



socialplatform

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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ABOUT US



socialplatform

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 47 pan-European networks of NGOs, Social Platform campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO THE SOCIAL PLATFORM ANNUAL REPORT 2015!

2015 was a year of mixed emotions for us. On the one hand, we saw progress in many fields of our work such as promoting socially responsible public procurement, raising awareness of social standards and championing the rights of people socially excluded from society.

On the other hand, the situation around us worsened considerably: Euroscepticism and populism rose, inequalities remained and the humanitarian crisis that saw unprecedented numbers of people risking all to seek refuge within our borders led to divisions among leaders and citizens alike.

One thing is clear – in times of adversity and great strain, solidarity is the answer.

Whether in the form of campaigning for national leaders not to punish those who offer humanitarian assistance to migrants or challenging the EU's tunnel vision on employment while turning a blind eye to the rights of those who cannot work, solidarity was a silver thread running through all our activities in 2015.

2015 also marked an important year for us personally – our 20th anniversary! Our celebrations allowed us to take stock of our achievements over the last two decades and gather our strength for the challenges ahead. Thank you to all who have stood by us since 1995 and helped us pave the way for a fairer, more social Europe.

Best wishes,



JANA HAINSWORTH
(President)



PIERRE BAUSSAND
(Director)

A MESSAGE ON OUR FAMILY

Social Platform is the leading European civil society alliance working on social justice.

As a membership-based organisation, it is safe to say that we would not be able to function without the strong support and participation of our family of members.

Our strength in numbers is a testament to our shared belief that the work we do really can – and does – bring a positive change to the lives of people living in the EU.

Our membership covers a wide variety of areas, ranging from poverty

to children's rights to education to social work and many, many more.

Rather than focusing on our differences, Social Platform enables civil society organisations to nurture those elements that bring us together; our shared belief that the EU's policies should be primarily based on respect for human rights, and our common vision for a socially just and cohesive EU.

Find out more about the members

→ *of Social Platform [here](#).* ←

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING
A **MEMBER** OF SOCIAL PLATFORM?

Get more information
→ *and apply [here!](#)* ←



20 YEARS OF SOCIAL PLATFORM

2015 marked the 20th anniversary of Social Platform. To celebrate this happy occasion, on 8 December we held a panel debate on social Europe over the last 20 years, focusing on human rights, social standards and services.



We were joined by Member of the European Parliament Marian Harkin, Open Society European Policy Institute's Neil Campbell, BUSINESSEUROPE's Maxime Cerutti and SOLIDAR Secretary-General and former Social Platform President Conny Reuter.

The debate was moderated by Geoff Meade MBE.

After the panel debate we celebrated our birthday in the old fashioned way – with cake! Ahead of the event we touched base with some of our past Management Committee and Secretariat members – here’s what they had to say about the last 20 years and what the future holds:



“
Social Platform has kept talking and advocating throughout negative policy changes and that means the debate is alive and well.

HEATHER ROY
 (President 2013-15)

Social Europe would be even worse without the actions of people and organisations committed to the achievement of fundamental rights for all, including economic, social and cultural rights.

FINTAN FARRELL
 (President 2007)

I enjoyed working with colleagues and members. It was fascinating to see how a topic approached from so many perspectives became increasingly richer and nuanced.”

ROSHAN DI PUPPO
 (Director 2007-10)

► [Read more here.](#) ◀

SOCIAL PLATFORM WELCOME VIDEO

We used the opportunity of our 20th anniversary event to launch our welcome video explaining who we are, what we work on and how we try to influence the EU decision-making

process. Check out the video by clicking on the [play icon](#) below!

You can also view the video on our YouTube channel [here](#).



Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance

OUR WORK IN 2015

EQUAL ACCESS TO ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY SERVICES

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



In 2015 we worked hard to ensure that social services and health and education services of general interest are excluded from the EU's trade deal with the United States – the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – which is still being negotiated. Read our position [here](#).

As well as getting agreement from EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström that these services should be protected, **in July the European Parliament demonstrated its resounding support for our proposals** by adopting a resolution calling on the European Commission to

fully exclude current and future public services from TTIP.

Through our '[Decriminalising Solidarity](#)' campaign we raised awareness of the EU's Facilitation Directive that currently allows Member States to sanction those who provide humanitarian assistance, such as food, shelter and medical attention, to undocumented migrants. We believe that these people should not face penalties for showing solidarity.

We launched a survey to find out real-life experiences of service providers and individuals on the ground. The resulting proposals shaped the European Parliament's study on this, namely to protect providers of humanitarian assistance from sanctions, and to ensure that service providers do not have to report encounters with undocumented migrants.

EU SOCIAL STANDARDS

The economic crisis has had detrimental and long-lasting social consequences. 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.

To add to our work on minimum income conducted in previous years, in 2015 we launched our common position calling for the introduction of adequate minimum wages for all in every Member State:



1 An adequate minimum wage should guarantee decent living standards to workers and employees. The first pre-condition for an adequate minimum wage is that it should be higher than what is considered an adequate minimum income.

2 The second pre-condition for establishing an adequate minimum wage is that, as a general rule, at least 60% of national median wage should be the minimum threshold.

3 Minimum wage should be set in a non-discriminatory way and irrespective of contract type, to ensure equal pay for equal work. Adequate minimum wages should be present in all sectors of the economy.

AN EU INTERNAL HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY

While there is a coherent human rights strategy for the EU's external actions, there is no equivalent for the EU internally. This is why in 2015 we continued to make the case for an EU internal human rights strategy, which would allow the EU to address Member States' failures to respond to human rights violations within their own borders.



Along with a strong coalition of human rights organisations including the Human Rights and Democracy Network, we repeatedly advocated for an internal human rights strategy in meetings with **European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans.**

A STRUCTURED CIVIL DIALOGUE AT EU LEVEL

Our members have noticed that involvement of civil society in the EU's decision-making processes has decreased in recent years, diminishing opportunities for the needs of people to be taken into account in EU policies.



In 2015 we pushed for the EU to set up a structured dialogue with civil society, raising the issue at numerous high-level meetings including the informal meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council configuration in Riga, Latvia.

EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE THAT BENEFITS ALL AND INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE

The EU has embarked on a mission to strengthen its economic integration. However, economic policies need to benefit all members of our societies and therefore need to be inclusive.



In 2015 we advocated for economic policies that revolve around **inclusive growth, quality employment and social investment in people** for a dignified life, based on our common position:

1 Ensure progress on the EU's social and equality objectives.

2 Ensure the positive social impact of all policies.

3 Ensure the involvement of civil society organisations in all stages and levels of policy processes.

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF OUR MAIN ACTIONS IN 2015



#WEAPOLOGISE

#WeApologise. That was the message civil society organisations delivered to people fleeing war, persecution and poverty for the lack of response from decision-makers.

Signed by over 55 organisations, our [open letter](#), which is available in eleven languages, apologised for the absence of safe and regular channels to the EU, meaning that many people have risked their lives – or worse – trying to reach the safety of our shores. [The letter also recognised the huge role that civil society and everyday citizens are playing by opening their homes, sharing their food and donating their clothes,](#) while many EU Member States shirk their responsibility to provide these most basic of services.

Our #WeApologise initiative led to a [joint letter](#) sent to the Justice and Home Affairs Council signed by Social Platform, CONCORD Europe and the European NGO Platform on Asylum & Migration (EPAM) – the first time that our three large platforms have collaborated on this issue.



PUBLIC PROCUREMENT FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

Following the adoption of a new EU Public Procurement Directive in 2014, we developed a guide for the European Commission, Member States and contracting authorities on how the Directive can be used to promote social progress.

The guide focuses on three areas:

1 *Reserved contracts* for economic operators that promote the social and professional integration of people with disabilities and disadvantaged people.

2 *Social considerations* as the silver thread through the procurement process.

3 Putting service users first by designing effective procedures for awarding contracts for social and health services.

→ *Read the full guide [here](#).* ←

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2015

On 5 May our members came together for our annual General Assembly in Brussels.

MORNING SESSION

In the morning we were joined by **keynote speaker Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility**.

She spoke of “*our joint task of creating a fairer and more inclusive society*” and called for civil society involvement to help shape a new approach towards achieving the Europe 2020 strategy’s headline targets including poverty and social exclusion, employment and education.

Read Commissioner Thyssen’s
 → *full speech [here](#)*. ←



AFTERNOON SESSION

We invited **European Ombudsman Emily O’Reilly** to share her views on citizens’ participation in the EU.

She also gave members an insight into some of her on-going investigations, such as her work on the transparency of the negotiation of the EU-US trade deal, also known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

This interactive session gave members the opportunity to share their concerns, expertise and opinions with the Ombudsman, who proved to be a very open partner and a friend of civil society.





2015 also marked the end of the Management Committee’s term, meaning that fresh elections had to be held for all seven positions.

The nomination process was run in a new, communications-oriented way which led to one of the largest number of applications for the various roles – 13!

After four rounds of votes members welcomed their new Management Committee:



PRESIDENT **JANA HAINSWORTH**
(Eurochild)

VICE-PRESIDENTS **MACIEJ KUCHARCZYK**
(AGE Platform Europe)
BARBARA HELFFERICH
(European Anti-Poverty Network)

TREASURER **ALLAN PÄLL**
(European Youth Forum)

ORDINARY MEMBERS **MICHELE LEVOY**
(Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

JOHN DOLAN
(European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities)

BORBÁLA JUHÁSZ
(European Women’s Lobby)



EVENTS

SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTING AND ITS ROLE IN FUTURE SOCIAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

16 FEBRUARY We organised a meeting at the European Economic and Social Committee to discuss what we mean by social impact investing.

Social impact investing is defined as investments into companies, organisations and funds with the intention of generating a measurable, beneficial social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.

Co-hosted by Social Platform, Confrontations Europe and the German Federal Association of Non-Statutory Welfare (BAGFW), participants discussed when and how social impact investing could be used.



Read the key outcomes of the event

→ *[here](#) and see photos [here](#).* ←

NETWORKING MEETING AND CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE EU PRESIDENCY IN LUXEMBOURG

2 JUNE We travelled with a delegation of our European members to Luxembourg to prepare ahead of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU.

We held a networking meeting with national civil society organisations to formulate key messages on social economy, social governance, social investment and equal treatment.

At our conference on 3 June these key messages were presented to our keynote speaker Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg's Minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy.



Read more about the conference

→ *[here](#) and see photos [here](#).* ←

CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE DUTCH EU PRESIDENCY

17 NOVEMBER We hosted national civil society organisations in the Hague to discuss the social dimension of the upcoming Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU.

We were joined by keynote speaker Jetta Klijnsma, Dutch Secretary of State for Social Affairs and Employment, who encouraged close cooperation with civil society.

The conference's two panels focused on ensuring adequate minimum income for all and the role of social standards and services in a mobile EU.



→ *Read more about the conference [here](#).* ←

EPSCO MEETINGS IN LATVIA AND LUXEMBOURG

21 APRIL We joined the two-day meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council configuration in Latvia.

We contributed to the opening session on the role social dialogue plays in inclusive growth, as well as two workshops where we outlined our positions on civil dialogue and minimum wage.

16-17 JULY We attended the EPSCO meeting in Luxembourg, where we focused on strengthening social governance, the inclusion of young people in the labour market and work-life balance.



A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD

We wish to extend a huge thanks to our members. Without you, Social Platform could not exist!



MEET THE SECRETARIAT!



PIERRE BAUSSAND

Director

Fun fact: Pierre once bleached his hair blonde after France won the '98 World Cup.



VALENTINA CAIMI

Policy & Advocacy Adviser

Fun fact: Valentina is a qualified free diver up to 24 meters.



HELEN JOSEPH

Communications & Media Officer

Fun fact: Helen runs an Instagram account for her dog, Max.



ILIAS PAPAGEORGIU

Administrative & Financial Officer

Fun fact: Ilias once watched a whole season of "24" in 24 hours.



GILBERTO PELOSI

Policy & Advocacy Officer

Fun fact: Gilberto can lick his elbow.



ANNICA RYNGBECK

Policy & Advocacy Adviser

Fun fact: Annica used to shave her head in university to save money.

THANKS TO OUR 2015 INTERNS!



LISA DEZAUER



MAXIME GEHRENBECK



JULIE MARANGÉ

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES



16
Task Force meetings



1,219
new Facebook friends



6
Management Committee meetings



Spoke at **10**
EU level conferences



6
Steering Group meetings



Met **6**
European Commissioners



875
new Twitter followers



85 *newsletters sent to*
126,311
people

MOST READ DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL

“Deaths at the Mediterranean sea: how to act for difference instead of indifference?”

→ [Read here.](#) ←

MOST READ BLOG

“Boosting social enterprises in Europe”

→ [Read here.](#) ←

A WORD ON OUR ALLIANCES

We and our members work on a broad array of social justice issues within the EU. However, there are many other civil society organisations working in the EU covering other important topics affecting people's lives such as the environment, workers' rights and public services.

Often our work connects and overlaps and it is therefore important to work together in partnership to strengthen our efforts and get broader support for the benefit of people we fight for.

In 2015 we became a founding member of **Civil Society Europe**, which aims to nurture a vibrant European democracy grounded on civic participation, and to ensure that the needs of people in the EU are heard and responded to by decision-makers.

We were also appointed to the stakeholder group of the European Commission's **REFIT Platform**, where we will ensure that changes implemented through the Commission's "Better Regulation" agenda do not lead to a weakening of the EU's work on social rights.

We also continued our work with the following alliances and groups:

- ▶ Human Rights and Democracy Network
- ▶ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
- ▶ European Economic & Social Committee Liaison Group
- ▶ European Commission Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship

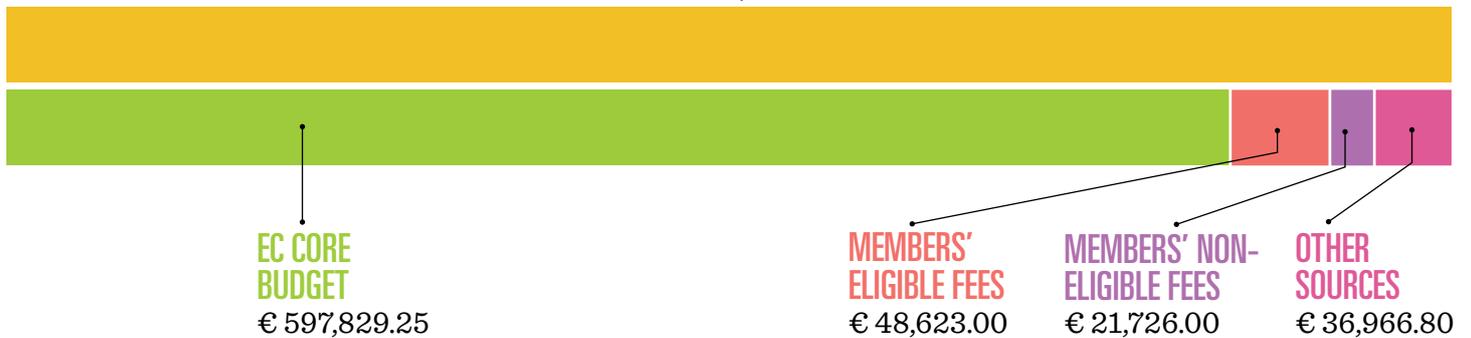
We would like to send a huge

THANKS

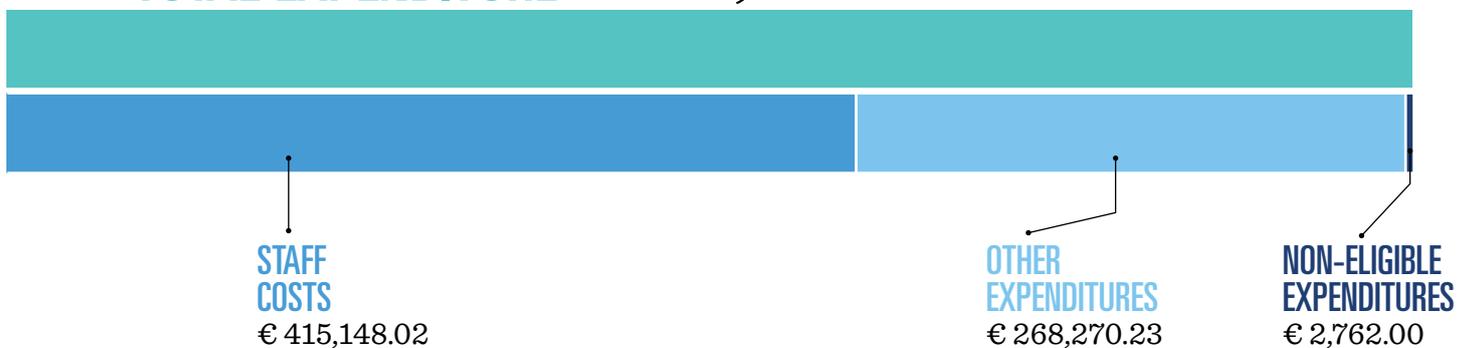
to all alliances, organisations and individuals that we worked with in 2015. We look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration in the future!

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

TOTAL INCOME € 705,145.05



TOTAL EXPENDITURE € 686,180.25





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SAY HELLO! →

