



# ANNUAL REPORT

**2011**

socialplatform

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 46 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.

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# 1 Message from the President and Director of Social Platform

There is one word to remember 2011 – austerity. Four words to summarise our actions – bringing a social dimension.

In less than two years we witnessed EU leaders ignoring their commitment to strive toward an inclusive, sustainable and smart recovery through the Europe 2020 Strategy. We knew the Strategy would not alone bring a social dimension to the EU however after only one year it looked like a step they would not even take. It's now clear that member states will not reach their commitment to lift 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. While unemployment has steadily increased reaching 10.1% (24.3 million) and young people have been particularly affected with an unprecedented unemployment rate of 22.4% (5.5 million).

The new motto for the EU has become “budget consolidation and austerity measures” in response to the demands of the financial markets. Alerted by our members to the situation on the ground we instead proposed a Social Pact to achieve an inclusive recovery. A Social Pact that swaps cost cutting with investment in social infrastructures as provision for our future. We asked EU leaders for concrete action on social issues in all EU policies – specifically on poverty and social exclusion, equality, social infrastructure, and services of general interest. We also called on them to respect Article 9 of the Lisbon treaty so that EU and national budgets comply with “*requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health*”.

We fought for a social dimension in the European economic governance to ensure the cohesiveness of a sustainable European society. We deliberated with the Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in January and July, addressed Heads of State in March and June and spoke at the first European Convention of the Platform against Poverty. We called on member states to include concrete actions in their commitment to implementing the poverty target. Instead, they adopted the Euro+ Pact and the Six Pack for greater budget consolidation and more austerity measures. The result: a lack of democratic legitimacy and more social difficulties for the people. From Greece to Portugal, Italy and Spain, from England to Belgium, the indignant protested against cuts in social protection such as welfare, health, front line social care, pensions and education.

Furthermore we battled for a social dimension in the EU budget. To counterbalance the worst effects of the austerity measures we made several proposals ahead of the Multi-Annual Framework (2014 – 2020) and related funds to guarantee they support inclusive policies. For the European Social Fund and EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation our aim was to guarantee that quality employment, quality services, the poverty and social inclusion objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy would receive sufficient funding and to ensure that civil society is a partner in designing and implementing the funds. We met with the Parliament and the Commission to demonstrate that there is a social dimension to all EU financial instruments. For example in the Common Agricultural Policy there is a need to combat rural exclusion, in the Regional fund energy efficiency is an appropriate support to combatting energy poverty, and the transport fund can be used to finance accessible public transport for people with disabilities or older people.

Our energy was also focused on bringing a social dimension to the internal market. There are areas in our societies where market rules should not apply. We therefore took action not only to ensure that social services would not be negatively impacted by the revised rules of state aid and public procurement but also to ensure that they recognise and protect the specificities of social services. Through these advocacy campaigns we have opened the door for continued dialogue with the Commissioners on Competition and the Internal Market.

There can be no social dimension of the EU without promoting and defending fundamental rights. Despite the support of the Commission and the European Parliament, member states have for three years hidden behind budget difficulties in refusing to adopt an Anti-Discrimination Directive in access to goods and services and a Maternity Leave Directive that would ensure all pregnant women have a full salary and protection against dismissal. Our interventions in the Parliament and the Council have been to ensure the proposals were not thrown off the negotiation table. Considering the intention of the Council is to reject both Directives this result is more important than it seems. The austerity measures have also emphasized how social conditions (such as poverty and social exclusion) prevent people from accessing fundamental rights. We therefore called on the Commission and the Fundamental Rights Agency at the 5<sup>th</sup> Equality Summit in November to specifically address this issue.

Finally after two years of work, we released our recommendations on Care that showed that care policies and services are not a cost as they are generally perceived, but are indeed a social investment for the sustainability of European societies and an under exploited source of employment.

In 2012 economic governance, the EU budget, the internal market and fundamental rights remain top of our priorities as these have a direct impact on the lives of the most vulnerable. We will present the EU with the



components of our Social Pact. We will present the Council and the Parliament with our proposals on the different EU funds which are minimum requirements for supporting inclusive policies. We will watch the internal market proposals for access to bank services, the social business initiative and the role of social enterprises in our societies. We will continue to promote the creation of quality employment to fight against the rise of the “precarariat”, working poor for whom employment is not a way out of social exclusion.

The EU is back once again to the growth and jobs agenda that was not successful in the past. The reason – growth at any cost is not what people want, they want an inclusive growth based on solidarity and social justice. These battles are led by social NGOs.

We would like to thank our members and partners for a year of solid collaboration which brought tangible results. We look forward to building on that work in 2012.

Conny Reuter

Pierre Baussand

## 2

## Our Achievements

### Annual Theme: Care that respects the rights, dignity and empowerment of individuals

*"The holistic approach that you have adopted is key ... these recommendations make an important contribution to this and the wider debate on care"*  
 Commissioner Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) key note address at our conference "We Care, how do EU Care?".

Continuing our work on demographic and social change, and following two years work by our 46 members, we released our recommendations on care. We wanted to show that care policies, and services are not a cost as they are generally perceived but are a social investment for the sustainability of European societies and an under exploited source of employment. Our starting point - not only is care a human right but it also benefits our societies. Our recommendations should be seen as a solid foundation for helping to change the paradigm so that care policies are looked at in an integrated way and not just from the point of view of women's employment, gender equality, long-term care, and sustainability of financing.

Through guaranteeing universal access to care for everyone in society and through ensuring that all users are treated equal, we can promote social inclusion and quality of life for all in the EU.

Future care policies should make certain that responsibility for care is based on equality and that informal and family care givers along with volunteers are properly recognised and supported. There should be a comprehensive approach to care policies - the rights of all care givers should be respected and an adequate balance between care, work and private life promoted.

Sustainable financing is key to ensuring a strong care sector. As care is a human right, profit should never be the driving force behind the provision of care and both users and care givers should be involved in the decision making process that concerns them. Only through this kind of investment in quality care services we will guarantee accessible, affordable and available care for all.

The potential for employment growth in the care sector is undeniable. The protection of decent working conditions and quality employment is vital to ensuring the sustainability and maintenance of jobs in the sector. Through high quality vocational training pathways and the promotion of equal treatment we can guarantee the care sector becomes an attractive source of employment.



### Strengthening the Social Dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy

At present a disconnection is showing between the aspirations of the Europe 2020 Strategy, towards inclusive growth and the poverty target, and the reality of austerity policies particularly on people in poverty and other vulnerable groups. Against the background of the financial and economic crisis a long term vision is lacking. It was therefore important to remind member states and EU institutions of their commitment to implementing the social objectives of the strategy (poverty, education and quality employment).

In October we addressed the First Annual Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAP) with our messages on the Europe 2020 poverty target, focusing on the social impact of the crisis, the inclusion of social objectives in the economic governance of the EU, and the participation of stakeholders in the EPAP and the overall Europe 2020 process. In our bi-annual meetings with Commissioner Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) we discussed the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and the transition of the inclusive pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy in the next European budget the Multi-Annual Framework (MFF) 2014 – 2020.

### Social Dimension in the European Economic Governance

With 116 million people socially excluded and austerity measures in place across the EU we alerted national level ministers, MEPs, Commission officials, and Heads of State to the realities on the ground as reported by our members (over-indebtedness, reduced access to public services and housing, and social protection systems under threat) and the importance of including social objectives in the European economic governance

To counterbalance the negative effects of austerity measures we made several proposals such as a social pact in the European Economic Governance to ensure the cohesiveness of a sustainable European Society, and proposals on the MFF (2014 – 2020) to guarantee that the next, and subsequent financial instruments fund inclusive policy priorities as required by the Europe 2020 strategy and the Lisbon Treaty. In fact concerning the EU budget, the Commission's proposal for the European Social Fund (the EU's main financial instrument for supporting employment in member states, as well as promoting economic and social cohesion) reflected our demands to concentrate on the Europe 2020 inclusive objective and to ensure a partnership with civil society organizations.

In January we addressed the informal EPSCO Council presenting our proposals for a successful response to the



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social crisis in Europe and for the effective inclusion of youth in education, society and employment. In the informal EPSCO Council of July we voiced our initial proposal for a Social Pact in line with the social objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and called for enhanced cooperation at EU level for greater solidarity between generations.

We also agreed to enhanced cooperation with the Social Protection Committee (SPC). As a first step we contributed to their 2012 assessment report on the social impact of the crisis and fiscal consolidation in which we requested a specific chapter on the role of social services during the crisis.

## Social Dimension of the Internal Market

Both the internal market and competition rules have an impact on how social services and public services are organised and funded in different member states. For this reason we believed it was crucial to diversify our work beyond DG Employment and start working with DG Internal Market and Services (MARKT) and DG Competition (COMP) at the highest level. In 2011 we were able to integrate the perspectives and expertise of social service providers with organisations representing users and facilitated the engagement of organisations, who are not usually involved in these issues, in the debate.

Our aim was to ensure the recognition of the specific characteristics of social services, such as service user choice, quality, sustainability, continuity, personalisation, integration of services, users' involvement and empowerment, and partnership with communities and other actors. We wanted to ensure the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of public services (the so-called Services of General Interest) for all, without any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, income and social origin.

In 2011 we held our first bi-annual meeting with Commissioner Barnier (MARKT) to discuss the social

dimension of the single market, in particular we discussed our proposals to: ensure the appropriate legal and political environment for high quality, accessible and affordable services of general interest; recognise the potential of social economy in terms of growth, creation of sustainable employment, promotion of social inclusion; and, make full use of the structured dialogue with civil society.

We also met with Commissioner Almunia (COMP) to discuss the revision of state aid rules applicable to social services of general interest.

Many of our demands were taken on board by the Commission. In particular:

- The proposal for a directive on public procurement published by the Commission in December, which sets out simplified rules for social services, compared to other services, and provides a specific threshold for social services, under which public procurement rules do not apply.
- The new competition rules published in December took on board many of our requests including the simplification of the rules for social services and other small local services and a recognition of the specificities of social services compared to other public services.

## An integrated approach to social fundamental rights

Currently in the EU there is a policy division between fundamental rights and social inclusion. Our approach to social fundamental rights is based on the mainstreaming clauses of the Lisbon Treaty and the recognition of social origin as grounds of discrimination in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Throughout the year we identified how social conditions (such as poverty, social exclusion etc.) must be addressed particularly when speaking about access to fundamental rights and anti-discrimination. We highlighted the importance of the Fundamental Rights Agency having a

mandate to work on social rights even though institutionally it is the exclusive role of Eurofound to look at 'poverty and social exclusion'.

We advocated for our approach to the European Parliament and participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Equality Summit in Poznan, Poland, where we made the link between social status discrimination and access to social fundamental rights. We also continued to strengthen our cooperation with the Fundamental Rights Agency by establishing an annual meeting with the Director and participating in the Annual Meeting of the Fundamental Rights Platform.

## Advancing EU laws for the protection of all

Since 2008 we have called for an Article 19 Equal Treatment Directive for access to goods and services in line with the Race Equality and Employment Directive. This is to ensure the removal of all barriers to discrimination in our societies and to fill the legal gaps of protection on access to goods and services on the grounds of religion and belief, sexual orientation, age and disability. The Parliament adopted its positive opinion on this issue in 2009 and since then the file has been blocked in the Council. In 2011 we ensured it remained on the political agenda by maintaining pressure on the EU Presidencies and urging them to move forward with negotiations. We also prevented the Parliament from voting for an amendment that would have undermined the Article 19 Directive.

Since 2008, when the Commission presented its proposal on a Maternity Leave Directive, we have been calling for mothers to be ensured their full salary throughout their maternity leave of at least twenty weeks (two weeks more than the Commission's proposal) and for strengthening their legal protection against dismissal, working time

arrangements, and return to work. The Directive currently remains blocked in the Council. During 2011 we maintained contact with the EU Presidency and the Parliament to ensure the Directive remains on the political agenda and encouraging them to initiate formal negotiations.



## 3

## What's Next?

The achievement of a socially cohesive Europe is dependent on an integrated policy approach to combat poverty and social exclusion, access to quality, affordable and accessible services, the enjoyment of fundamental rights, including equality between women and men, and access to quality employment. This is particularly important given that 89% of the EU general population considers poverty in Europe as a problem requiring urgent action by the public authorities. In 2012, in line with the objectives and the EU Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, we will continue to promote the enhancement of social cohesion and social inclusion in the EU through the following four interrelated actions:

- Integrate social objectives in the economic governance and priorities of the EU:** Based on the social impact of the crisis, we will make proposals on how to implement the Europe 2020 poverty target and the EU Treaty social clause so that "in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health". These same requirements should be incorporated into member states stability and convergence programmes.
- Guarantee access to quality services for social and occupational integration:** The quality, accessibility and affordability of Services of General Interest (SSGI) and related Social Services (SSGI) play a major role in counteracting social exclusion and helping people find ways to improve their lives. We will continue to advocate for access to services for all and in particular for people facing social exclusion, and for their sustainability through the legal recognition and protection of their characteristics in the internal market.
- Enforce fundamental rights for all in society to remove barriers to inclusion:** We will continue to remind the EU institutions about their commitment to effectively apply the Charter of Fundamental Rights; call on them to ensure that legislative proposals such as the equal treatment directive and the maternity leave directive remain on the political agenda and that ambitious initiatives are taken to ensure the respect of fundamental rights across the institutions and all its policy fields. We will continue to call for social rights to be recognized as a pre-condition to access fundamental rights and to show how equality is an investment in itself and how it also can be a way to reach economic development, growth and social cohesion.
- Ensure access to, and progression in, quality employment:** In line with the Commission's Active Inclusion Recommendation, we will deliver proposals on quality jobs, quality employment and on equality in employment for the effective implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.

## 4

## Internal Governance

Social platform is governed by a General Assembly which convenes yearly; it takes constitutional decisions and elects the Management Committee. Political decisions are formed in Working Groups, submitted for consultation across the membership and then approved by the Steering Group, in which every full member organisation is represented. The smooth running of the Social Platform is ensured by the Secretariat, which is based in Brussels.

- General Assembly** – this is the highest authority of the Platform. Social Platform members convene once a year to take constitutional decisions, including the adoption of the yearly budget, approve of membership applications, and elect the Management Committee.
- Management Committee** – the seven members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years and meet regularly to provide political leadership, ensure the good running of the platform, and oversee the implementation of the annual work programme.
- Steering Group** – The Steering Group guides the Platform's political decisions. All full members are invited to attend the four meetings of the Steering Group throughout the year and use these opportunities to discuss progress in implementing the annual work programme. The Steering Group approves policy positions after a full consultation process has been undertaken across the membership.
- Working Groups** – Our working groups bring together members as well as invited key speakers to discuss and exchange views on specific issues. Membership of the working groups is open to all members and they usually meet four times per year. The groups draft policy papers with the support of the Secretariat that take all members' views into account. Working groups are also a venue to debate issues in depth, as well as monitor developments in particular policy areas.

### Management Committee members:

|                   |                                                                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President:        | <b>Conny Reuter</b>                                                      |
| Vice-Presidents:  | <b>Heather Roy</b><br><b>Rodolfo Cattani</b>                             |
| Treasurer:        | <b>Michel Mercadié</b>                                                   |
| Ordinary members: | <b>Catriona Williams</b><br><b>Michaela Moser</b><br><b>Julien Dijol</b> |



Current Working Groups:

**Social Policy Working Group** – social inclusion, employment, Europe 2020, European economic governance, family reconciliation measures, European Social Fund 2014-2020

**Fundamental Rights and Non-Discrimination Working Group** – fundamental rights, equality, non-discrimination, migration

**Services of General Interest Working Group** – Social services of general interest, including public procurement and state aid law, access to services of general interest for all, the social dimension of the single market, Care

**5. Membership Accreditation Committee** – The five elected members of the Membership Accreditation Committee evaluate applications for membership before putting recommendations to the General Assembly and exercise a permanent review of current members.

**6. Skills Sharing Sessions** – Three informal networks hold regular meetings to share knowledge and experiences on Communications, Administration and Membership development.

**7. Secretariat** – The Secretariat is made up of seven professionals based in Brussels who ensure the smooth running of the Platform.

|                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Director:                         | Pierre Baussand       |
| Office Manager & Finance Officer: | Marie-Paule Bockstal  |
| Policy Officer (SSGI):            | Valentina Caimi       |
| Communications Officer:           | Alison Coleman        |
| Project Officer:                  | Ariella de Gennaro    |
| Policy Officer (FRAND):           | Annica Ryngbeck       |
| Policy Officer (Social Policies): | Herlinde Vanhooydonck |



5

Financial Report 2011

GLOBAL BUDGET (in Euro)

INCOME

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| EC Core Budget               | 695.389,86 |
| Membership eligible fees     | 41.783,00  |
| Membership non-eligible fees | 15.701,00  |
| Co-Finance expert fees       | 21.153,00  |
| Other sources                | 36.750,00  |

|       |            |
|-------|------------|
| Total | 810.776,86 |
|-------|------------|

EXPENDITURE

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Staff costs               | 447.277,07 |
| Other expenditures        | 347.824,50 |
| Social Provision          | 10.794,39  |
| Non eligible expenditures | 4.880,90   |

|       |            |
|-------|------------|
| Total | 810.776,86 |
|-------|------------|

## 6

## Our Members

## Full Members

AGE Platform Europe  
[www.age-platform.org](http://www.age-platform.org)

ATD Quart Monde - ATD Fourth World International Movement  
[www.atd-fourthworld.org](http://www.atd-fourthworld.org)

Autism Europe  
[www.autismeurope.org](http://www.autismeurope.org)

Caritas Europa  
[www.caritas-europa.org](http://www.caritas-europa.org)

CECODHAS Housing Europe  
[www.housingeurope.eu](http://www.housingeurope.eu)

CECOP-CICOPA Europe - European Confederation of Workers' Co-operatives, Social Cooperatives and Participative Enterprises  
[www.cecop.coop](http://www.cecop.coop)

CEDAG - European Council for Non-Profit Organisations  
[www.cedag-eu.org](http://www.cedag-eu.org)

CEV - The European Volunteer Centre  
[www.cev.be](http://www.cev.be)

COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU  
[www.coface-eu.org](http://www.coface-eu.org)

EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults  
[www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org)

EAPN - European Anti-Poverty Network  
[www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu)

EASPD - European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities  
[www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)

EBU - European Blind Union  
[www.euroblind.org](http://www.euroblind.org)

ECDN - European Consumer Debt Network  
[www.ecdn.eu](http://www.ecdn.eu)

EDF - European Disability Forum  
[www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org)

ENAR - European Network Against Racism  
[www.enar-eu.org](http://www.enar-eu.org)

EPHA - European Public Health Alliance  
[www.epha.org](http://www.epha.org)

EPR - European Platform for Rehabilitation  
[www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu)

ESAN - European Social Action Network  
[www.esan.eu](http://www.esan.eu)

EURAG - European Federation of Older Persons  
[www.eurageurope.org](http://www.eurageurope.org)

EUROCHILD  
[www.eurochild.org](http://www.eurochild.org)

EURODIACONIA - European Federation for Diaconia  
[www.eurodiaconia.org](http://www.eurodiaconia.org)

EWL - European Women's Lobby  
[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless  
[www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)

FEFAP - European Federation of Parents and Carers at Home  
[www.fefaf.be](http://www.fefaf.be)

ICSW - International Council on Social Welfare  
[www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org)

IFSW - International Federation of Social Workers  
[www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)

ILGA Europe - The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association  
[www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

INCLUSION EUROPE - The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families  
[www.inclusion-europe.org](http://www.inclusion-europe.org)

## Associate Members

AFEM - Association des Femmes de l'Europe Méridionale  
[www.afem-europa.org](http://www.afem-europa.org)

CEBSD - Combined European Bureau for Social Development  
[www.cebsd.org](http://www.cebsd.org)

EFOMW - European Forum of Muslim Women  
[www.efomw.eu](http://www.efomw.eu)

ERIO - European Roma Information Office  
[www.erionet.eu](http://www.erionet.eu)

IUT - International Union of Tenants  
[www.iut.nu](http://www.iut.nu)

MHE - Mental Health Europe  
[www.mhe-sme.org](http://www.mhe-sme.org)

PICUM - Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants  
[www.picum.org](http://www.picum.org)

SOLIDAR  
[www.solidar.org](http://www.solidar.org)

TGEU - Transgender Europe  
[www.tgeu.org](http://www.tgeu.org)

WAGGGS - World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Europe Region  
[europe.waggsworld.org](http://europe.waggsworld.org)

Workability Europe  
[www.workability-europe.org](http://www.workability-europe.org)

YFJ - European Youth Forum  
[www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)

FAI - The International Federation of the Christian Associations of Italian Workers  
[www.aclifai.it](http://www.aclifai.it)

IPPF-EN - International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network  
[www.ippfen.org](http://www.ippfen.org)

Red Cross EU Office  
[www.redcross-eu.net](http://www.redcross-eu.net)

Y.E.S FORUM - Youth and European Social Work  
[www.yes-forum.org](http://www.yes-forum.org)

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Social Platform acknowledges the financial support of the European Commission. This publication reflects the author's views. The Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained in this publication. *Published in June 2012*