socialplatform

Work Programme 2015
Executive Summary

The work programme is based on the objectives set in our strategic orientation adopted by the Steering Group in June 2013. These are:

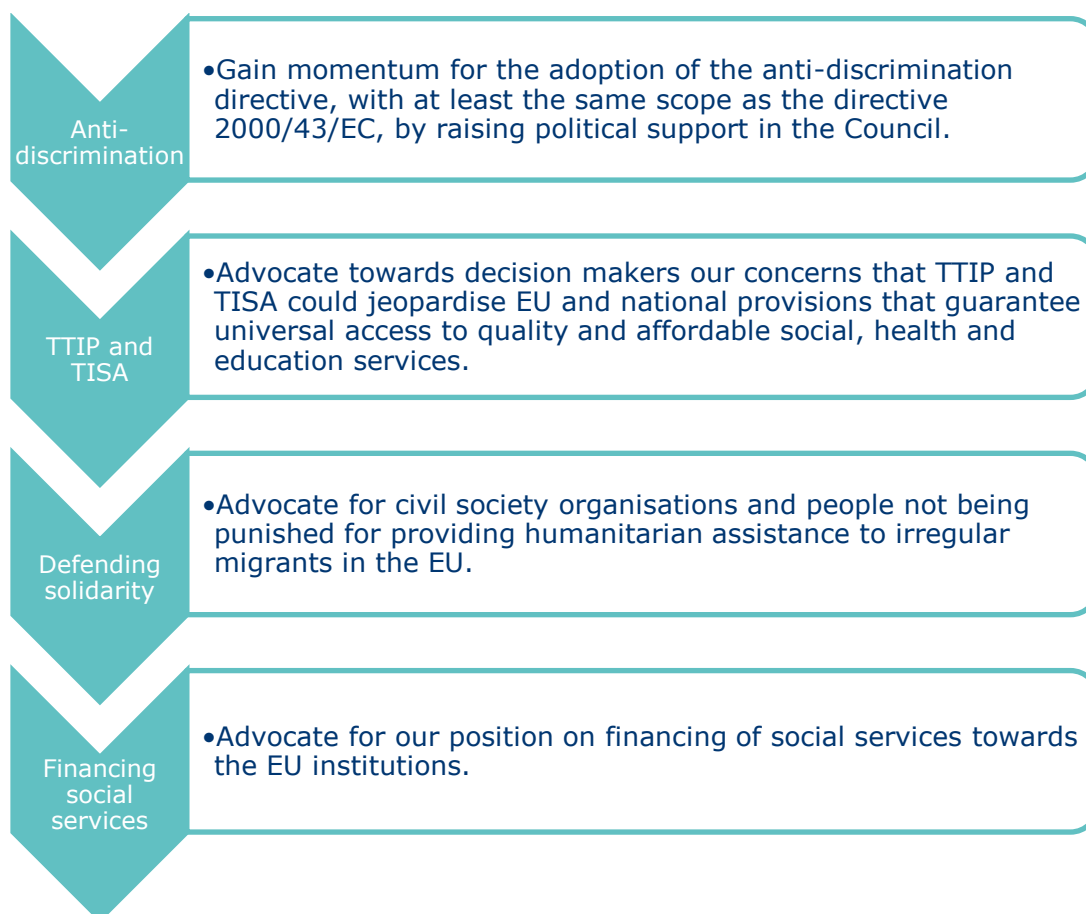## EQUAL ACCESS TO ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY SERVICES

What we stand for

All people living in Europe should have equal access to accessible, affordable and quality services, conforming to the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU treaty.

Current challenges

- Non-discrimination in access to services: not all people in the EU have access to services due to their religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Currently, EU law only protects against discrimination in areas such as employment and occupation.
- Risks presented by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trade in Services Agreement. Although the EU is aware of the need to provide protection to education, social and health services, several member states are seeking to remove rules that underpin universal access to quality and affordable services.

The year ahead

Anti-discrimination
- Gain momentum for the adoption of the anti-discrimination directive, with at least the same scope as the directive 2000/43/EC, by raising political support in the Council.

TTIP and TISA
- Advocate towards decision makers our concerns that TTIP and TISA could jeopardise EU and national provisions that guarantee universal access to quality and affordable social, health and education services.

Defending solidarity
- Advocate for civil society organisations and people not being punished for providing humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants in the EU.

Financing social services
- Advocate for our position on financing of social services towards the EU institutions.

FOR EU SOCIAL STANDARDS

What we stand for

The economic crisis had detrimental and long-lasting social consequences. For many Europeans, if the EU faces common economic challenges it also faces common social challenges. Social standards are not only meant to protect people from unbalanced economic policies, but also to develop a more social and democratic Europe.

In 2014, Social Platform developed its common positions on minimum income, on a fair wage for all workers, an EU unemployment benefit system as well as on financing social services.

Current challenges

- The increasing levels of poverty despite the goal set in 2010 to reduce the number of people living at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million by 2020.
- The increased number of working poor in the EU.
- Decreased public investment in the wellbeing of people (health, education, social services, social benefits).
- The lack of measurement of the impact of EU economic policies on the social situation in Europe.

The year ahead

Promote social standards

- Advocate for a minimumwage in the EU, an adequate minimum income, a just common EU unemployment benefit scheme and financing of social services and services of general interest.

EU INTERNAL HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY

What we stand for

Our overall work is grounded in a rights-based approach encompassing human dignity, gender equality and equality for all, respect for diversity, solidarity, freedom, social justice, sustainability, transparency and participatory democracy.

During 2014 Social Platform created an alliance with the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN), allowing us to jointly deliver our message in meetings with the Council and with the EU Presidencies.

Current challenges

- The current situation shows that the EU institutions are not responding to human rights problems and violations of laws and practices by member states in an adequate and coherent way. While there is a coherent human rights strategy for their external actions, there is none for EU internally.
- An EU internal strategy is needed to ensure consistency between EU external and internal human rights, and to address member states' failures to respond to consistent and structural violations of human rights as enshrined in the EU treaty and the Fundamental Rights Charter.

The year ahead

Advocate

•Advocate for an 'EU internal Human Rights Strategy' to ensure the implementation of Human rights throughout the EU.

Engage with the European Commission

•New opportunites exist as we now have a First Vice-President in charge of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and a Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

A STRUCTURED CIVIL DIALOGUE AT EU LEVEL

What we stand for

Civil society organisations are the only organisations that represent the interests of people that gather around specific characteristics: young and old people, women, children, people living in poverty, people with disabilities, LGBTI, migrants etc. These people are generally less heard than others. A proper civil dialogue at both EU and national level will reinforce legitimacy, accountability and adequacy of measures proposed.

Current challenges

- Civil society organisations may be consulted in the EU policy making process such as European governance, but our members noticed that it has decreased over the last few years and the consultation has not extended to meaningful participation where the concerns and propositions from civil society would be taken into account and responded to.

The year ahead

Inter-institutional agreement
- Advocate for an inter-institutional agreement on structured civil dialogue with all EU institutions on the basis of our recommendations.

Structured civil dialogue
- Establish a structured civil dialogue with relevant EU institutions (EC, EP, European Council and EESC) where at least the EC and EP have been renewed with the May 2014 elections.

Engage on a national level
- Ensure civil dialogue at national level between EU presidency of the Council and national NGOs.

EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE THAT BENEFITS ALL AND INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE

What we stand for

The European Union has embarked on strengthening its economic integration. However, economic policies need to benefit all members of our societies and therefore need to be inclusive. Therefore the goal of economic policies should revolve around inclusive growth, quality employment, and social investment in people for a dignified life.

Current challenges

- There is a trend of economic policies being prioritised over social policies. Furthermore, economic and financial legislation has been introduced with no impact assessment carried out on the social situation in member states, e.g. with austerity measures.
- Despite advocacy work, EU Structural Funds have been implemented by member states with poor attention paid to the advice of civil society organisations
- There is inadequate coordination of frameworks between member states when developing and implementing policies related to social economy and social enterprises

The year ahead

Financial VS Social
- Ensuring balance between social priorities and economic and financial priorities in European governance.

Monitoring EU funds
- Monitor and evaluate whether the EU structural funds are implemented in line with key criteria.

Social Business Initiative
- Advocate for a Social Business Initiative to be in line with our position on social entrepreneurship.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

The year ahead

Governance and participation	• Ensure good and democratic governance of Social Platform and the participation of members through regular meetings.
Funding	• Diversify the funding of Social Platform by expanding our contact with existing and potential donors.
Visibility of activities	• Increase the visibility of Social Platform and our members' activities at EU level through high level meetings and the media to publicise achievements.
Visibility of our work to the public	• Communicate our work in a digestible way to the wider public through various mediums, including traditional and social media formats.