



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

A7-0370/2011

24.10.2011

REPORT

on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion
(2011/2052(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Rapporteur: Frédéric Daerden

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	30
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS	32
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION	35
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY	39
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE	46

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion (2011/2052(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Article 3(3) thereof, and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular Articles 9, 148, 160 and 168 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 1, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and 34 thereof¹,
- having regard to the revised European Social Charter, in particular Articles 30 (on the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion), 31 (on the right to housing) and 16 (on the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection) thereof,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation²,
- having regard to the Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation³,
- having regard to Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)⁴,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting of 8 June 2010 on the theme ‘Equity and Health in All Policies: Solidarity in Health’⁵,
- having regard to the Council declaration of 6 December 2010 on ‘The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: Working together to fight poverty in 2010 and beyond’⁶,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting of 7 March 2011⁷,

¹ OJ C 303, 14.12.2007, p. 1.

² OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p.22.

³ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

⁴ OJ L 298, 7.11.2008, p. 20.

⁵ Council of the EU, Press Release 10560/10 (Press 156), 3019th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 7 and 8 June 2010.

⁶ Council of the EU, 3053rd Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 6 December 2010.

⁷ Council of the EU, Press Release 7360/11 (Press 52), 3073rd Employment, Social Policy, Health and

- having regard to the opinion of the Social Protection Committee of 15 February 2011 entitled ‘The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: Flagship Initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy’¹,
- having regard to the report of the Social Protection Committee of 10 February 2011 entitled ‘SPC Assessment of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy’²,
- having regard to the opinion of the Social Protection Committee entitled ‘Solidarity in health: on reducing health inequalities in the European Union’³,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion⁴,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion⁵,
- having regard to the Commission recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market⁶,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Solidarity in health: reducing health inequalities in the EU’ (COM(2009)0567),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Strategy for the effective implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights by the European Union’ (COM(2010)0573),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe’ (COM(2010)0636),
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020’ (COM(2011)0173),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to its resolution of 4 October 2001 on the United Nations World Day to

Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 7 March 2011.

¹ Opinion of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) addressed to the Council, Council of the European Union, 6491/11, SOC 124, 15 February 2011.

² Report of the Social Protection Committee to the Council, Council of the EU, 6624/11 ADD 1 SOC 135 ECOFIN 76 SAN 30, 18 February 2011.

³ Opinion of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) addressed to the Council, Council of the European Union, 9960/10, SOC 357 SAN 122, 20 May 2010.

⁴ CoR 402/2010 final, <http://toad.cor.europa.eu/corwipdetail.aspx?folderpath=ECOS-V/012&id=20923>.

⁵ EESC, 1000/2011-SOC/405, 15 June 2011.

⁶ OJ L 307, 18.11.08, p. 11.

overcome extreme poverty¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 9 October 2008 on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU²,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 May 2009 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market³,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 February 2009 on Social Economy⁴ ,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 June 2010 on EU 2020⁵ ,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2010 on the contribution of the Cohesion policy to the achievement of Lisbon and the EU 2020 objectives⁶ ,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status⁷,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 8 September 2010 on ‘the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States: Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines’⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on ‘the financial, economic and social crisis: recommendations concerning measures and initiatives to be taken (mid-term report)’⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2011 concerning the Commission Green Paper entitled ‘Towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems’¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on the face of female poverty in the European Union¹²,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2010 on the role of women in an ageing society¹³,

¹ OJ C 87E, 11.4.2002, p. 253.

² OJ C 9E, 15.1.10, p. 11.

³ OJ C 212E, 5.8.10, p. 23.

⁴ OJ C 76 E, 25.3.10, p. 16.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0223.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0191.

⁷ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0262.

⁸ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0309.

⁹ Texts adopted P7_TA(2010)0376.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0375.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0058.

¹² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0086.

¹³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0306.

- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2011 on the Scheme for food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Union,¹
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion (2010/2276(INI))² ,
- having regard to its declarations of 22 April 2008 on ending street homelessness³ and of 16 December 2010 on an EU homelessness strategy⁴ ,
- having regard to the final recommendations of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness of 9 and 10 December 2010,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2011 on an EU Homelessness Strategy⁵ ,
- having regard to its resolution of ... on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020⁶,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the European Pact for Gender Equality for the period 2011-2020⁷,
- having regard to the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2011 on the future of Social Services of General Interest⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 October 2010 on precarious women workers¹⁰,
- having regard to the EUROSTAT 2010 publication ‘Combating poverty and social exclusion – A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010’,
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion’ (COM(2010)0758),

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0338.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0092.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0163.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0499.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0383.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0000 (report A7-0263/2011, scheduled for adoption at the October II part-session).

⁷ Council conclusions of 7 March 2011, Brussels.

⁸ P7_TA(2010)0231.

⁹ P7_TA(2011)0319.

¹⁰ P7_TA(2010)0365.

- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0370/2011),

Figures

- A. whereas 116 million people in the EU are at risk of poverty and 42 million (8%) live ‘in conditions of severe material deprivation and can not afford a number of necessities considered essential in order to live a decent life in Europe’¹ ; whereas poverty is the unacceptable reflection of an uneven distribution of wealth, income and resources in a prosperous European economy; whereas the most vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities, have been those most severely affected by the financial, economic and social crisis; whereas the austerity measures currently being taken in the EU, and those to be taken in the future, must not undermine employment and social protection, worsen the situation for the most disadvantaged or put at risk of unemployment, economic insecurity or poverty millions of people who were previously still managing to live on, and meet their basic needs from, their wages or retirement pensions, notably as a result of cuts in public service and social assistance budgets; whereas the application of tougher conditions and penalties as part of social activation policies designed to address the crisis is exacerbating the difficulties faced by the most vulnerable people at a time when few decent jobs are on offer; whereas the gap between rich and poor is continuing to widen as a result of the crisis;

Violations of fundamental rights

- B. whereas the Commission’s new strategy for implementing the Charter of Fundamental Rights aims, inter alia, to improve access to fundamental rights for the most disadvantaged; whereas the Charter must be respected in its entirety, and whereas severe poverty represents a violation of human rights and a serious erosion of human dignity and encourages stigmatisation and injustice; whereas the key objective of income support schemes must be to lift people out of poverty and enable them to live in dignity;

Commitments not honoured

- C. whereas poverty and social exclusion increased and involved new social categories between 2000 and 2008 despite the undertakings given by the Union in relation to the target, set at the Lisbon summit of 23 and 24 March 2000, of eradicating poverty in the EU by 2010, and the progress which the Nice European Council of 7 and 9 December 2000 agreed should be made; whereas it is impossible to reduce poverty and social exclusion, or to boost inclusive growth, if nothing is done to combat inequality and discrimination, or if countries’ economies do not develop and there is no solidarity with the weakest groups in society, that is, if national wealth is not shared fairly;

¹ Commission communication entitled ‘European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion’, (COM(2010)0758).

- D. whereas the risk of poverty directly affects rural communities and especially small farms and young farmers threatened by the effects of the economic crisis and by excessive fluctuations in commodity prices;

20 million people

- E. whereas one of the five major objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy is the soft target – i.e. not coupled with sanctions – of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million, on the basis of three indicators agreed upon by the Member States (the at-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers, the severe material deprivation index and the percentage of people living in jobless households or households with very low work intensity); whereas, although this target acknowledges the importance of combating poverty and social exclusion, the figures of 116 million people at risk of poverty and 42 million living in conditions of severe material deprivation mean that, from the outset, it reflects the abandonment of millions of people in Europe, with the associated risk of generating threshold effects which exclude the most vulnerable people from the scope of policies geared to measurable results; whereas, if the most intractable situations are not addressed from the outset, the policies implemented will have no impact on them; whereas the European Platform against Poverty is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy;
- F. whereas social inequality is increasing in some Member States, in particular as a result of economic inequality in terms of income and wealth distribution, labour market inequalities, social insecurity and unequal access to the social functions of the state, such as welfare, health, education and the legal system;

Relationship between the economy and poverty

- G. whereas poverty – which has been running at a high level in the EU Member States for many years – is having a steadily increasing impact on the economy, is detrimental to growth, increases public budget deficits and undermines the EU's competitiveness, and whereas these factors in themselves create poverty and unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, which affects one-third of the jobless, and whereas this situation that is worse in the more economically vulnerable countries; whereas the preservation of social rights in the European Union is crucial to any attempt to address poverty;
- H. whereas poverty can be classed as a human rights violation and is thus proof of the effort still needed to achieve the aims set out in Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union;
- I. whereas any stringent budgetary policy needs to be intelligent, with scope for counter-cyclical investment in major policy priorities;
- J. whereas structural reforms must be adopted in order to keep Europe competitive, create jobs and fight poverty;

Multidimensional poverty

- K. whereas poverty is a multi-faceted problem requiring an integrated response which is tailored to different stages of life and to people's multidimensional needs, and which is also based on guaranteeing access to rights, resources and services, as reflected in the common objectives of the Open Method of Coordination for social protection and social inclusion (2006), in order to meet basic needs and prevent social exclusion;
- L. whereas the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion was successful in raising public awareness and encouraging political commitment;

Decent work/the working poor

- M. whereas growth and employment – even in a decent job – alone are not sufficient to lift people out of poverty, and whereas the labour market has become increasingly fragmented, working and living conditions have deteriorated considerably, particularly in the wake of the financial crisis, and work has become much less secure – a trend which must be combated; whereas the problem of the working poor has gained increasing recognition in recent years, but does not yet appear to be being addressed to an extent commensurate with the challenges it represents for our societies; whereas the number of working poor has grown considerably in recent years, with 8% of the working population living in poverty and 22% of those at risk of poverty holding jobs¹; whereas the availability of decent, egalitarian working conditions is a step towards reducing poverty and social exclusion among families and people living alone;
- N. whereas, nevertheless, people with few or no qualifications are more exposed to labour market hazards, insecure and poorly paid employment, and poverty;

Homelessness

- O. whereas homelessness is one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and a problem which remains unresolved in all the Member States; whereas, for various reasons, most of the Member States now have large numbers of homeless people, necessitating specific measures with a view to integrating them into society; whereas, according to Eurobarometer, almost one European in four regards the excessive cost of decent housing as one of the main causes of poverty, and almost nine Europeans in ten believe poverty makes it harder to gain access to decent housing; whereas public authorities may lose contact with their citizens if the latter lose their housing, and whereas this not only makes it much harder to help them, but is also indicative of an advanced stage in the process whereby an individual becomes excluded from society;
- P. whereas the accessibility and quality of social services such as health care, cultural services, housing and education are additional factors that have an impact on poverty;
- Q. whereas homelessness – or not having a decent home – severely erodes human dignity and has major consequences in relation to all other rights;

Basket of basic goods and services

¹ EUROSTAT (2009), 'SPC Assessment of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy', 10 February 2011.

- R. whereas the poverty threshold of 60% of median national income is a compelling, helpful and necessary indicator of relative poverty, but should be complemented by other indicators such as the concept and calculation of a ‘basket of basic goods and services’ at national level (which is merely a short-term response to the specific situation of people suffering from poverty) and those agreed by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) in June 2010 (risk of poverty, material deprivation and households with very low work intensity) in response to public policy needs;

Social protection

- S. whereas social protection, including minimum income systems, is a basic element of modern democracies that substantially guarantees the human right to social, economic, political and cultural participation in society and plays a key role in stabilising the economy by limiting the impact of crises, and in redistributing resources at every stage of life, while also affording protection against social risks and preventing and alleviating poverty and social exclusion, throughout the life cycle;
- T. whereas, according to the OECD, the proportion of social benefits unclaimed ranges from 20% to 40%;

Health

- U. whereas poverty and social exclusion remain a key social determinant of health¹ and living conditions, including life expectancy, particularly in view of the impact of child poverty on child health and well-being, and whereas there is still a significant gap between rich and poor when it comes to affordable access to health services and to income and wealth, which is continuing to widen in some respects;
- V. whereas certain sectors of society, such as one-parent families, elderly women, minorities, people with disabilities and the homeless, are among the most vulnerable groups at risk of poverty;
- W. whereas the principle of non-discrimination, including the rejection of social discrimination, is a cornerstone of the system of fundamental rights;

Elderly people

- X. whereas, because our society is ageing, the number of dependent people will increase considerably in the near future; whereas, in a number of countries, elderly people – in particular women – are at greater risk of poverty than the general population as a result of their loss of income on retirement and other factors such as physical dependence, solitude and social exclusion; whereas the breakdown of intergenerational social bonds is a major problem facing our societies;

¹ Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2008), ‘Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health’, final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, Geneva, World Health Organisation.

Y. whereas pension policies are crucial to any attempt to address poverty;

Gender

- Z. whereas women are in general more vulnerable to poverty than men, owing to various factors such as gender discrimination at work (which results in a persistent gender pay gap and subsequent pension disparities), career breaks to care for dependants, and labour market discrimination; whereas only 63% of women work in Europe, compared with 76% of men, and whereas there is a lack of support networks and concrete measures to help working people achieve a work/life balance, such as affordable care services;
- AA. whereas poverty impacts differently on poor women and men, boys and girls, as poor women and girls often find it more difficult to access suitable social services and income;
- AB. whereas the Platform does not take into consideration the specific gender-related factors that affect women and men, and insufficient attention is paid to the feminisation of poverty;
- AC. whereas the effect of the gender pay gap on lifetime earning indicates that women will have lower pensions and whereas, as a result, women are more affected than men by persistent and extreme poverty: 22 % of women aged 65 and over are at risk of poverty as compared to 16 % of men;
- AD. whereas 20% of children are at risk of poverty, compared with 17% of the EU's overall population, and whereas low-income families are one of the groups at greatest risk of poverty;
- AE. whereas family policies are an essential part of policies to address poverty and social exclusion;
- AF. whereas the first indications that a young person is likely to drop out of school are an early warning sign of a recurring cycle of poverty;

Young people

- AG. whereas unemployment among young people, which is already higher than for other age groups, has exploded in the EU since the crisis and is now running at over 20%, and whereas it has now reached a critical level in all the Member States, putting young people at risk of falling into poverty from a very early age; whereas this alarming situation calls for urgent political, economic and social responses and will, in combination with demographic changes, exacerbate skills shortages; whereas vocational training can play a vital role in helping young people and low-skilled workers to join the labour market; whereas, at the same time, getting a job does not always mean escaping poverty, and whereas young people are especially susceptible to finding themselves among the working poor;

Migrants

- AH. whereas migrants and ethnic minorities are especially vulnerable workers, who are being hit hard by the economic crisis – and consequently by increased poverty and social exclusion – because of the insecure jobs they are likely to hold on account of their place of origin or level of skills; whereas migrant workers should enjoy the same working and pay conditions and the same level of access to training and social protection as nationals of the countries in which they are working;
- AI. whereas people with disabilities, whose poverty rate is 70% higher than average, should be the central focus of a strategy aimed at highlighting the added value they provide once they have joined the labour market;

Roma

- AJ. whereas a significant proportion of European Roma are marginalised and live in deplorable socio-economic conditions, and whereas they are often subjected to serious discrimination and segregation in all aspects of life, as are other marginalised communities;
- AK. whereas the increasing poverty in the EU is currently being exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis and by soaring food prices in the context of almost inexistent food surpluses in the EU, and whereas 43 million people are currently at risk of food poverty; whereas the scheme for food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Union, set up in 1987, currently provides food aid for 13 million people suffering from poverty in 19 Member States, and whereas its distribution chains involve some 240 food banks and charities; whereas the recent Judgment T-576/08 of the European Court of Justice, which deems it illegal to purchase food for the scheme on the market, jeopardises EU food aid for the most deprived, given the scheme's increased dependency on market purchases, and whereas it appears that the ECJ's annulment of Article 2 of Regulation 983/2008 will have an immediate negative impact on the scheme in 2012 and the years to come, leading to an abrupt end to food aid for the most deprived citizens of 19 Member States;
- AL. whereas housing and domestic energy costs are substantial household budget items which have increased over the last decade and must be taken into account as major factors contributing to the risk of poverty;
- AM. whereas family carers provide the greatest proportion of care in the EU;
- AN. whereas the inability of people living in poverty to make use of basic banking services, such as withdrawals, transfers and standing orders, is a considerable obstacle to their re-entry into the labour market and reintegration into society,

Participation

1. Calls on the Commission to boost the involvement of organised civil society, of all stakeholders (such as NGOs, social economy organisations, service providers, experts in social innovation and the social partners) and of people living in poverty themselves – in partnership with the associations within which they freely express their opinions, and which have acquired experience and knowledge, particularly through the development

of national platforms against poverty and social exclusion in each Member State – in the development of a European strategy at all levels of governance (European, national, regional and local); calls on the Commission to enhance cooperation between local, regional and national authorities and the EU institutions, including Parliament; believes that synergies should involve all stakeholders, including SMEs and businesspeople; calls for discussions with people living in poverty and social exclusion to be extended at national level, and for their participation and their contribution to the annual convention on poverty and social exclusion to be made a formal and central part of that convention, and calls for appropriate and regular follow-up of the recommendations thereby developed;

2. Calls on the Commission to play a coordinating role and to guide the Member States in order to meet the current challenges and combat poverty and social exclusion, being mindful that combating poverty is primarily the responsibility of national policies, while also showing the necessary solidarity and providing relevant technical assistance;
3. Calls for the Platform against Poverty also to serve to bring together, at European level, those national organisations representing the groups at greatest risk of poverty which are not yet federated;

Joint training

4. Calls for poverty awareness seminars to be provided within the EU institutions and Member State governments by organisations with practical experience of combating poverty, and for joint training on social and exclusion issues to be run on a trial basis, bringing together EU officials and people with hands-on experience of combating poverty;
5. Calls on the Member States to make the enjoyment of the cultural heritage accessible to all sections of society and to avoid cutting resources in this sector, which guarantees social inclusion and provides quality jobs;
6. Reiterates the crucial role played by volunteering and active citizenship as an instrument of cohesion and action to combat economic, social and environmental disparities, encouraging citizens to get involved in public life through sport, culture, the arts, and social and political activism;
7. Calls for disadvantaged people to be guaranteed access to mobility programmes for education and work, and for the share of the budget set aside for such programmes to be increased; draws attention to the fact that ‘Youth on the move’ should promote mobility for all apprentices, trainees and students and the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired vocational skills;
8. Encourages initiatives that are also intergenerational, to reduce the digital divide of disadvantaged people, by providing them with access to information and communication technologies, in keeping with the European Digital Agenda;
9. Calls on the Member States to encourage the teaching of new technologies from the outset as part of the educational curriculum;

Evaluation mechanism

10. Calls for the establishment of a regular, critical evaluation mechanism involving Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, based on precise indicators at national and European level, which will make it possible to evaluate the multiple dimensions of poverty and measure the Member States' progress – bearing in mind the gender and age distribution of poverty – towards achieving the poverty reduction target and breaking it down into sub-targets, insofar as the lack of a detailed definition of poverty leaves the Member States too much leeway, giving rise to a risk of aberrant interpretations; calls on the Commission to improve national and European indicators as regards the comparability of national statistics on poverty among vulnerable groups, and to promote, in conjunction with Eurostat, the compilation of more detailed statistics as part of a comprehensive scoreboard on poverty and social exclusion which will make it possible, inter alia, to track the number of people receiving less than 50% or 40%, respectively, of the median income, and to use this as a basis for conducting an annual evaluation of poverty situations in the EU, supplementing the statistical approach with a qualitative and participatory approach; calls on the Commission to ensure that the policies implemented are beneficial to all and not just to those close to the poverty threshold;
11. Calls on the Commission/Eurostat to carry out a comprehensive analysis of poverty and social exclusion and to compile the statistics through a qualitative and participative approach broken down by gender and age, in order to highlight the problem of poverty among older women; hopes that the Institute for Gender Equality will, as soon as it is fully operational, contribute to resolving the problem of inadequate systematic and comparative data broken down by gender;
12. Calls for the national statistics on poverty to be improved and made more comparable by developing indicators at the European level;
13. Calls, in the light of the current crisis, for a detailed, up-to-date study of the number of people living in poverty and the number at risk of falling into poverty, to be carried out as a matter of urgency in the coming months;
14. Calls on the Commission to draw up and present an annual report to Parliament on the Member States' progress in reducing poverty and social exclusion;

Horizontal social clause

15. Calls on the Commission to take full account of the correct horizontal social clause as specified in Article 9 TFEU, under which the EU has to 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, and calls on the Commission to specify how the Platform will affect assessments of the implementation of that clause; calls for more in-depth social impact assessments of EU policies, even where those policies are initiated by the European Council rather than the Commission, as in the case of the Euro Plus pact; takes the view that such in-depth analysis of the application of this clause will make it possible to avoid a levelling-down of social standards in Europe and facilitate the

development of a common social basis in Europe; calls for this social impact assessment to be carried out in conjunction with associations active in combating poverty, and for it to take the situation of the poorest people in Europe as a benchmark; takes the view that such assessments should involve Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Commission departments responsible for social affairs, under the supervision of a director-general reporting to the Commission Secretariat;

Budget

16. Calls on the Commission to identify more precisely the budget lines relevant to the Platform and the level of appropriations allocated to them, particularly as regards the ESF and its contribution to this flagship initiative through the funding of political priorities such as preventing early school leaving and addressing poverty among children, women, the elderly and migrant workers; calls on the Commission to set out its proposals for combating poverty and social exclusion in the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, so as to ensure adequate funding of the initiatives launched to combat poverty and social exclusion; calls on the Commission to identify the financial support needed for agreed thematic priorities, and to ask the Member States to provide financial support for the civil society actors involved, at national level, in the national reform programmes, the Flagship Platform and the national strategies for social protection and social inclusion; recommends pressing ahead with, and providing increased funding for, European programmes which can contribute to various aspects of the fight against social exclusion, poverty and social and economic inequality, including health inequality (such as the research Framework Programme and the Progress programme);
17. Takes note that, in the draft budget 2012, the European Commission has estimated the increase for the European Platform against Poverty flagship initiative at 3.3 %, as compared to last year; asks the Commission to provide further explanation on the contribution of the European Social Fund (ESF) to this flagship initiative and on specific measures addressing priorities such as the fight against poverty among children, women, elderly people and migrant workers, and the prevention of early school leaving; in this context, regrets the lack of clarity and the overlapping of the different instruments and budgetary lines via which the Europe 2020 targets are to be achieved through the EU budget;

Food distribution scheme for the most deprived people in the EU

18. Contests the Commission's decision to review downwards, from EUR 500 million to EUR 113.5 million, the budget for the 2012 food distribution scheme for the most deprived people in the EU (the MDP scheme); deeply deplores this situation, coming as it does at a time of serious economic and social crisis; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Council to find a way to continue the MDP scheme for the last two years of the current funding period (2012 and 2013) and for the next funding period (2014-2020), giving it a legal basis that cannot be contested by the CJEU and maintaining the annual financial ceiling at EUR 500 million so as to ensure that people dependent on food aid do not suffer food poverty;

Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

19. Calls for the social open method of coordination to be strengthened and applied correctly in the field of poverty, inter alia through the common development, implementation and evaluation of national strategies for social inclusion and protection, on the basis of commonly defined objectives, via national platforms against poverty, exchanges of good practice concerning policies on effective access to fundamental rights, and implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the revised Social Charter (which not all the Member States have ratified), in particular Articles 30 and 31 thereof; stresses that the work of the Council's Social Protection Committee should continue to be taken into account in this connection; calls for the Platform to promote and monitor the involvement of local authorities, social economy enterprises and other local stakeholders in drawing up and implementing the national strategy reports;

Basket of basic goods and services

20. Calls on the Commission, in consultation with the European Central Bank, to propose common principles to define the 'basket of basic goods and services' required to enable everyone to live in dignity, and points out that these immediate needs are inseparable from respect for human dignity and effective access to all fundamental rights – whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural – without exception; calls for the target of price stability to be clarified so that specific national situations which do not necessarily have a significant impact on the euro-system indicators can be taken into account;
21. Calls for the Parliament's Employment Committee to be granted an explicit role in the Platform, particularly in monitoring the effectiveness of the Platform and of EU and Member State policies designed to reduce poverty and social exclusion, in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy;
22. Calls for the Platform to make it possible to map, as accurately as possible, the degree of access to these basic requirements (which vary according to the place and group concerned) under the various systems in place for the provision of assistance to the poor;
23. Calls on the Commission to specify the objectives and scope of the annual convention of the European Platform against Poverty, which might include exchanging best practice and directly involving people living in poverty; suggests that this meeting should last at least the whole week in which the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) falls;
24. Takes the view that improving the quality and comparability of national statistics under the Platform, so as to measure trends in respect of inequality and improvements in well-being, is essential in order to improve the Union's policies in this area;
25. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the Platform takes account of the outcomes of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity;

2008 recommendation

26. Welcomes the Commission's announcement of a communication on the implementation of its 2008 recommendation concerning the active inclusion strategy, and calls for that communication to include, in particular, a timetable for implementing the strategy's three component strands, specifying a multiannual work programme for delivery at national and EU level; expresses its concern at the postponement of the communication on active inclusion to 2012, and asks the Commission to bring forward the publication of that communication to 2011; calls for an explicit commitment by the Council, the Commission and Parliament to mobilise all poverty reduction policies and ensure that economic, employment and social inclusion policies help to eradicate poverty rather than increasing it;
27. Draws attention to the three component strands of the European strategy for the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, as set out in the Commission's 2008 recommendation, namely:
 - sufficient income support: the Member States should recognise the individual's basic right to adequate resources and social assistance as part of a comprehensive and consistent drive to combat social exclusion;
 - inclusive labour markets: the Member States should provide persons whose condition renders them fit for work with effective help to enter or re-enter, and stay in, employment that corresponds to their work capacity;
 - access to quality services: the Member States should ensure that those concerned receive appropriate social support to facilitate their economic and social inclusion;

Exercise of fundamental rights

28. Calls for the Platform to be geared towards the exercise of the rights that enable everyone to live in dignity, particularly in the fields of employment, housing, health care, social security and an adequate standard of living, justice, education, training, culture and the protection of families and children; calls for the Fundamental Rights Agency to produce a study on effective access by the poorest people to the whole range of fundamental rights and the other rights enshrined in the international agreements to which the Member States are signatories, and on the discrimination those people face, with the participation of NGOs within which socially excluded people can freely express their opinions, and bearing in mind that securing the right to housing is a necessary prerequisite for the full exercise of other fundamental rights, including political and social rights;

Homelessness

29. Believes that the situation of the homeless calls for particular attention and the introduction of additional measures on the part of both the Member States and the Commission, with a view to ensuring their full integration by 2015, which will necessitate the collection and annual publication of comparable data and reliable statistics at EU level, together with an account of the progress achieved and the

objectives set in the respective national and EU strategies for fighting poverty and social exclusion; calls on the Commission to develop, as a matter of urgency, an EU homelessness strategy in accordance with the 2010 Joint Report of the Commission and the Council on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the final recommendations of the 2010 European Consensus Conference on Homelessness and Parliament's resolution on an EU homelessness strategy; calls on the Commission to draw up a detailed roadmap for the implementation of this strategy in the 2011-2020 period; calls on the Platform to promote the exchange of best practice in order to prevent public institutions from losing contact with people who are homeless;

30. Calls on the Social Protection Committee to undertake annual monitoring of the progress made by the Member States with regard to homelessness, on the basis of the 2009 'light year' national thematic reports on homelessness and in accordance with the 2010 Joint Report of the Commission and the Council on Social Protection and Social Inclusion;

Education/training

31. Takes the view that a comprehensive and effective way out of poverty can be found only if the necessary strengthening of social protection instruments is accompanied by significant reinforcement of education and training paths at every level; supports the development of more inclusive education systems to tackle the problem of early school leaving and enable young people from disadvantaged social groups to reach a higher level of education, with a view to countering the intergenerational transmission of poverty; supports access to validation of acquired experience and to life-long training, as a means of reducing poverty by securing access to employment, in particular for disadvantaged groups, so as to help them gain access to decent, quality jobs; takes the view, therefore, that it is essential to implement life-long learning programmes properly and to develop them further, and for Member States to cooperate in relation to education, vocational training and personalised job-seeking assistance, and stresses that more measures of this kind must be taken to assist the most vulnerable sectors of the population; recommends developing an EU strategy with a view to tackling in-work poverty, creating quality jobs and agreeing principles for quality work;

Decent work/the working poor

32. Points out that the increasing number of insecure employment contracts in most Member States is having the effect of exacerbating the segmentation of the labour market and reducing the protection afforded to the most vulnerable; stresses, therefore, that, in addition to vocational and in-service training, the creation of new jobs must proceed in accordance with the basic principles laid down by the ILO, putting into practice the concept of decent work and quality jobs (including decent working conditions, the right to work, health and safety at work, social protection, and arrangements for worker representation and dialogue with employees) and applying the principles of equal pay for men and women and equal treatment for EU workers and third-country nationals legally resident in the EU; urges the Member States to step up their efforts to combat substantially and effectively the problem of undeclared employment, which, as well as having a hugely adverse impact on the viability of social

security schemes, is incompatible with the principles of decent work and denies access to such schemes, thereby engendering a risk of greater poverty; calls on the Commission to tackle the problem of the working poor, support the creation of secure jobs and ensure the correct application of flexible contract arrangements so that they cannot be abused;

33. Emphasises that young people's main concern is to be autonomous, having access to health care and to decent accommodation for a reasonable price, while being able to undergo training, work and find self-fulfilment; calls, therefore, on the Member States to abolish age-related discrimination in respect of access to minimum income schemes, such as the exclusion of young people from these schemes because of their lack of social security contributions;
34. Stresses the need for specific additional provisions for the most disadvantaged groups (people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, single-parent families and families with large numbers of children) to cover the additional costs they incur, in particular in relation to personal assistance, the use of special facilities, medical care and social support;
35. Urges the Member States to make public employment offices more effective, inter alia by identifying the needs of the labour market more accurately, since employment is the first step in preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion;
36. Emphasises that the transition from school, vocational training or higher education to employment must be better prepared and must follow on directly from education or training; emphasises, therefore, that it is extremely important to implement the European Youth Guarantee initiative effectively and to make it an instrument for active integration into the labour market; believes that the social partners, local and regional authorities and youth organisations should be involved in the development of a sustainable strategy to reduce youth unemployment, which must include formal recognition of the qualifications obtained;
37. Recommends that the Member States, in implementing the principles of flexicurity in the labour market, ensure, after consulting the social partners, that in practice equal weight is given to both flexibility and workers' security, and that incentives are provided to increase the participation of those workers in vocational training;
38. Recalls that women are at greater risk of falling into extreme poverty than men, given the shortcomings of welfare systems and the fact that discrimination persists, especially in the labour market, necessitating a whole range of specific policies which should be tailored to both the gender dimension and the specific circumstances;
39. Calls on the Member States to provide increased resources in order to enable public employment services to operate effectively;
40. Calls on the Commission to relax the rules and supervisory procedures relating to the granting of compensation for the discharge of public service obligations, which place a heavy burden on local authorities that set up local public services to help the most deprived members of society;

41. Calls for the knowledge, experience, and informal competences and skills of disadvantaged people in situations of poverty and social exclusion and/or traditional communities to be valued and for systems validating experience acquired in non-formal and informal training to be promoted, and furthermore for it to be identified how these could contribute to their integration into the labour market;

Migrants

42. Calls, with due regard to differing practices, to collective labour agreements and legislation in the various Member States and to the subsidiarity principle, for respect for equal rights and equal social protection for all in each Member State, irrespective of whether people are EU citizens or third-country nationals; calls on the Member States to combat illegal and undeclared work;
43. Calls, in particular, for measures aimed at cultural and linguistic integration in the host country in order to overcome social exclusion;
44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their cooperation with third countries in the field of education and culture, with a view to reducing poverty and social exclusion in such countries, supporting development and also prevent immigration driven solely by economic factors;
45. Believes that in-work poverty reflects inequitable working conditions, and calls for efforts to change this state of affairs, through pay levels in general and minimum wage levels in particular, which – whether regulated by legislation or by collective bargaining – must ensure a decent standard of living;
46. Notes that being employed does not suffice to guarantee a way out of poverty, as further action is needed to combat the problem of the working poor and ensure access to decent and lasting employment;
47. Calls on the Member States to promote the full participation of women in the job market and the introduction of legislation on equal pay, and to give greater consideration to the issue of adequate pensions for women;
48. Recommends introducing appropriate taxation of very high salaries in order to help fund social protection systems and the minimum wage and reduce income disparities;

People with disabilities

49. Recommends that the Member States develop new measures to help vulnerable and socially excluded groups, especially people with disabilities, find jobs with enterprises (including social economy enterprises) or public bodies, so as to promote inclusion, not least in those regions that are economically weaker and socially more vulnerable, or that they further develop existing legislation, such as the 2000 Employment Directive, which deals with the employment of people with disabilities; recommends that the Member States ensure that people with disabilities participate in education from early childhood, by removing the current barriers and providing them with assistance; recommends that the Member States promote accessible environments for people with disabilities and pay

particular attention to the situation of early childhood education and care so as to prevent the irreversible exclusion, without any hope of reintegration, of children born with disabilities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up exchanges of best practice and introduce multifaceted measures for the integration of the people with disabilities into the job market; recommends that the Member States ensure that the elderly and people with disabilities have access to social and health care services;

Gender

50. Strongly criticises the fact that the gender aspect of poverty and social exclusion is completely ignored in the Commission's European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion;
51. Stresses that women in rural areas are often not seen as part of the workforce although their contribution to daily agricultural work is as important as the contribution made by men, with the result that they are excluded socially from their rights as employees and are vulnerable to poverty;
52. Invites the Commission and the Member States to take the gender-specific perspective as a key component in all common policies and national programmes in order to eradicate poverty and combat social exclusion; takes the view, furthermore, that Member States should take the gender dimension into account in their plans for recovery from the recession;
53. Notes, in view of the importance of welfare policies in combating poverty and social exclusion, the need for effective and adequate social security benefits to support vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities, single-parent families and the unemployed) as well as specific segments of the population (such as families with large numbers of children);
54. Calls on the Member States to improve the protection provided for employees who are unfit to carry on working as a result of illness, an accident at work or an industrial disease, to prevent their being reduced to financial insecurity; would like to see national legislation strengthened, therefore, to make it mandatory for redeployment to be offered before employment can be terminated;
55. Calls for the Platform to work towards defining a special status for workers with disabilities which would guarantee their long-term employment;
56. Urges the Member States, as part of measures to support employment – especially among women – through the reconciliation of work and family life, to facilitate access to quality and affordable care facilities, since a significant proportion of EU citizens remain outside the labour market because they are taking care of a family member, which increases the risk that they will fall into poverty;

Use of funding

57. Acknowledges the need to assess, where possible, the effectiveness, impact, coordination and value for money of the use of EU funds – especially the European

Social Fund (ESF) – in terms of achieving the poverty reduction target, even where this is not their primary objective, by reducing economic disparities, prosperity imbalances and differences in living standards between EU Member States and regions, and thereby promoting economic and social cohesion; maintains that priority must be given to projects that combine employment targets and strategies with integrated active inclusion approaches, such as projects designed to strengthen intergenerational solidarity at regional and local level or which specifically contribute to gender equality and the active inclusion of vulnerable groups; stresses the importance of effective action for solidarity, including reinforcement, anticipated transfers, and reductions in the Member States' share of cofinancing in respect of budgetary funding, so as to create decent jobs, support production sectors, fight poverty and social exclusion and avoid creating new forms of dependence; stresses the importance of supporting efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, facilitate access to quality jobs, promote non-discrimination, guarantee an adequate income and promote access to high-quality services;

58. Highlights the crucial role played by the cohesion policy and the structural funds in promoting employment and social inclusion and in tackling poverty in urban areas, where the majority of disadvantaged people live, as well as in rural areas; underlines the relevant contribution of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in preventing poverty among workers hit by the crisis, and of the European Progress Microfinance Facility in supporting entrepreneurship; calls for the specific function of each fund to be preserved within the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);
59. Emphasises that the European Social Fund is still the main instrument specifically intended to promote social inclusion, and believes it must be strengthened in order to meet effectively the ambitious targets set as part of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Platform against Poverty;
60. Takes the view that instruments such as the European Progress Microfinance Facility and the Grundtvig programme have an important role to play in preventing poverty and social exclusion, and believes they should be developed on the basis of in-depth analyses;
61. Calls on the Commission to identify priority areas for EU spending so that funding may be directed more effectively toward micro-regions and/or those neighbourhoods whose inhabitants suffer most from poverty and social exclusion;
62. Takes the view that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, under which specific customised assistance can be provided for workers made redundant as a result of the current crisis or of globalisation, should be allowed to continue operating beyond 2013, and that it should be fully funded by the EU budget as regards both commitments and payments;

Economic governance/European Semester

63. Calls on the Member States to submit national reform programmes consistent with the aim of the Platform and with the Union's objectives of social and sustainable development, and, supporting the Commission's recognition that poverty 'is unacceptable in 21st-century Europe', calls on them to refrain from calling into question

wage indexation systems and collective labour agreements or restricting, in an unreasonable and unjustified way, their capacity for investment and social spending in the context of economic governance, whilst ensuring the sustainability of public finances and the creation of well-paid jobs, bearing in mind that poverty reduction is an essential corollary of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; calls for clarification of the status of national action plans for social inclusion and, in particular, the question of their integration into national reform programmes under the Europe 2020 strategy; calls on the Commission to develop country-specific recommendations with a view to meeting the poverty reduction target, especially in the event that those programmes are not successful, bearing in mind that poverty reduction requires us to step up our efforts and mobilise all parties and all our resources to reduce poverty and extreme poverty significantly in the medium term, and to reduce greatly or eradicate poverty by 2020 at the latest; proposes that the Commission draw up guidelines at European level for the Member States so as to ensure that local authorities and other stakeholders participate effectively in the drafting of national reform programmes; notes that ‘territorial pacts’ potentially offer the most comprehensive and consistent means of involving local authorities in this process, as proposed in the Fifth Cohesion Report; believes that the Europe 2020 target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million can be achieved only if the austerity measures currently being taken in the EU, and those to be taken in the future, do not undermine employment and social protection, especially for the most disadvantaged people;

64. Takes the view that the Member States should aim to translate the targets relating to the reduction of social exclusion/poverty into ambitious national and regional targets, and should include a specific target relating to child poverty and specific strategies involving a multidimensional approach to child and family poverty;
65. Calls for all NGOs and small associations to be given support in their efforts to promote fundamental rights, so as to strengthen the necessary human investment, allow people living in poverty to participate and ensure that they are better informed about access to rights and justice;
66. Welcomes the proposal on global grants, which could help a number of smaller NGOs and associations in their work to combat poverty;
67. Urges the Member States to agree to, and adopt as soon as possible, the proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426); calls on the Commission to continue to support efforts to overcome technical difficulties within the Council in order to ensure a swift agreement is reached, and to close gaps in the existing anti-discrimination legislation, which does not currently cover all relevant aspects, with a view to further eradicating discrimination, including social discrimination;
68. Suggests that the actions proposed in the Platform should acknowledge the consequences of multiple discrimination and introduce policy-oriented measures as presently provided for, for example, in Spanish and Romanian legislation, and in particular that the concept of gender mainstreaming should be developed in order to

respond to multiple discrimination;

69. Calls for the establishment of wage equality between men and women and for equal treatment of EU workers and third-country nationals;
70. Urges the Commission to consult as to how best to combat negative discrimination based on social origin;

Social economy

71. Welcomes the Commission's desire to take greater account, through various initiatives, of the role of social economy actors (as defined in Parliament's resolution of 19 February 2009 on the social economy), in particular by clarifying the legal framework applicable to social economy enterprises (for mutual societies, foundations and cooperatives) so that there are no more obstacles hindering them from making a full contribution, with legal certainty, to reducing poverty and social exclusion by proposing innovative and sustainable responses to citizens' needs; stresses at the same time that the social economy is not limited to this area of activity; is concerned, however, that no reference is made to the statute for a European association, given that the not-for-profit sector is a major actor in the fight against poverty; stresses, however, that the measures currently being proposed to promote the social economy, in particular associations and mutual societies, do not adequately reflect its potential contribution to the policy on combating poverty and social exclusion, to the economy and to the European social model, and, more generally, do not match its role in responding to the consequences of the economic and social crisis; stresses, in particular, its demands and expectations in relation to the recognition of SSGIs, as reaffirmed in Parliament's resolution of 5 July 2011 on the future of social services of general interest (A7-0239/2011); notes the proposals for a revision of the EU provisions on public procurement procedures and state aid, and reiterates its call for them to be adapted to the specific nature of the tasks of SSGIs and the way in which they are organised; supports the creation of decent jobs and the provision of personalised job-seeking assistance via specialised training and placement agencies and social economy enterprises, in view of their expertise in helping disadvantaged people find jobs; reiterates its call for sectoral legislative initiatives in relation to the quality and accessibility of social services of general interest, in particular in the areas of health, education, public transport, energy, water and communication;
72. Highlights the importance of social, health, care and education services in bridging skills gaps, promoting social integration and combating poverty and social exclusion; recalls their potential to create new jobs and calls for strong and sustainable investment in these key services and infrastructures and for their further development; looks forward to the Commission's action plan to address the shortage of health workers;
73. Calls for a framework directive on the quality and accessibility of social services of general interest, in particular in the areas of health, education, public transport, energy, water and communication;
74. Calls for strong support to ensure the quality and accessibility of social services, especially in the areas of health, long-term care, education, transport, energy, water and communication;

Housing

75. Recommends that the Member States adopt a proactive policy on decent housing in order to ensure universal access to quality housing at affordable prices or on preferential terms of purchase, and to prevent the loss of such housing, with guaranteed access to services essential to health and safety (bearing in mind that lack of housing represents a serious erosion of human dignity), along with a proactive energy policy that steps up the use of renewable energies and boosts energy efficiency in order to combat energy poverty; calls, in the context of housing, for more attention to be paid to migrants, who are often exploited and forced to live in sub-standard housing; recalls Protocol 26 annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon, which concerns social housing, and calls for its provisions to be respected, in particular as regards the Member States' freedom to organise social housing, including the question of financing; encourages the Member States to implement special housing programmes and opportunities for homeless people, with a view to guaranteeing the most basic living standards for the most vulnerable members of society;
76. Recommends that the Member States expand the supply of quality social housing and emergency housing in order to guarantee access for all, and in particular for the most disadvantaged, to decent, affordable housing; considers that it costs society and the community more to rehouse people who have been evicted from their accommodation than it does to keep them there; recommends, therefore, the implementation of policies to prevent evictions, in particular by the public authorities taking responsibility for payment of rents and rent arrears of persons threatened with eviction;
77. Recalls the link between living in deprived neighbourhoods, which increases poverty and social exclusion, and increased health problems; sees, therefore, EU action in deprived neighbourhoods as a cost-efficient way to combat exclusion and reduce health expenditure, and calls on the Commission to step up such action under the next cohesion policy and other EU programmes;
78. Calls for an increase in the ERDF budget for measures to improve energy efficiency in social housing in order to tackle energy poverty;
79. Draws attention to the major effort required of the EU and the Member States to reduce energy costs in household budgets, in the case of the EU by ensuring security of supply so as to protect against significant price fluctuations in the energy market, and in the case of the Member States by strengthening their policies in support of household energy efficiency;

Roma

80. Calls for Roma people, and the organisations that represent and work with them, to be actively involved in the drafting and implementation of the national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, so as to contribute to achieving the EU poverty target; calls on the EU and the Member States to implement the European strategy to promote Roma inclusion as soon as possible, and calls on the Member States to propose, by the end of this year, measures to promote the inclusion of Roma in accordance with the European framework for coordinating national Roma inclusion strategies presented by the

Commission in April 2011; stresses that, as with the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the inclusion and integration of Roma will require greater efforts in order to achieve their full inclusion – and put an end to the numerous forms of discrimination to which they are subject – by 2020; calls for other marginalised communities, such as immigrants, to be involved in all EU or Member State policies relating to their social inclusion;

81. Highlights the importance of social, health, care and education services in bridging gaps, promoting social integration and combating poverty and social exclusion; recalls their potential to create new jobs, and calls for significant and sustainable investment in these key services and infrastructures and for their further development; looks forward to the Commission's action plan to address the shortage of health workers;
82. Calls for the interests of people with disabilities to be taken into account in the planning, use and monitoring of EU funding, with particular regard to support for education, training, employment and independent living (transport and communication);

Children

83. Calls for the fight against child poverty to focus on prevention through the provision of equal access to high-quality early childhood education and childcare services, in order to prevent children from starting school life with multiple disadvantages, and to other facilities for children (such as activity centres available during term-time and holiday periods, and extracurricular cultural and sports activities), ensuring that the network of such services and centres covers all areas adequately; calls for financial support for services having proven their worth and for the systematic integration of policies designed to support poor families into all relevant areas of activity, combining a universal approach with targeted measures for the most vulnerable families, in particular the families of children with disabilities, single-parent families and families with large numbers of children; calls for the parent-child relationship to be given particular attention in programmes to combat poverty and social exclusion, so as to prevent children being placed in care as a consequence of severe poverty;
84. Emphasises that all children and young people have a right to education under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children and young people who do not have a residence permit in the countries in which they reside;
85. Points out that thousands of children are separated from their parents as a result of their living conditions (lack of housing) or because their parents are living in severe poverty (material, social and cultural) and have not received the necessary support to help them fulfil their parental responsibilities;
86. Calls for special attention to be given to the future of young people, and for a clear strategy to help young people find a decent first job commensurate with their level of training;
87. Emphasises that the fight against poverty requires a holistic and consistent approach, embracing all policy areas; also points out that it is particularly important to step up action at both European and national level with a view to preventing and combating this

problem;

88. Points to the need to adopt a more comprehensive approach to the issue of child poverty, and emphasises the results obtained so far in terms of establishing ‘common principles’, as reflected in the conclusions of the Employment Council of 6 December 2010, which call for combating child poverty to be a priority;
89. Welcomes the Commission’s desire to present a recommendation on child poverty in 2012;
90. Endorses the conclusions of the June EPSCO Council, which support an integrated strategy to prevent child poverty and promote child well-being, focusing on adequate family income, access to services, including early learning and childcare, and children’s participation; calls for a detailed roadmap for implementation of the proposed communication in 2012;
91. Emphasises the importance of structural funding, in particular the European Social Fund, as a key tool for helping the Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion; calls on the Member States for more co-funded projects to support services such as care facilities for children, the elderly and dependent persons;
92. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the austerity policies agreed with the Member States do not hinder or call into question the attainment of the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty;
93. Calls for efforts to tackle the vicious circle of poverty in order to combat the perpetuation of poverty in subsequent generations;
94. Calls on the Member States to recognise the true value of the role of artists in social integration and the fight against poverty, in particular by promoting their working environment and status;

Minimum income

95. Wishes the Commission to launch, in full compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, a consultation on the possibility of a legislative initiative concerning a sensible minimum income which will allow economic growth, prevent poverty and serve as a basis for people to live in dignity, play a full part in society and make headway with finding employment or identifying training opportunities, and which will play an automatic stabilising role for the economy, with due regard for differing practices, and for collective labour agreements and legislation in the various Member States, bearing in mind that the definition of a minimum income remains the prerogative of each Member State; wishes the Commission to help the Member States share best practice in relation to minimum income levels, and encourages the Member States to develop minimum income schemes based on at least 60% of the median income in each Member State;

Unclaimed benefits

96. Points out that, according to the OECD, 20% to 40% of benefits are not taken up; calls on the Member States to evaluate their income support and social security benefit systems in order to avoid the creation of hidden poverty, by increasing transparency, informing benefit recipients more effectively of their rights, establishing more effective advisory services, simplifying procedures and putting in place measures and policies to fight the stigma and discrimination associated with minimum income recipients;
97. Calls on the Member States to provide adequate support, training and respite services to family carers so that elderly people and those who need care can remain in their own homes and communities for as long as they wish to;
98. Calls on the Commission to assess the role of high indebtedness in poverty and to promote the exchange of best practice within the Platform concerning ways to tackle high indebtedness;

Elderly people – carer’s leave

99. Maintains that elderly care programmes, including home care, must be developed and reviewed in all the Member States so as to prevent elderly people falling into exclusion or poverty, and adds that families caring for the elderly should also be provided with support (financial if possible), in line with the objective of promoting a sustainable society and in particular with a view to improving support for active ageing and solidarity between generations, encouraging accessibility and solidarity and improving the quality of long-term care; calls on the Commission to assess whether a directive on carer’s leave could help achieve this;
100. Calls on the Commission to pay proper attention to developing social innovation and fact-based support for social policy, and to making more considered use of impact assessments with a view to providing genuine added value and proposing sustainable and innovative solutions consistent with demographic trends;
101. Stresses the importance of developing policy proposals at Member State level to tackle problems associated with poverty and exclusion, such as homelessness and drug and alcohol addiction; calls for more effective exchanges between Member States of best practice in these areas;
102. Emphasises that it is important to propose measures that simplify access to EU funding for organisations active in the voluntary sector;
103. Calls on the Commission to take account of Parliament’s report on the Green Paper on the future of pensions in Europe;
104. Recommends that the Member States establish an adequate minimum pension which allows the elderly to live in dignity;
105. Calls on the Commission to envisage a set of framework guidelines and principles with a view to ensuring adequate and sustainable pension arrangements, so as to combat effectively the risk of poverty faced by women as a result of precarious and sporadic employment and low remuneration; notes that it is necessary to ensure that welfare

provisions can be brought more closely into line with individual and family circumstances while enhancing the value attached to maternity and the provision of care;

106. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Although the European Union is one of the richest regions of the world, there are more than 80 million people at risk of poverty, including 20 million children and 8% of the working population.

This situation is incompatible with the European values of justice and solidarity enshrined in the Treaties.

However, poverty and social exclusion have increased in recent years despite the Union's undertakings to reduce them.

The impact of the 2008 crisis has further exacerbated the problem by putting pressure on the most vulnerable groups.

While the fight against poverty and social exclusion is primarily the responsibility of national governments, the Union can nevertheless play an important role in terms of awareness-raising, coordination and funding.

In order to ensure sustainable, inclusive growth, it is essential to make the most vulnerable groups a central focus of European integration, since poverty reduction will be a driver of future growth.

Parliament and the Council designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in order to reaffirm and strengthen the initial political commitment made by the EU at the start of the Lisbon Strategy to having 'a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty'.

In the course of the year, Parliament – among other initiatives – adopted a report on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe.

The Commission, for its part, published a communication on 16 December 2010 entitled 'The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion'.

This is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Platform will provide the Member States with a 'framework for action' based on a multi-dimensional approach with a view to achieving the specific target set by the Europe 2020 strategy, namely that of lifting 20 million people out of poverty by 2020.

As part of a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Platform is intended, inter alia, to promote innovation and social experimentation, reduction of poverty – in its various forms – at all stages of life, better use of EU funds and more effective social protection.

Over the next few months the Member States will have to submit their national reform programmes to the Commission, including details of how they intend to fight social exclusion and poverty. They will report on their initiatives as part of national reports on the Europe 2020 strategy.

Given that poverty is a multi-faceted problem, it calls for an integrated response involving the various tiers of public authorities, from European to local level, in partnership with those working on the ground.

That was the rationale for this report, which is based on a great deal of input from the relevant players, in particular as regards the proposals it puts forward with a view to helping eradicate the scourge of poverty and social exclusion.

13.7.2011

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion
(2011/2052(INI))

Rapporteur: Andrea Cozzolino

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that fighting poverty and social exclusion is a key Europe 2020 target and that it is consequently at the heart of the EP priorities for the EU budget;
2. Takes note that, in the draft budget 2012, the European Commission has estimated the increase for the European Platform against Poverty flagship initiative at 3.3 %, as compared to last year; asks the Commission to provide further explanation on the contribution of the European Social Fund (ESF) to this flagship initiative and on specific measures addressing priorities such as the fight against poverty among children, women, elderly people and migrant workers, and the prevention of early school leaving; in this context, regrets the lack of clarity and the overlapping of the different instruments and budgetary lines via which the Europe 2020 targets are to be achieved through the EU budget;
3. Calls on the Commission to ensure that there are sufficient funds in the EU budget to meet the ambitious objectives of the key initiatives identified in the Commission communication on the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, as well as in the Europe 2020 strategy;
4. Is deeply worried by the European Commission's announcement of drastic cuts to the budget allocations for the EU Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived Persons of the Community (MDP); calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Council to find a way of continuing the MDP scheme in the remaining years of the funding period

(2012 and 2013) and in the new funding period 2014-2020 on a legal basis that cannot be contested by the Court of Justice (CJEU), maintaining the EUR 500 million annual financial ceiling so as to ensure that people dependent on food aid will not suffer from food poverty;

5. Highlights the crucial role played by the cohesion policy and the structural funds in promoting employment and social inclusion and in tackling poverty in urban areas, where the majority of disadvantaged people live, as well as in rural areas; underlines the relevant contribution of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in preventing poverty among workers hit by the crisis, and of the European Progress Microfinance Facility in supporting entrepreneurship; calls for the specific function of each fund to be preserved within the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);
6. Calls for an improvement in the coordination among the European instruments for tackling poverty, supporting social inclusion and employment, and for the coordination between them and national resources to be improved; also advocates a simplification of the structural fund rules in order to support the fight against poverty and social exclusion, while ensuring a result-oriented approach, and calls for transparent and measurable effectiveness criteria;
7. Invites the Member States, after consulting organised civil society and stakeholders, to establish national targets to define their contribution to this Europe 2020 target, to supply information on how the initiatives proposed complement existing European, national and local initiatives, and to inform the Commission annually, within the European Semester procedure, of the exact level of funding they will allocate to fighting poverty and social exclusion.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	13.7.2011
Result of final vote	+: 27 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Damien Abad, Alexander Alvaro, Andrea Cozzolino, Göran Färm, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazábal Rubial, Salvador Garriga Polledo, Jens Geier, Ivars Godmanis, Estelle Grelier, Carl Haglund, Lucas Hartong, Jutta Haug, Monika Hohlmeier, Sidonia Elżbieta Jędrzejewska, Anne E. Jensen, Jan Kozłowski, Alain Lamassoure, Giovanni La Via, Barbara Matera, Claudio Morganti, Miguel Portas, László Surján, Angelika Werthmann
Substitutes present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Frédéric Daerden, Roberto Gualtieri, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Theodor Dumitru Stolojan
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Gabriel Mato Adrover

25.7.2011

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion
(2011/2052(INI))

Rapporteur: Silvia Costa

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Confirms that education and culture significantly contribute to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, as well as to the promotion of social equity and the elimination of discriminatory attitudes; strongly urges the Member States, therefore, to invest more specifically in the National Reform Plans (NRP); calls on the Member States also to guarantee quality education and training which is accessible to all;
2. Calls on the Member States to maintain among the priorities in the forthcoming structural fund financial programming period investment in broadening the range of education and training opportunities on offer and the training-to-work support strategy;
3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make a greater effort to reduce school drop-out rates, paying special attention to children coming from socially disadvantaged families or having serious health problems or disabilities, in addition to promoting the building of bridges between education and work and between training systems, in order to eliminate economic, social, or any other kind of marginalisation;
4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up the basis for the creation and development of policies that would allow for an early identification of those most likely to be affected by school drop-out;

5. Calls on the Member States to implement lifelong learning, distance learning and vocational and informal training programmes, and to ensure equal access to those programmes; further calls on the Member States to provide greater recognition for non-formal education and to step up the implementation of the EQF (European Qualifications Framework), in accordance with the flagship initiative ‘An agenda for new skills and jobs’;
6. Stresses the importance of pre-school education in fighting poverty. In particular, education must include sport and artistic education – including, where necessary, the establishment of the necessary facilities and institutions – in order to develop children’s skills, help them take decisions independently and engender a sense of social responsibility, in order to prevent poverty and ensuing social exclusion being passed on from one generation to the next; insists that free and equal access to such education is ensured irrespective of the place of residence of the children or their families’ financial or social status;
7. Calls on the Member States to recognise the true value of the role of artists in social integration and the fight against poverty, in particular by promoting their working environment and status;
8. Emphasises that all children and young people have a right to education under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children and young people who do not have a residence permit in the countries in which they reside;
9. Calls for an intercultural and multilingual education to be endorsed, in order to combat social exclusion, to facilitate the educational and formative inclusion of disadvantaged communities such as the Roma and to foster integration of ethnic minorities and migrants; calls for training courses and workshops for teachers, institutional staff, social workers and NGOs active in this field in order to sensitise them and focus attention in their work on the elimination of exclusion and/or marginalisation;
10. Calls, in particular, for measures aimed at cultural and linguistic integration in the host country in order to overcome social exclusion;
11. Calls on the Member States to make the enjoyment of the cultural heritage accessible to all sections of society and to avoid cutting resources in this sector, which guarantees social inclusion and provides quality jobs;
12. Draws attention to the need to draw up integrated programmes targeted on traveller communities in order to facilitate their access to education, health and social security;
13. Reiterates the crucial role played by volunteering and active citizenship as an instrument of cohesion and action to combat economic, social and environmental disparities, encouraging citizens to get involved in public life through sport, culture, the arts, and social and political activism;
14. Calls for disadvantaged people to be guaranteed access to mobility programmes for education and work, and for the share of the budget set aside for such programmes to be increased; draws attention to the fact that ‘Youth on the move’ should promote mobility

for all apprentices, trainees and students and the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired vocational skills;

15. Encourages initiatives that are also intergenerational, to reduce the digital divide of disadvantaged people, by providing them with access to information and communication technologies, in keeping with the European Digital Agenda;
16. Calls on the Member States to encourage the teaching of new technologies from the outset as part of the educational curriculum;
17. Supports the promotion of second-chance education and training projects, as well as the development of semi-boarding programmes and ‘tutoring’ in schools, also in cooperation with NGOs, through the use of the Structural Funds and through forms of extra-curricular help and support for those experiencing the greatest difficulties; reiterates the crucial role of youth organisations in motivating the young to participate in programmes aiming at social inclusion and equality;
18. Calls for the knowledge, experience, and informal competences and skills of disadvantaged people in situations of poverty and social exclusion and/or traditional communities to be valued and for systems validating experience acquired in non-formal and informal training to be promoted, and furthermore for it to be identified how these could contribute to their integration into the labour market;
19. Calls on the Member States to provide opportunities for training and skills upgrading for women following periods out of employment to ensure that they can fully reintegrate into the work environment and to reduce the risk of them losing their jobs;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their cooperation with third countries in the field of education and culture, with a view to reducing poverty and social exclusion in such countries, supporting development and also prevent immigration driven solely by economic factors;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	14.7.2011
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Magdi Cristiano Allam, Zoltán Bagó, Lothar Bisky, Piotr Borys, Jean-Marie Cavada, Silvia Costa, Santiago Fisas Aixela, Mary Honeyball, Petra Kammerevert, Morten Løkkegaard, Emma McClarkin, Marek Henryk Migalski, Katarína Neveřalová, Doris Pack, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Marco Scurria, Hannu Takkula, László Tőkés, Helga Trüpel, Milan Zver
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Heinz K. Becker, Ivo Belet, Nadja Hirsch, Seán Kelly, Iosif Matula, Paul Nuttall, Georgios Papanikolaou
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Olle Schmidt

30.8.2011

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion
(2011/2052(INI))

Rapporteur: Anna Záborská

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the European Social Charter, in particular Articles 16, 30 and 31 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Articles 15, 21, 31, 34 and 36 thereof,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 October 2005 on women and poverty in the European Union¹,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the European Pact for Gender Equality for the period 2011-2020²,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 May 2009 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market³,
- having regard to the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on gender aspects of the economic

¹ OJ C 233 E, 28.9.2006, p. 130.

² Council conclusions of 7 March 2011, Brussels.

³ P6_TA(2009)0371.

⁴ COM(2010) 491 final.

- downturn and financial crisis¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2011 on the future of Social Services of General Interest²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 19 October 2010 on precarious women workers³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on the face of female poverty in the European Union⁴,
 - having regard to the EUROSTAT 2010 publication ‘Combating poverty and social exclusion – A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010’,
- A. whereas extreme poverty is a violation of fundamental rights and a serious attack on the human dignity of women, men and children;
 - B. whereas successful poverty reduction in societies in poor regions gains particularly from the active involvement of poor women and girls in the development process;
 - C. whereas women with disabilities find themselves trapped in socially vulnerable situations and exposed to serious risks of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion;
 - D. whereas poverty impacts differently on poor women and men, boys and girls, as poor women and girls often find it more difficult to access suitable social services and income;
 - E. whereas empowering women by improving their living conditions and enabling them to participate actively in the social and economic life of a country is key to long-term sustainable development and tackling poverty;
 - F. whereas the Platform does not take into consideration the specific gender-related factors that affect women and men, and insufficient attention is paid to the feminisation of poverty;
 - G. whereas poverty and social exclusion violate human dignity and fundamental human rights, while the key objective of income support schemes is to bring people out of poverty and enable them to live in dignity, this being especially important for women since they are worse affected by poverty;
 - H. whereas developing countries with less gender inequality tend to have lower poverty rates;
 - I. whereas the effect of the gender pay gap on lifetime earning indicates that women will

¹ P7_TA(2010)0231.

² P7_TA(2011)0319.

³ P7_TA(2010)0365

⁴ P7_TA(2011)0086

have lower pensions and whereas, as a result, women are more affected than men by persistent and extreme poverty: 22 % of women aged 65 and over are at risk of poverty as compared to 16 % of men;

- J. whereas in the past 10 years the number of women living in poverty has risen disproportionately in relation to the number of men;
1. Calls on the Commission/Eurostat to carry out a comprehensive analysis of poverty and social exclusion and to compile the statistics through a qualitative and participative approach broken down by gender and age, in order to highlight the problem of poverty among older women; hopes that the Institute for Gender Equality will, as soon as it is fully operational, contribute to resolving the problem of inadequate systematic and comparative data broken down by gender;
 2. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take measures to prevent feminisation of poverty by promoting women's employment and entrepreneurship, combating the gender pay gap, facilitating reconciliation of work and family duties through the development of childcare facilities, a system of services for dependants, equally shared parental leave and promotion of flexible working arrangements;
 3. Insists that the social policies identified in the Platform should be implemented alongside anti-discrimination policies, since for many individuals the roots of poverty can often be found in restrictions of opportunities;
 4. Strongly criticises the fact that the gender aspect of poverty and social exclusion is completely ignored in the Commission's European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion;
 5. Stresses that women in rural areas are often not seen as part of the workforce although their contribution to daily agricultural work is as important as the contribution made by men, with the result that they are excluded socially from their rights as employees and are vulnerable to poverty;
 6. Invites the Commission to clarify the common principles for defining the 'basket of basic goods and services' in order to visualise poverty and discrimination on grounds of gender, age or social origin;
 7. Calls on the Commission to take account of Recommendation 92/441/EEC¹ and its recognition of 'the basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity', recalling that this is a vital issue for women, and also stressing that the key objective of income support schemes should be to bring people out of poverty and enable them to live in dignity, this including invalidity and retirement pensions which ensure such dignity; given this objective, recommends that the Commission establish a common method for calculating a subsistence threshold in

¹ Council Recommendation of 24 June 1992 on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems (OJ L 245, 26.08.1992, p. 46).

cost-of-living terms (a 'shopping basket' of goods and services), so as to be able to draw on comparative measurements of poverty levels and determine means of social intervention, including a minimum income scheme;

8. Urges continued adherence to the European programme of food aid for the most deprived as one of the elements of an ambitious integrated policy seeking to combat poverty, bearing in mind that women are frequently the first victims of food poverty;
9. Calls for special attention to be paid to the relationships between parents and children, for example through programmes containing concrete measures specifically tailored to national requirements, seeking to provide maximum and optimum assistance for parents or guardians in the fulfilment of their parental duties in order to prevent children being placed in social care as a result of serious poverty or ensure that such a measure is envisaged only as a very last resort;
10. Calls on the Member States to ensure adequate support for single parents, as they are at much greater risk of being exposed to poverty than families where both parents are receiving income; in this context, also calls on the Member States to ensure support for single parents by establishing enough childcare institutions and facilitating single-parent families' access to them;
11. Calls on the Member States to provide appropriate social benefits for women and men who take care of elderly, sick or disabled relatives, and on the Commission to retain the financial allocation earmarked for use by civil society organisations in fighting, and curbing the effects of, women's poverty;
12. Underlines that universal access and affordable, high-quality support services such as childcare facilities, are important for equal participation of women and men in the labour market and as a means of preventing and reducing poverty;
13. Calls on the Commission to envisage a set of framework guidelines and principles with a view to ensuring adequate and sustainable pension arrangements, so as to combat effectively the risk of poverty faced by women as a result of precarious and sporadic employment and low remuneration; notes that it is necessary to ensure that welfare provisions can be brought more closely into line with individual and family circumstances while enhancing the value attached to maternity and the provision of care;
14. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to pay special attention to the poverty problem among older women resulting from the fact that they receive smaller pensions, which is also a consequence of unemployment periods that they have had to face in life in order to take care of their children and other dependant family members;
15. Invites the Commission and the Member States to take the gender-specific perspective as a key component in all common policies and national programmes in order to eradicate poverty and combat social exclusion; takes the view, furthermore, that Member States should take the gender dimension into account in their plans for recovery from the recession;

16. Calls for the evaluation at the biannual ministerial Round Table on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, to involve the citizens concerned and associations assisting the most deprived from a gender-specific perspective, taking the poorest groups as a reference;
17. Takes the view that voluntary work can play a very important role in combating poverty, social exclusion and gender inequality; points out that 2011 has been designated as European Year of Volunteering and urges Member States to step up their exchanges of good practice and take effective action to support voluntary work and widen the scope thereof;
18. Suggests that particular attention should be paid to the specific situation and needs of vulnerable groups of women who are at risk of poverty (the elderly, the disabled, those living in rural areas, migrant, and victims of violence and trafficking), and that gender-specific policy measures should be developed;
19. Suggests that the actions proposed in the Platform should acknowledge the consequences of multiple discrimination and introduce policy-oriented measures as presently provided for, for example, in Spanish and Romanian legislation, and in particular that the concept of gender mainstreaming should be developed in order to respond to multiple discrimination;
20. Calls on its President to ask the Agency for Fundamental Rights, in cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, to carry out a study on access by the poorest groups to all of their fundamental rights and on the discrimination they face, with the involvement of the organisations within which the people facing social exclusion can freely express themselves.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	30.8.2011
Result of final vote	+: 31 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Andrea ěešková, Tadeusz Cymański, Edite Estrela, Ilda Figueiredo, Zita Gurmai, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Constance Le Grip, Astrid Lulling, Barbara Matera, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Siiri Oviir, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Nicole Sinclair, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Marc Tarabella, Britta Thomsen, Marina Yannakoudakis, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Lena Ek, Sylvie Guillaume, Mojca Kleva, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Katarína Neveřalová, Norica Nicolai, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Licia Ronzulli
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Heide Rühle

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.10.2011
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 5 0: 5
Members present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Heinz K. Becker, Jean-Luc Bennaïmias, Pervenche Berès, Philippe Boulland, Milan Cabrnock, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Frédéric Daerden, Karima Delli, Frank Engel, Sari Essayah, Richard Falbr, Thomas Händel, Marian Harkin, Roger Helmer, Nadja Hirsch, Stephen Hughes, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Danuta Jaz ³ owiecka, Martin Kastler, Jean Lambert, Patrick Le Hyaric, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Olle Ludvigsson, Thomas Mann, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Csaba Őry, Konstantinos Poupakis, Licia Ronzulli, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Jutta Steinruck
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Georges Bach, Raffaele Baldassarre, Philippe De Backer, Julie Girling, Richard Howitt, Gesine Meissner, Evelyn Regner, Birgit Sippel, Gabriele Zimmer