socialplatform

Brussels, October 22, 2012

Re: Social Platform's recommendations in view of the vote in plenary of the Resolution on the Multiannual Financial Framework

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

Tomorrow you will vote in plenary on the motion for a Resolution on the Multiannual Financial Framework to make sure that "the EU budget is a key tool to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the entire EU".

In view of the final vote on the 'Interim Report', we call on you to support the following proposals:

- **Paragraph 26 on EU cohesion policy as a key tool for the economic and social development of the EU**

  Why?

  Keep 376 billion euro of EU funds for economic, social and territorial cohesion as proposed by the European Commission. These funds are the most important financial instrument for social and economic development. In many regions they are the main source of public funding at national, regional and local level as national support has been cut due to the crisis and austerity measures.

- **Paragraph 26 on earmarking at least 25% of the cohesion policy's budget for the ESF**

  Why?

  The 'minimum shares' for the European Social Fund (ESF) (ie. at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy's Budget for the ESF and at least 20% of the ESF earmarked for social inclusion and poverty reduction[1]) are the most tangible way to translate into action the commitments member states agreed to in June 2010 to deliver on the 5 headline targets of Europe 2020 (including the poverty reduction target).

- **Paragraph 41 on ex ante conditionality provisions to ensure that EU funding is better targeted to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives**

  Why?

  Support the Commission's proposal[2] to strengthen the regulation to ensure EU funds are efficiently used to achieve objectives which member states are already committed to: the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the UN Convention of Persons with Disabilities and the Europe 2020 Strategy targets. To receive funding

[1] The defence of the minimum shares is at the core of the key demands of the EU Campaign EU Money forPoverty Reduction, NOW! supported by the Social Platform.

[2] We also support our members EWL, EDF, EAPN, ENAR and others (see their letter; *Important provisions for social cohesion, economic growth employment and poverty reduction under threat in Council discussions on the Structural Funds legislative package for 2014-2020*) as well as the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care (EEG) (see their letter: *Parliament and Council of the European Union have a duty to support community care*)

member states must explain how they intend to fulfil their promises to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, promote anti-discrimination gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Investing in diversity and equality can be a driving force for economic development, growth and social cohesion.

- **Paragraph 43 on the deletion of macroeconomic conditionalities**

  Why?

  Suspending payments and commitments from the Cohesion Funds, particularly the Structural Funds, will further worsen the negative social impact of austerity measures. People in the EU under economic pressure should not be penalised for actions or situations beyond their control.

- **Paragraph 30 on a new legal basis with independent funding for the programme for the most deprived persons**

  Why?

  The current proposal of earmarking 20% of the ESF allocation for social inclusion and combating poverty is needed to support programmes to fight against poverty and social exclusion and to contribute to reach the poverty reduction target. Therefore the Food Aid programme should be continued after 2013 with a sound legal basis outside of the ESF.

As regards the partnership principle, we support the Commission's proposal on article 5 of the Common Provision Regulation on structural funds: we recommend a partnership that involves relevant stakeholders on equal footing and at all stages and levels of the structural funds programming. This includes NGOs who often implement programmes, address beneficiaries on a level playing field, have a key role in identifying social needs, and have a sound knowledge of the needs of different target groups and how to successfully run integrated projects funded by Structural Funds. Civil society organisations also have the necessary expertise to identify how Structural Funds can deliver on the poverty reduction target in the most efficient and effective way.

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 45 pan-European networks of NGOs, we campaign to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

We trust that you will give these issues your utmost attention.

Yours sincerely,





Conny Reuter

President

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Director