth, the unemployed, people with care burden, Roma, people with migrant background and homeless people, by considering integrated strategies and best practices;
15. Strengthen the involvement of and cooperation between all relevant public, private and civil society actors, also by making reference to experts input in the formulation, transposition, effectuation and evaluation of policies;
16. Foster the development of personalised and integrated services in line with the active inclusion recommendation, involving all relevant public and private actors at all relevant levels;
17. Draw inspiration from the best practices with regard to integrated approaches to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion published in the form of an addendum to the present Council Conclusions and intensify the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices in this field;
18. Make better use of European Structural and Investments Funds, the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived and to implement policies inducing an effective impact on preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion.

CALLS ON THE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEES TO

19. Ensure the continued monitoring of employment and social developments, in particular the progress towards the Europe 2020 headline targets on employment and reducing poverty and social exclusion, including positive developments resulting from integrated approaches;

20. Continue to provide adequate analysis on specific poverty-related topics, with a special focus on the effectiveness of integrated approaches;
21. Strengthen where appropriate, the involvement of social partners and civil society in the work related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

CALLS ON THE SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE TO

22. Within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion, continue to facilitate and stimulate the gathering and sharing of ideas, knowledge and experience on integrated approaches for the fight against poverty and social exclusion, involving all relevant expertise available from both public and private organisations;
 23. Organise thematic reviews of positive developments and results achieved by applying an integrated approach, including the use of the peer review in social protection and social inclusion programme in this respect.
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References

1. Council

- The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion – Council conclusions adopted on 7 March 2011 (doc. 6917/11).
- Towards social investment for growth and cohesion – Council conclusions adopted on 20 June 2013 (doc. 11487/13).
- Council Decisions (EU) 2015/772 and (EU) 2015/773 of 11 May 2015 establishing the EMCO and the SPC (in particular the task conferred on both Council preparatory bodies to contribute to all aspects of the European Semester within their fields of competence and report on them to the Council).
- Revised Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines, including the Broad Guidelines for Economic Policies adopted by the Council on 8 July 2015 (Council Recommendation (EU) 2015/1184) and the Guidelines for Employment Policies adopted by the Council on 5 October 2015 (Council Decision (EU) 2015/1848; in particular Guideline 8 on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, and recital 11 stating that the EMCO and the SPC should monitor how the relevant policies are implemented in the light of the employment guidelines, in line with their respective Treaty-based mandates).
- Moving towards more inclusive labour markets – Council conclusions adopted on 9 March 2015 (doc. 7017/15).
- Social governance for an inclusive Europe – Council conclusions adopted on 7 December 2015 (doc. 15070/15).
- Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (doc. 15107/15 - adopted by Agriculture-Fisheries Council on 15 February 2016).
- Council Conclusions on "Common active inclusion principles to combat poverty more effectively" (doc. 15984/08 + COR 1 + REV 1 COR 1 (hu) + REV 2 (lv)).

2. Social Protection Committee

- The Europe 2020 social dimension: delivering on the EU commitment to poverty reduction and inclusion (2011) – Opinion of the Social Protection Committee as endorsed by the Council on 1 December 2011 (doc. 17050/11).
- Europe 2020 Strategy: Mid-term review, including the evaluation of the European Semester - Joint Opinion of the Employment Committee and of the Social Protection Committee as endorsed by the Council on 14 October 2014 (doc. 13809/14).
- 2015 Report of the Social Protection Committee on recent social policy reforms: contribution to the Annual Growth Survey 2016 (doc. 12079/15 ADD 1).

3. European Commission

- Communication on "A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion" (COM(2008) 418 final).
- Recommendation 2008/867/EC of 3 October 2008 on the "active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market" (OJ L 307 of 18 November 2008).
- Communication on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: a European framework for social and territorial cohesion (COM(2010) 0758).
- Communication on the "European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe" (COM(2010) 636 final).
- Communication "Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020" (COM(2013) 83 final).
- Commission Staff Working Document "Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019" (SWD(2015) 278 final).

4. European Parliament

- Report on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe (16 July 2010).
- Resolution on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (15 November 2011).
- Resolution "Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union" (20 November 2012), calling on the Commission to define concrete benchmarks in the form of a social protection floor.
- Resolution "Strengthening the social dimension of the EMU" (21 November 2013), calling on the Council to define concrete benchmarks for the employment and social indicators in the form of an EU social protection floor, with a view to promoting upward social convergence and social progress.
- Resolution on "the European Semester for economic and policy coordination: employment and social aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2015" (11 March 2015), calling *inter alia* on the Commission to continue developing the social dimension and to make greater use of the social scoreboard in policy formulation and that the Europe 2020 strategy should take into account the urgent need to make more progress towards the poverty reduction and other social targets.

5. Committee of the Regions

- Fighting poverty and social exclusion – What role for regions and cities? – Proceedings of the conference of the CoR, 29 May 2013.

6. European Economic and Social Committee

- Opinion of the EESC on Principles for effective and reliable welfare provision systems, 17 September 2015.