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Poverty Convention – conclusions and results

The implementation of the Social Investment Package (SIP), giving priority to social investment and the modernisation of the welfare state, was the main focus of discussions during the Third Annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The Convention took place in Brussels on 26 and 27 November 2013 with around 700 participants from 38 countries, including representatives from Member States and candidate countries, regional and local authorities, NGOs, service providers, academics and a wide variety of actors active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Participants took stock of the on-going actions at European, national and local level, and discussed further solutions to address the increasing disparities and inequalities in Europe.

László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion commented: *"There are some signs of economic recovery, but it is far too weak to create the jobs and inclusive growth we need. With 125 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, action is urgently needed at all levels. At European level, strengthening the social dimension of the EMU should be one of our priorities"*.

The President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso signalled the priorities of the Commission in terms of tackling unemployment and pursuing social inclusion. He mentioned in particular the Annual Growth Survey for 2014 published earlier this month (see [IP/13/1064](#)), which called on Member States to improve the performance of social protection and reduce inequalities, including the gender gap. There is a need to mobilise structural funds for social inclusion, to invest on social innovation and to act at regional and local level.

The President of the European Council Hermann van Rompuy underlined the need to overcome the tension between what the EU can achieve through the Treaty and the ambitious actions needed to reach the Europe 2020 poverty target. He referred to instruments at hand such as the social clause of the Lisbon treaty, the Europe 2020 Strategy and its quantifiable objectives, the Commission's Communication on the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union ([IP/13/893](#)) and the draft Joint Employment Report ([MEMO/13/976](#)).

While seriously concerned by the current move away from meeting the Europe 2020 target of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020, participants at the Convention discussed different policy solutions developed at national and local level that can inspire policy development in Europe.

Closing the event, Commissioner Andor summarised the different initiatives planned by the Commission such as building a "Knowledge Bank" to help policymakers and experts share social policy experience, launching a pilot project on the right to housing and on homelessness prevention, and working on a proposal for reference budgets to guarantee adequate income support for people in the EU. With implementing the Social Investment Package, strengthening the social dimension of the EMU and reviewing the EU Strategy, 2014 offers the chance to reinforce Europe's potential of inclusive growth.

Together with the [Employment Package](#), the [Youth Employment Package](#) and the [White Paper on pensions](#), the [Social Investment Package](#) provides guidance on modernising welfare systems, focusing on social investment, prevention, and individualised approaches. The Commission is therefore supporting the EU Member States to implement this policy framework and restore EU Member States' potential for growth and competitiveness, jobs and social cohesion.

Support will be provided through the European Social Fund and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived will also promote social cohesion in the Union by helping to meet the poverty target. discussion on how to best use these funds, experts underlined the need for partnerships following a community-led and integrated approach, the synergies between the different funds and the importance of monitoring and evaluation.

In order to meet the target of reducing poverty, stakeholders need to be able to play an active role in implementing these new initiatives. The Convention underlined the need for partnership, cooperation and exchange to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current social policies.

Workshops and side-events at the conference addressed topical issues for promoting social investment.

Conclusions and detailed proceedings will be posted on the website of the [Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#).

For more information:

Further information on [Social Investment](#)

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