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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT**

**on the implementation, results and overall assessment
of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

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1. BACKGROUND: BUILDING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AT A TIME OF CRISIS

1.1. Introduction

In 2008, the Council and the European Parliament reaffirmed that the fight against poverty and social exclusion was a key commitment of the EU and its Member States, and agreed to designate 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (hereinafter EY2010).¹

The EY2010 coincided with a time of economic and social challenges, spurring mobilisation and helping put poverty and social exclusion at the centre of the Europe 2020 agenda. It highlighted the crucial importance of citizens' engagement and awareness, and brought opportunities for positive participation by men and women experiencing poverty. It also showed that Europe can encourage new models of governance, and stressed the need to build more bridges between key players. Yet, the crisis hit the people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and those working with them on a daily basis, making it difficult for the full impact of initiative to be felt.

In accordance with the Decision establishing the EY2010, this report offers an overview of the implementation, results and overall achievements of the European Year, building on the conclusions of an external evaluation.²

1.2. EU coordination on social inclusion

At the launch of the Lisbon strategy in March 2000, the European Council invited Member States and the Commission to take steps to make 'a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty' by 2010, and the European Council has been reaffirming this objective ever since. The Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (Social OMC) was developed to ensure policy coordination among Member States. This has helped identify common challenges, increased the shared knowledge-base and supported good governance. However, work is still to be completed on strengthening political commitment and visibility, interaction with other policy areas and ownership by all relevant players.

¹ Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008.

² The European Commission asked an external contractor to carry out the ex-post evaluation (from 16 December 2009 to 16 April 2011). The Report was finalised in June 2011.

1.3. The European Year 2010 and its objectives

As the first decade of EU cooperation on poverty and social exclusion drew to a close, the EY2010 was designed to act as a catalyst for raising awareness, building new partnerships and creating fresh momentum. Four main objectives were pursued:

Recognition of rights — recognising the right of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion to live with dignity and to play a full part in society.

Shared responsibility and participation — increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising collective and individual responsibilities in tackling poverty and social exclusion.

Cohesion — promoting a more cohesive society, by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society that eradicates poverty, works for fair distribution and marginalises no one.

Commitment and concrete action — reiterating the strong political commitment of the EU to combat poverty and social exclusion, and promoting this commitment and action at all levels.

2. EUROPEAN YEAR 2010: IMPLEMENTATION AND KEY ACTIVITIES

2.1. Management and financial execution

A budget of €17.25 million went towards activities in 29 participating countries (EU 27 plus Iceland and Norway) and at European level.

Programming and financial management in Member States

National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) coordinated the EY2010 and managed EU funding at country level, in accordance with a National Programme devised in consultation with key stakeholders.

Overall, the 29 NIBs (27 Member States, Norway and Iceland) were granted a total of €9.27 million from the EU budget, following the indirect centralised management procedure. In each country, the amount received had to be matched, at least, by a level equivalent to the EU grant. Some countries provided more than was requested. In addition, private funding was secured by calls for proposals, with a variable percentage co-funding requirement.

Programming and financial management at EU level

A budget of €8 million was dedicated to initiatives at European level, most of them key European level activities. In the main they were fully funded, while others (opening and closing conferences) were 80% co-financed. While pan-European initiatives were coordinated at European level, others were implemented in a decentralised way in participating countries, with close cooperation between the communication contractor's national correspondents and the NIBs. An advisory committee of representatives from participating countries met regularly to advise and assist the Commission in planning and implementing the EY2010 activities. An EU Stakeholder Expert Group, comprising some 70 European NGOs and organisations (networks or regional/local authorities, social partners, foundations, think-tanks,

European/international bodies) served as an information and consultation channel, meeting five times between March 2009 and March 2011.

EY2010 in figures

- 29 participating countries (27 Member States, Norway and Iceland).
- Around 900 co-funded activities promoted either by NIBs or by stakeholders; at least another 1800 national and local activities using the logo.
- Around 40 EU events (organised by EU bodies or in partnership with large events).
- 164 Ambassadors (160 at national level and 4 at European level).
- 49 million viewers and listeners reached by broadcasted reports.
- Over 400 000 unique visitors to the website.
- Over 10 000 printed/online articles.
- 1200 entries to the Journalist Award competition and 60 winners.
- Over 60 videos produced at EU level.
- 200 photographs from 18 European countries participating in the Art Partner Project.
- Total budget of €17.25 million (EU budget) + €9 million (national budgets), i.e. a total of €26.25 million.

2.2. Implementation in participating countries

Activity on the ground

Much of the activity at national, regional and local level was promoted by stakeholders, particularly NGOs, that led 664 co-funded projects, and by National Implementing Bodies, that directly promoted 220 activities. These included:

- awareness-raising activities (debates, didactic materials, media work, art competitions, solidarity chains, open universities, social networking ...);
- direct support to those concerned (information on rights, community support, empowerment through arts, informal education ...);
- policy development (conferences, seminars, participatory meetings, introduction of new policy schemes and action plans ...);
- expertise-related activities (research, studies, publications ...).

Educational and media-related outputs outweighed studies and surveys, reflecting the Year's role as an awareness-raising campaign. Around 10 000 printed/online articles were produced.

The number and scale of co-funded projects promoted by stakeholders varied significantly, ranging from 1 in Finland and 2 in Lithuania to 71 in France and 92 in Ireland. In most countries the average amount of co-funding was under €20 000, making it possible to support organisations with limited absorption capacity. In addition, ‘moral support’ was given to over 1800 national and local activities that used the logo without receiving EY2010 funding.

The role of national ‘Ambassadors’

In all, 22 countries appointed 160 national EY2010 Ambassadors in order to reach a wider public. They came from varied backgrounds: actors, singers, NGO activists, academics, sports people, business people, people with a direct experience of poverty and social exclusion, people from groups particularly at risk (people with disabilities, Roma people, single mothers, etc.). The number of ambassadors appointed varied from one (in France and Romania) to 26 in Austria.

2.3. Activities at EU level

While many activities were coordinated and implemented by the European Commission, a significant number were also carried out by the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies, stakeholders and other EU institutions and bodies.

Information, Communication and Promotion Campaign

The main activity at European level was a common campaign coordinated by the European Commission, for the most part in 23 languages, and implemented in participating countries in cooperation with the communication contractor and the NIBs:

- development of a media relations network and regular outreach to media (print/online/audiovisual) covering key events (e.g. press breakfasts);
- online tools — including a campaign website (www.2010againstopoverty.eu) in 23 languages, use of the ‘Social Europe’ Facebook group, Flickr page for photos, and posts on Youtube, EUtube and Wikipedia;
- publications — a Eurobarometer brochure, a newsletter (6 issues), a compendium of good practices (‘Getting out of Poverty’), a magazine beyond 2010 (‘Springboard into the Future’) and an overview of key statistics;
- production of audio-visual material (one promotional clip in 23 languages, 29 short country features and news clips of key events);
- partnership with 26 European events (music, film festivals, NGO events, etc);
- promotional material (posters, bookmarks, pens, t-shirts, lanyards);
- four Campaign Ambassadors at EU level (Dr Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, Dr Lesley-Anne Knight, Mr Michał Piróg and Ms Tasha de Vasconcelos), who increased media interest and enhanced the EY2010’s profile through their active involvement and endorsement of the EY2010 messages.

EY2010 opening and closing events

The opening conference hosted in Madrid on 21 January by the Spanish Presidency was attended by 400 participants. The closing conference on 17 December in Brussels under the Belgian Presidency reviewed key achievements and highlighted selected national projects. The European Year Final Declaration (see below), adopted by the Council of Ministers, was endorsed formally on this occasion. The broad political commitment to achieve the EY2010's objectives was reflected by the participation in both events: a variety of decision-makers and stakeholders were joined by high-level representatives, including the Presidents of the European Council and the Commission, Spanish and Belgian heads of government and numerous national ministers.

Two focus weeks

Two focus weeks were organised in June and October to instil momentum by concentrating a number of EU and national activities and events over a short period, with a strong emphasis on partnership and participation.

Two year-long initiatives — Art Partner and pan-European Journalists Competition

The Art Partner Project (IN)VISIBLE (April 2010 — November 2010) encouraged art students across the EU to visualise poverty through photography. All the photos were shown on the EY2010 website and 70 were displayed at an exhibition in Brussels at the end of 2010. The Journalists Award (April 2010 — December 2010) aimed to support journalists whose work had contributed to increased awareness and broader understanding of poverty and social exclusion. Almost 1.200 articles or audiovisual reports were submitted, and both national and European winners were selected.

Eurobarometer surveys and studies

A Eurobarometer survey published in October 2009³ canvassed public opinion on policies to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion. Four waves of 'Flash' Eurobarometer surveys on public perceptions of the social impacts of the crisis were also conducted and published.

EU- level activities organised by partners

Many European activities were organised in addition to those coordinated by DG EMPL in the Commission.

- A special coalition of NGOs⁴ brought together more than 40 organisations and set up joint activities (human chain around the European Parliament, their own website www.endpoverty.eu, information exchange).

³ Special Eurobarometer No 321 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_321_en.pdf.

⁴ <http://endpoverty.eu>.

- A large number of European stakeholders developed activities for the Year, including conferences, awareness-raising events and specific advocacy work.
- The European Parliament issued several related reports, hosted the June Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, and organised a citizens' Agora on the issue in January 2011.
- The European Economic and Social Committee organised a high-level conference on poverty and social exclusion (May 2010) and set up a standing group on the EY2010 as well as several specific initiatives (People's University, hearing).
- The Committee of the Regions organised a Forum in June, and one of its political groups ran a film competition ('Poverty in Europe: Can you picture a way out?').
- European Commission Representations in participating countries provided significant input by organising many communication activities (e.g. a photo competition, outreach to disadvantaged groups, open air concerts, info stands) and participating in different discussions, debates and conferences on the themes. Europe Direct Information Centres were also actively involved in many countries.
- Within the European Commission itself, numerous DGs other than DG EMPL developed specific projects and initiatives (e.g. on health, information society, research, youth, culture, tourism, etc.).
- Ahead of the EY2010, the 2009 EU Journalists Award 'Together against discrimination' of the European Commission dedicated a Special Award to articles focusing on poverty and discrimination.

3. WHAT DID THE EUROPEAN YEAR ACHIEVE?

3.1. A firm political commitment, despite a difficult economic context

The European Year took place in a critical social context, coinciding with discussions on the future of key EU policies. Building on the impetus of the launching of the EY2010 throughout the EU, it helped create momentum, underlining the need for political commitment at the highest level.

Against this backdrop, the fight against poverty and social exclusion was acknowledged to be one of the key priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. For the first time ever, this commitment is linked to a numerical target, namely to lift 'at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020'. The final declaration of the European Year⁵ marked a further commitment to pursue and deepen these efforts.

Europe 2020 acknowledges the need for strong engagement at national level. Member States were thus invited to define a specific national target for reducing poverty and social exclusion in their National Reform Programmes. The EY2010 also contributed to domestic policy

⁵ Council Declaration on The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: Working together to fight poverty in 2010 and beyond. 3053rd Employment, Social Policy Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 6 December 2010, OJ C333/8 10.12.2010.

developments beyond Europe 2020, as a number of countries took this opportunity to develop or implement new policy initiatives, and to strengthen links with other policy themes (such as health, justice, antidiscrimination and finance).

However, while these developments represent a step forward in reinforcing the EU and Member States' commitment, they have to be seen in the light of the situation of the most vulnerable, which in many cases deteriorated in 2010.

3.2. Development of new partnerships and alliances

The European Year provided a significant incentive to strengthen partnerships and involve new players, from the local to the European level. These alliances were built primarily between stakeholders (in particular NGOs and foundations) but also involved institutional players at various levels (local authorities, academics, cultural organisations, schools, etc.).

Moreover, the EY2010 provided an impetus to overcome traditional boundaries by involving players who, although perhaps less directly engaged in addressing poverty and social exclusion, still have a critical impact (e.g. business, media, public authorities beyond social inclusion departments, etc.). In some countries the involvement of the EY2010 'Ambassadors' has had a significant role in this respect. At European level, cooperation has been strengthened with a number of key bodies and new stakeholders, as well as across departments within the European Commission. However, despite some positive examples, opportunities for strengthening links with social partners and the private sector were not fully exploited.

3.3. Meeting the need for better communication

Reaching out to a broad public and shaping perceptions of poverty were particularly challenging objectives for the EY2010. Data gathered by the communication contractor show that information on the Year reached about one tenth of Europeans through the broadcast media, helping to raise awareness of the various faces of poverty in Europe and the EU's role. The EY2010 also generated wide press coverage, both written and electronic, in particular around major events and key stages. Social media channels were also developed to reach out to a wider audience.

The initiative's impact on deconstructing stereotypes is more difficult to assess. Nevertheless, a number of key activities, such as the October 2009 EU conference 'Poverty between Reality and Perception — the communication challenge' as well as national, regional and local initiatives, gave the floor to those in poverty. They also sparked off a necessary discussion on how best to report on a complex issue by combining the interests of those in poverty with the constraints of increasingly demanding journalistic work.

Finally, the EY2010 raised awareness of the need for public institutions to communicate better, and in a different way, on social inclusion issues, to engage further with media and to reach out both to those at risk and to the general public. New approaches were tested and further developed with this in view (e.g. partnership with major events or media).

3.4. Towards greater participation by those experiencing poverty

The participation of people experiencing poverty was recognised as an important objective of the EY2010, both to encourage individual empowerment and as a more direct form of civic participation. The European Year partly lived up to expectations by giving the floor to men and women directly concerned, making their voices heard in key events (opening and closing conferences, grassroots events, popular universities) and media work (video, conference on perceptions of poverty) and enhancing their presence as participants in such events. It also supported the development of structured forms of participation, through a variety of projects developed in participating countries.

Moreover, the Year contributed to explore the link between social exclusion, poverty and discrimination. Initiatives carried out have had, to some extent, a positive impact for all groups at risk of discrimination (e.g. such as migrants, ethnic minorities, people with a disability, older people).

3.5. Complementing existing EU initiatives

The Year complemented existing EU initiatives and programmes in the field of social inclusion and reducing inequalities, such as the PROGRESS programme⁶ and the Social OMC. It provided funding opportunities for projects which were ineligible for other EU programmes and so helped reach out to a wider range of players. However, opportunities to complement other EU-funded initiatives were not fully grasped and will be further developed in the context of the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

3.6. Development of innovative approaches

A number of innovative approaches were tested during the Year: using social media for communication; engaging with journalists; advanced participatory approaches to policy planning; evidence-based social policy and social entrepreneurship. Some initiatives forged links with other policy areas, namely health, justice and finance. The impact of these innovations is potentially significant and they could be further developed. However, current budget consolidation efforts will be a significant obstacle to any scaling up.

3.7 Gender Mainstreaming

Provisions were put in place to take the gender dimension into account for example in the governance of the Year and indirect evidence suggests that gender specific issues such as single parenthood and homelessness were addressed in a balanced manner. However, the gender dimension was not strongly perceived by key 2010 players and gender disaggregated data were not systematically produced.

⁶ As illustrated by a 2010 call for project proposals on reducing health inequalities

4. THE WAY FORWARD: BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY

The impacts of the economic crisis continue. Unemployment persists at high levels and the EU still has unacceptable numbers of people living below the poverty line or on the margins of society. The very cohesion of European societies is at stake.⁷

While essential policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion are primarily in the hands of the Member States, the EU has a major role to play and must live up to expectations. It has clear competences and new instruments to support Member States and make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable. These include Europe 2020 as well as the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion,⁸ both of which have put social inclusion high on the EU agenda.

4.1. Europe 2020: from commitment to delivery

The crisis has illustrated the extent to which economic and social developments in EU Member States are interconnected. Drawing on this lesson, the EU has implemented a new working method, the European Semester, to ensure EU coordination on key policy priorities before decisions are taken at national-level. The 2011 exercise has put a strong focus on sustainable public finances and creating jobs and growth. Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis is one of the five priorities of the 2012 Annual Growth Survey⁹, whereby Member States should protect the vulnerable by further improving the effectiveness of social protection systems, implementing active inclusion strategies and ensuring access to services supporting integration in the labour market and society.

Efforts should be stepped up so that the historical commitment to reduce poverty and social exclusion by 2020 results in tangible change. In all, 26 Member States have now proposed national poverty reduction targets and highlighted their specific strategy for delivery in the National Reform Programmes which they submitted in April 2011. So far, these have however fallen short of meeting the level of ambition collectively agreed in June 2010.

4.2. The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: a framework for action

As one of the flagship initiatives within Europe 2020, the Platform highlights the Commission's agenda to step up efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, building directly on the lessons learned from the EY2010.

Promoting a partnership approach and broadening participation

One of the key objectives of the Platform is to broaden and enhance stakeholder involvement. To this end, the Stakeholders Group which was set up for the EY2010 has been maintained and extended. The Commission has also worked together with Council Presidencies to transform the Annual Round Table against Poverty and Social Exclusion into a wider Annual Convention which will take stock of progress made towards the headline target and review the implementation of activities under the Platform. The first Annual Convention took place on

⁷ Social Protection Committee, Report on the Social Dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy, 2011.

⁸ The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion, COM/2010/0758 final.

⁹ COM(2011) 815 final, Annual Growth Survey 2012

17 and 18 October 2011. With time, the Convention will provide an opportunity to strengthen and deepen cooperation with other EU institutions and bodies and strengthen the links with other policy areas, as well as with major stakeholders.

Delivering action across the policy spectrum

The Communication on the Platform proposed a set of measures in key policy areas, going beyond social inclusion *stricto sensu*. These include financial services (Commission Recommendation on access to a basic payment account¹⁰), energy, education (e.g. Commission Communication and Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving¹¹), health (launch of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on active and healthy ageing in 2011, implementation of the Communication on "Solidarity in Health: reducing health inequalities in the EU"¹²), migration and integration. It will be necessary, in particular, to step up efforts to facilitate the integration of Roma into the EU societies and to assist minorities' integration on the neighbouring countries, as set out in the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020¹³. The protection and integration of minorities, including Roma, is also particularly relevant as an indispensable part of the visa liberalisation process with the Eastern Partnership countries and of the post visa liberalisation monitoring vis-à-vis of the visa-free Western Balkans countries.

Using community funds and the ESF more efficiently

In accordance with the Budget review, the Communication on the Platform stressed that the European Social Fund should be used to sustain Member States' efforts to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives, including the poverty reduction target. Thus, the legislative package for 2014-20 Cohesion Policy adopted by the Commission on 5 October has a significantly stronger focus on social inclusion. The fight against poverty and social exclusion is recognised as one of the four thematic objectives of the European Social Fund. According to the Commission proposal¹⁴, a minimum share of 20% of the ESF would go towards social inclusion measures, including the following priorities: inclusion, the integration of disadvantaged groups, access to services, social economy and community-led development strategies. The participation of social partners and civil society will be further encouraged, as will the simplification of the delivery system.

Developing an evidence-based approach to social innovation and reform

The increasing demand for social intervention has led to a growing awareness of the need to explore new approaches to meet current and emerging social challenges, improve the cost-effectiveness of social policies and make better use of evaluation for policy-making. The Platform has therefore announced a major initiative on social innovation involving: the promotion of evidence-based social innovation through awareness-raising activities; policy

¹⁰ C(2011) 4977/4

¹¹ COM(2011)18, OJ C 191(2011)

¹² COM(2009) 567 final

¹³ An EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (COM) 2011 173 final

¹⁴ COM(2011) 607 final, Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

and financial support to projects; capacity-building for key players and further development of methodological approaches.

Stepping up policy coordination between the Member States

In line with the Social Protection Committee opinion on "reinvigorating the social OMC in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy" endorsed by the Council on 17 June 2011, there is a need to improve the visibility and impact of the Social OMC. The social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the Social OMC. Efforts will focus on enhancing mutual learning and analytical capacity, enhancing stakeholders' involvement and developing synergies with the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The EY2010 succeeded in injecting new momentum into the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Europe. At a particularly challenging time for the economy and society, it opened many people's eyes to the reality of poverty and social exclusion in Europe, while triggering the need to find innovative, more efficient programmes. It brought attention to the current and potential contributions of stakeholders and policy-makers, pointed out the significant multiplicative function of the media, and reinforced the importance of listening to the voices of men and women experiencing poverty. It also highlighted the need for political commitment at the highest level and for reaching out to people not traditionally involved in social inclusion policies. Subsequent European Years (Volunteering in 2011, Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations in 2012, and the European Year of Citizens in 2013) have close links with the themes addressed in 2010 and the lessons learned from the EY2010 could be applied in preparing and implementing them.

The focus must now shift to keeping up the momentum initiated by the Year. With this end in view, the European Commission will work together with the Council, the European Parliament and all key stakeholders to turn to account the instruments provided by the Europe 2020 strategy and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

ANNEX

EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES FROM PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES, NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING BODIES OR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATIONS

- A Belgian project to help socially excluded people gain a foothold in the labour market through tailored advice and networking.
- A bus tour around Portugal with young artists to raise public awareness of poverty and social exclusion.
- A project in the Netherlands to bring together local partnerships in 60 different communities and develop integrated strategies for tackling social exclusion in their areas.
- An Irish partnership to broadcast on the country's biggest radio station the stories of people living in poverty.
- An Austrian programme to train financial advisers to counsel people facing debts and other financial problems.
- A German project to help disadvantaged people from a migrant background to integrate into society by offering them volunteering opportunities in the local community.
- A series of regional seminars in France to highlight the responsibilities of the regional authorities in tackling poverty, allowing for the diversity of cities and regions.
- A programme in Denmark designed to help people with mental disabilities find work by training job centre staff in dealing with their specific needs.
- A campaign in Luxembourg to promote a real estate service which helps people to access affordable housing in the private sector while guaranteeing rental payments to landlords.
- An Italian supermarket which provides free basic foodstuffs to those in greatest need.
- An essay competition dedicated to the EY2010 and Spring Day was organised by the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria. The best essays were published in a brochure.
- Workshops for school children (14 - 19 year old) on the subject of "The fight against poverty and social exclusion", organised by the European Commission Office in Wales. Over 480 students attended in total.
- Information to local partners on EU social programmes targeted at improving social inclusion of the Roma and other groups at risk, organised by the Europe Direct Information Centre in Komotini, Greece.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN YEARS

The European Commission endorses the following recommendations, arising mainly from the external evaluation, for the management, planning and implementation of future European Years.

Advance planning and follow-up

- Develop arrangements for detailed programme planning, so that EU-level activity is scheduled at least one year in advance; arrange for similar advance planning in participating countries.
- Ensure that commitments are followed up, either by maintaining a reduced team to follow up the Year or by formally mandating a particular Unit in the European Commission to do so.
- At national level, strengthen links between Years that are thematically connected, by unifying the closing event of one Year with the opening event of the following Year.
- Identify possible partner events early on and establish partnerships at least six months before the start of the Year.
- Strengthen planning and coordination between all European Commission communication services before the start of the EY.

Administrative procedures

- Review arrangements for the administrative, contractual and financial management of national funding, in order to reduce management and administrative burdens within implementation bodies at both EU and national levels.
- Prepare a project promoters' manual on grant management procedures to be adapted and used by NIBs.

Communication tools

- Further develop innovative communication channels for European Years, especially social networking tools.
- Consider abandoning the principle of EU-level Ambassadors. If they are judged to be necessary, there should be a sufficient number of individuals (10-15) from a range of backgrounds, to ensure impact.
- Clarify right from the start, the respective roles of the communication contractor and the NIBs in implementing the communication campaign at national level.
- Regular contacts with the press and journalists are crucial.
- Maintain a margin of flexibility in the implementation of the communication campaign at national level, so that it can be tailored to local needs and situations.

- Use committed national ambassadors who are genuinely available and high-level officials to attract media attention in countries; develop strategic partnerships with key media players.
- Better define the roles of the European Commission Representations and media/outreach services that are based in the Member States (operated by the national governments or other organisations), like Europe Direct Information Centres, so that their input to communication activities can be further enhanced.

Stakeholder involvement

- Ensure that governance arrangements for stakeholder engagement are appropriate for managing expectations effectively; maintain a distinction between the administrative and the political.
- Allow stakeholders to take a greater part in EU-level activity by contributing to the design of the communication campaign; mutual trust and reliability are key factors here.
- From the very beginning, involve national stakeholders in designing the national programmes to ensure their full support. Give them the opportunity to provide feedback during the campaign.
- Be aware of duplication of efforts if stakeholders prefer to develop their own websites, logos and slogans.