

NEWSFLASH



E-Newsletter Issue 04/2008
September 2008

Dear Member,

Please find enclosed the fourth issue of the QeC-ERAN Newsflash. As previously reported our QeC ERAN ["Open Days OFF"](#) network event is coming up soon and we hope to see you all there on the 7th October 2008.

Do take a closer look at our [feature article](#) on "gender equality in employment". Gender equality is one of the key horizontal themes of the EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs. The Lisbon Strategy defines targets in terms of participation rates for women in the labour market and also, entrepreneurship development. The achievement of such targets remains compromised by the various and numerous obstacles women encounter in the job market and in the business creation field. The article highlights some of the main issues that are being addressed in the project ["Women, Enterprise and Employment in local Development"](#) (WEED) in which QeC ERAN is involved.

Please do also make use of our website's ["members section"](#) where you will find the relevant documents for upcoming events such as the network workshops and Executive Board meetings.

Haroon Saad
Director



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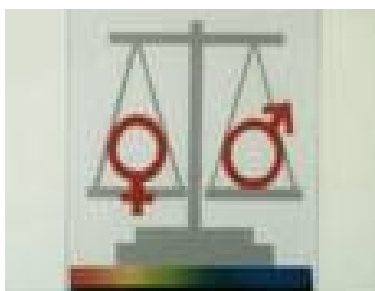
MEMBER NEWS

Feature Article

Steps towards Gender Equality in Employment: Facts, Figures and Trends at EU Level.

It is often thought that gender equality has become less of an issue in regional development, and indeed, women are clearly visible in public life and the labour market. However, gender inequality persists: gender stereotyping, the gender pay gap and occupational segregation continue to be real issues, especially in key areas identified by the Lisbon Strategy, such as employment, education, research and innovation.

The Lisbon employment targets call for a 60% employment rate for women by 2010. At present it is 55.7%, and much lower (31.7%) for older women. Moreover, despite EU legislation on equal pay, women still earn 15% less than men, a gap which is decreasing at a much lower pace than the gender gap for employment. With respect to entrepreneurship, the Commission states that women constitute, on average, 30% of entrepreneurs in the EU. They often face



greater difficulties in accessing the financial means, new technology and training needed to start a business. Another important factor related to the entrepreneurship of women is linked to the segregation in education. Despite the fact that women now represent the majority of high graduates (59%), their fields of study remain strongly stereotyped and technical studies attract only 1 female graduate in ten.

With the unequal division of domestic responsibilities remaining very marked, a key factor underlying inequalities in the labour market is the difficulties women face in reconciling their professional and private life. Today women are still the main carers of children and other dependants, and it appears

that the majority of men do not take parental leave. This is particularly a problem in the new member states, where leave arrangements encourage women to stay out of the labour market for several years, thereby creating the risk of detachment and loss of skill.

Reconciliation policies are now given more importance in the [European Employment Strategy](#), which highlights the need for services and structures to adapt faster to the situation of two working parents, in order to allow for the full potential of the workforce to be used.



Although the development, implementation and monitoring of the [flexicurity](#) policies tend to tackle this issue, labour flexibility is also having a disproportionately large impact on women. It is important that flexicurity policies take account of their different impacts on women and men, and avoid stressing the flexibility aspect for women and the security one for men too strongly. Women are still likely to have shorter and more interrupted careers and therefore fewer rights than men, which increases the risk of poverty, especially for single mothers or older women. The EU advocates social protection systems that can ensure that these women have access to adequate benefits, in particular when they retire.

EU policies in relation to [equal opportunities](#) can be seen to have progressed in three stages: the 1970s were characterised by legislation for equal treatment, the '80s by positive action interventions, and the '90s by mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming means taking into account, at the planning stage, the possible effects of policies and measures on the respective situation of men and women.

Member States began working with common EU objectives to combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2000. They are expected to mainstream gender in their National Action Plans. In the process for the modernisation of

pension systems, which has existed at EU level since 2001, gender equality is also an important element; several Member States are adapting their systems in the light of increased labour market participation of women.

In 2006 the European Commission published a framework for the future development of policies to support and promote gender equality: '[the Roadmap for equality between men and women](#)'. It identified six priority areas for EU action on gender equality over a five year period through to 2010, each with a series of objectives and actions designed to build on and revive existing strategy. The reconciliation of professional and private life alongside the equal economic independence for women and men are two of the key objectives.

Although the implementation of the measures announced in the Roadmap started only in 2007, the EC's own [Report on Equality between women and men – 2008](#), gives some idea of how far things have progressed, and what Member States and the Commission feel still needs attention. It was the first of the annual reports to cover the enlarged European Union of 27 States and it gives some indication of agreement amongst Member States.

The Report identifies five areas where special attention still needs to be focused. These are:



- Creating more and better jobs for women in the new cycle of the European Strategy for Growth and Employment.
- Including a gender perspective in all aspects of job quality.
- Improving both the supply and quality of services which help to reconcile professional and private life for both men and women.
- Tackling stereotypes in education, employment and the media, and emphasising the role of men and women in promoting equality.
- Developing tools to assess the impact of policies from the gender stereotypes.

Gender mainstreaming is also a key element of the [EU Structural Funds Programmes](#). These play an important role in addressing many of the priority areas identified in the "Road for equality between men and women". The Programs encourage regional development activities to take into account the needs of women and men, in order to build awareness of gender equality into regeneration and local economic development: gender mainstreaming needs to become a key tool for local development actors.

Funding for key actions was envisaged to come from a multitude of sources, but Structural Funds such as EFF and EAFRD (2007 – 2013) have turned out to be the major source of

funding. These include a focus on the target of achieving the Barcelona targets on childcare (childcare to at least 90% of children between 3 and school age and to at least 33% of children under 3).

Previous programmes have demonstrated that partnerships play an important part in mainstreaming, as they bring together organisations and individuals with expertise concerning the needs of men and women, and experience of collecting data and engaging individuals and groups in communities.

For this reason QeC-ERAN is involved in an URBACT project called [Women Enterprise, Employment in Local Development \(WEED\)](#). WEED aims at creating an exchange of experience between 9 cities around three main issues:

- Women and entrepreneurship
- Women in science, research and knowledge economy
- Gender equality in the workplace and labour market for disadvantage women groups

This project is lead by the city of Celje and will run until October 2010.

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Network Developments

Staff developments

Janneke Draaisma from the Netherlands has joined our staff in July. She will be assisting our



communications manager and also become the new coordinator for the European Social Inclusion Platform (ESIP). Janneke studied a Master's in European Studies

at the International School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Amsterdam.

Valeria Schirru from Sardinia, Italy, has also started working at QeC-ERAN

this summer. She studied Political Science in Rome, followed by a Master's in European Studies at the free University of Brussels (ULB).



She is a project assistant for Women, Enterprise and Employment in local Development (WEED).



Marika Heilimo from Canada has joined us at the beginning of this month for a one-year student work placement. She studies European Business and International Business

Management between the Metropolia University

of Helsinki and the University of Wolverhampton. She will be working on various projects.

Executive Board meeting

The next QeC ERAN Executive Board meeting will take place on 8 October 2008 in Brussels to coincide with the network event "Open Days Off". Amongst other things participants will discuss the upcoming 20 anniversary of QeC ERAN in 2009.

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Upcoming Events

QeC-ERAN event "Open Days Off", Café Debates and Non-VIP reception Brussels, 7 October 2008

"Open Days" has now established itself in the annual Brussels institutional agenda. It has a programme of workshops held over 3 days in various institutional or representational offices in Brussels. Over 5000 people participate in the event. The event is jointly sponsored by the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and is co-ordinated by the CoR and DG Regio. This year's title is "Regions and cities in



a challenging world", and it will take place from 6-9 October in Brussels.

QeC-European Regeneration Areas Network will use the opportunity to invite OPEN DAYS participants to the event with a difference. The aim is to stimulate debate and discussion, to network and have a good time.

We are proposing a café style debate and party. This will begin with a series of three "tables/spaces" where participants can move around and take part in a series of rolling debates on a number of issues that will be linked to the goal of the programme, BUT that will be less "institutionally" determined and thus provide a more "bottom-up" perspective to the EU agenda. During the course of the first part of the evening there will be a series of 4 short debates. Current themes include:

The themes for debate will include:

- The failings of EU Regional policy?
- Have we a balanced approach to growth and cohesion?
- Were the Irish right to say NO?
- Where is social innovation in the EU approach to Innovation?
- Is EU policy for climate change effective?

Speakers include:

- Gyula Hegyi MEP
- Jan Olbrycht MEP

- Eivind Hoff – Environmental Foundation Bellona
- Harris Beider from the Institute of Community Cohesion
- Professor Jan Vranken from the University of Antwerp
- Anthony Coughlan from the Irish National Platform

The second part of the evening will be for networking and having fun.

The event will take place on **Tuesday 7 October 2008** starting from 18.30 until 24.00. Address: Beursschouwbourg, Rue Auguste Orts Nr. 20-28, Brussels. Please register beforehand with Annachiara Pecchini at apecchini@qec-eran.org.

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Other upcoming events

Agenda

<p>30 September – 2 October: 1st European Conference: "Minority Ethnic and Migrant Elders across Europe - from Challenges to Opportunities", Bonn</p> <p>1-2 October: CECOP conference:</p>



" Worker ownership: the synthesis between entrepreneurial development and social inclusion ", Brussels
6-9 October: Open days 2008 – 6th European Week of Regions and Cities, Brussels
15-16 October: 7th Round table on poverty and social exclusion , Marseilles
29 October: DG SANCO Conference " Delivering for Tomorrow's European Consumers ", Brussels
5-7 November: EUROCHILD Annual Conference: " Including children: a child rights approach to child well-being ", Budapest
13-14 November: FEANTSA Annual European Conference: " People who are homeless can be housed ", Cardiff City Hall

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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Current Project Update

**European
Regeneration
Exchange (ELRFE)**

**Local
Forums**



The ELRFE project has intended to introduce a methodology that would create a mechanism to

give citizens a voice so that they take part, collaborate and get involved in matters which concern them with regard to the urban development of the areas in which they live, engaging, at the same time, with EU policies and programmes around the same issue. This engagement will eventually create a link between the citizens and the European integration process, making them feel part of the European project, highlighting the common values they share with other EU citizens and building a common sense of identity.

In terms of bringing together people from across Europe to share and exchange experience, opinions and values, this project has created an online exchange between over 150 participants from 4 different Member States, with a view to providing a framework for the exchange of experience and good practice in relation to area based regeneration policies which are supported via EU funds and programmes.

Although the objective of full involvement of citizens in public life is yet far from reached, the ELRFE project has contributed to this objective by creating an effective mechanism to engage citizens at a local level engaging them at the same time with other EU citizens and EU policies and programmes.



For more information please contact ELRFE coordinator [Tamara Hodas Garcia](#)

Women, enterprise and employment in local development (WEED) – Urbact network

The WEED project aims to establish a network of 10 cities, which will address the theme of “Women, Enterprise and Employment in local Development”. The network will focus on three key issues:

- Women and entrepreneurship
- Gender inequalities in the labour market
- Women in research and knowledge economy

After the first Steering Group Meeting, partners set up the Local Support Groups and completed the Local Mapping in order to identify three main issues within the partnership, which will constitute the focus of the Phase II application.

These will include the Baseline study where the Lead Expert reports on the EU state of the art in relation to the project’s theme and the partners’ Local Mappings. The 2nd Steering Group Meeting took place in Brussels on the 22-23 of September in order to discuss the results of the Baseline Study and to identify actions to

be taken during the Implementation Phase of the project.

For more information please contact [Annachiara Pecchini](#)

European Managers Regeneration Network



ERMN is an online network of actors from the public, private and third sectors who are actively involved in urban regeneration.

ERMN is now being transferred to a “QeC-ERAN Live” space, an interactive online platform on the themes and activities that QeC is undertaking.

The new image of ERMN will include the three Urbact II projects in which QeC collaborates: Active Ageing, Building Healthy Communities and WEED. Each project will have its own Community of Practice where all the partners of the project, as well as participants of the Local Support Groups, will be able to interact.

For more information please visit the website: www.ermn.eu or contact [Maria Elena Bragaglia](#).



ESIP

The next ESIP Steering Board will meet in Prague on the 1st of October to discuss the further development of the platform. The discussion will focus on increasing the network and making its activities more widely known to interested stakeholders. As the website and the ESIP newsletter will be the main tools for achieving this goal, ideas for their elaboration will be presented. Petra Kotaskova has finished her work as ESIP officer. ESIP Communications will from now on be handled by Janneke Draaisma (see staff development section).



For more information please contact Janneke Draaisma at info@esip-platform.net or visit the [ESIP website](#)

Building Healthy Communities - Urbact

The main objective of the Building Healthy Communities network is to establish a transnational exchange programme for the transfer of policy, the planning and practice of urban health policies and to provide capacity building for professional development in the field of urban health.



The project has held its second steering group meeting from 15-17 September in the Piedmont

Regional Office, Brussels. Amongst the participants were the 10 city partners, representatives of the Managing Authorities for Belfast, Torino and Lecce as well as representatives from DG Sanco and DG Region. The main purpose of the meeting was to finalize the application form to be submitted to the Urbact secretariat in order for the network to enter into the second phase (implementation phase) of the project. If successful, project activities will start in January/February of next year.

For more information please contact [Isabella Haaf](#) or visit the [project website](#)

Active AGE – Urbact network

The second Steering Group Meeting for the Urbact II thematic network Active-AGE took place in Rome on 25th and 26th of September 2008.

The ten partners of the thematic network, discussed, among other things, the baseline study, methodologies and learning activities, budget, trans-national exchange, etc. The meeting especially focused on the three main clusters which will





serve as main themes of the trans-national exchange programme:

- **Older people in employment/enterprise** (retention; re-entry; support services, etc)
- **Older people and social exclusion** (new technology; health; home care; housing, etc)
- **Intergenerational solidarity** (impact of changing demographics; intergenerational exchange)

For more information please contact [Lola Uña Cárdenas](#).

INTI

The Second Peer Review Workshop on Access for Migrants to Education, Health and Housing took place in Lecce from 24th till 27th of June.

The feedback from the First Peer Review Workshop allowed us to prepare a more balanced agenda in terms of presentations, interactive sessions and the discovering of local realities. The workshop started with the presentation of external success stories in the fields of Education (Netherlands), Health (UK) and Housing (European City Network CLIP) followed by discussions. In the afternoon participants had the opportunity to meet the

members of the Lecce Local Action Group and learn about their particular actions in the field of Integration.

The second day was dedicated to brainstorming following the first day's input. More than four hours of the morning session were dedicated to deepening the reflexion and discussion on each of the three themes: Education, Health and Housing. In order to maximise the efficiency of this session all the participants were divided into three working groups.

A final report of the workshop will be ready by the end of October this year.

The next Third Peer Review Workshop on the themes of Intercultural Dialogue and Participation will take place in Brussels on 25-27 of November 2008. During this event we will devote a time slot to the presentation of the first version of the website which is the main outcome of this project.

For more information please contact Yamina Guidoum at yguidoum@qec-eran.org or Karolina Rachwal at krachwal@qec-eran.org



MILE

The Second MILE Peer Review Workshop on the "Active Inclusion in the labour market of ethnic minorities" took place in CHARLOIS, Rotterdam from 8th till 11th of June 2008.

Under the heading "**community action in the field**" participants were welcomed at the Cleopatra Women Centre which is offering migrant women a safe place to gather and develop their self-esteem, their language skills etc. This was followed by a presentation from Patricia Van der Vorst from ID PLEIN-association, who presented the 3D project establishing a one to one approach in the social inclusion programmes founded by Municipality's Individual Reintegration Operation.

- **Interesting and innovative case studies** were presented by project partners and other European organisations involved in the issue of Active Inclusion in the Labour Market.

- **The European perspectives in the field of Active Inclusion** were brought to participants by Sue Bird from the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, who has presented the new tools for the local actions in the field of Active Inclusion in the Labour Market. These were Local Employment Development (LED) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

- **Example of the involvement of local policy** "Active Inclusion" was presented by the hosts. Aat Brandt – Head of the Social Policy department of Rotterdam - presented the results of the Employment and Social Assistance Act implemented since 2004, which brought a lot of possibilities for a public-private cooperation in terms of Active Inclusion and which seems to have quite positive results up till now.

- **Working groups.** During the whole afternoon of the first day of conference the participants were divided into small groups and discussed the difficulties and opportunities of the Direct Actions in the field of Social Inclusion and Support services.

Finally, in order to capitalize the fresh outcomes of the workshop, each partner drafted a potential action plan in the field of Active Inclusion, which will be implemented by the Local Action Learning Set.

For more information please contact Yamina Guidoum at yguidoum@qec-eran.org or Karolina Rachwal at krachwal@qec-eran.org

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EU NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS



EU News

French Presidency presents its migration pact

During an informal Council meeting on 7-8 July in Cannes, the French Presidency presented its proposal for a "European Pact on Immigration and Asylum", which is expected to be adopted during the European Council in October 2008.

This draft revolves around 5 major themes:

- organising legal immigration based on Members States' needs and capacity to welcome migrants;
- combating irregular immigration (including strengthened cooperation between the Member States);
- improving the effectiveness of border controls (through the strengthening of FRONTEX);
- developing an asylum system for Europe;
- developing a partnership with countries of origin and transit.

One central proposal calling for compulsory "integration contracts" for immigrants has been removed from the text following among others Spain's pressure.

While a broad-ranging pact has the potential to lead to a more coherent, rights-based and integrated approach, EAPN is concerned that the primary focus will be on combating irregular migration, rather than strengthening the fundamental rights of all migrants, including undocumented ones.

In addition, the increasingly selective approach to labour migration raises major concerns with regard to the EU's capacity to ensure the social inclusion of all migrants.

Read the [results of the informal meeting](#)

See also:

- The European Network against Racism's statement: "[The Immigration Pact: Can the French Presidency's Immigration Pact contribute to a Europe without racism?](#)"



President Sarkozy promises the European Parliament: the social dimension will be a priority for the French Presidency

On 10 July, President Sarkozy addressed the European Parliament to present the priorities of the French Presidency.

On the social dimension of Europe, he stated that "there are social directives which Mr Barroso did well to put on the agenda - work council, temporary work- basic rules that need to be required from everyone in Europe. The French presidency will make that a priority too".

Read the [European Parliament report on President Sarkozy's speech and MEPs reactions](#)

Social issues in the French presidency agenda

On 1 July, France took over the EU Presidency for the next six months. This also implies the start of the coming 18-month presidential trio with the Czech Republic and Sweden.

Social policy features on their joint programme, which covers the period from July 2008 to December 2009, as the presidency trio is of the opinion that after Ireland's no Europe has to become more concrete, protective and closer to its citizens.

The **development of the renewed Social Agenda** will be the most important social project of the French Presidency. The aim is to establish the broad social guidelines for the years 2008 to 2013. In a paper on this topic prepared for the French presidency, four axes are identified: a return to employment, flexicurity, solidarity in the internal market, and the fight against discrimination and poverty.

The renewed social agenda, which will be debated by the informal Employment and Social Affairs Council on 10 and 11 July 2008, will tie in with two other debates: the mid-term review of the financial perspectives and the future of the Lisbon Strategy beyond 2010.

Other social items that will be discussed during the French presidential term are the **temporary employment** and **working time** directives, the **supplementary pensions** directive, a draft directive and communication on **combating discrimination**, the debate on **information to patients**, and a new proposal on **cross-border healthcare** and the **liberalisation of the health care market**.

On employment, the French Presidency will report on the work of the **flexicurity mission** undertaken in May and try to have adopted **principles on Active Inclusion**.

The Presidency also intends to take forward analysis of the **legal framework for**



economic services of general interest (ESGI) and social services of general interest (SSGI).

The French presidency website (calendar of events, etc.) is available at: <http://www.eu2008.fr>

European Parliament to adopt report on fundamental rights in the EU

On July 14th, the Committee on Civil Liberties Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) within the European Parliament discussed the draft Report on Fundamental Rights in the EU 2004-2007 (Rapporteur Giusto Catania, GUE/NGL).

The report puts for the first time a strong focus on economic and social rights. The specific section on poverty calls among others for "genuine integration of the social dimension into all EU policies", for an "EU instrument designed to endow the Member States with a high level of social standards guaranteeing access for all to decent levels of income and high-quality general-interest services", and recalls that "universal access to general-interest services, including affordable energy, is an important social right".

It also underlines the need for participation of people experiencing poverty, as "action to combat poverty must be taken in partnership

with the most disadvantaged population groups".

The draft report can be found by clicking [here](#) ([French version here](#)). The final report is expected to be adopted in plenary in December.

European Parliament to adopt report on partnership within cohesion policy

The European Parliament's draft initiative report on "Governance and partnership at national and regional levels and a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy" (rapporteur Jean Marie Beaupuy, ALDE, FR) which was discussed by the Regional Affairs Committee on 16th July represents a positive step in recognizing the current gaps and the need to move beyond rhetoric.

Noting that the "requirement to hold public consultations on the issue of programming (...) and that the efforts to involve the public in the preparations for the operational programmes for the period 2007-2013 were not entirely successful", the draft report calls on the European Commission to draw up an assessment of the implementation of partnership by the Member States, as well as a guide designed to improve the current situation.

It also calls on Member States and managing authorities to make sure that partnership



covers all the phase of structural funds programming. EAPN believe the report should be strengthened in the sense of a more equal partnership by mentioning more explicitly the role of civil society. MEPs had an opportunity to propose amendments until 21 July, and the report should be adopted by the REGI committee on 9th September.

Partnership between public authorities, social partners and civil society play a major role to ensure better transparency, democracy and outreach to potential project promoters within structural funds. However, much remains to be done to ensure that such partnership really takes place in practice, and social NGOs are concerned that no major step forward has been taken for this new programming period.

The report can be found by clicking [here](#), all languages versions are available on the [committee's website](#).

Treaty of Lisbon: What's next?

After the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish voters on June 12, most other Member States have made clear that they have no interest in reopening negotiations although a Eurobarometer survey shows that Irish no-voters expected exactly this.

Council President, Nicolas Sarkozy, has nevertheless indicated that there might be

room for manoeuvre in adding protocols. While the EU heads of states and governments are expected to discuss the issue again in their October summit, the way forward is not likely to be agreed before the end of the year. The UK and the Netherlands have meanwhile ratified the Treaty.

Find the [results of the Eurobarometer post-referendum survey in Ireland](#)

"No Modern European Democracy without Gender Equality": European Women's Lobby launches 50-50 Campaign

In view of the European elections taking place in June 2009 and given that a number of EU top jobs will be filled in the course of the year 2009, the European Women's Lobby is launching a European-wide cross-party Campaign with the support of Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission and the ministerial chair of the Council of Women World Leaders.

The EWL campaign aims at putting pressure on political parties and decisions makers to make sure that women are equally represented in political parties' lists for the 2009 European Parliament elections, in the next European Commission and in all top political posts.



The first step of the EWL campaign is to gather the support of high level personalities from all European countries, political parties and all walks of life for the Campaign Call for Action. The EWL is therefore in the process of collecting support from personalities for its Campaign prior to the launch in September 2008.

If you want to support the EWL Campaign, please contact Cécile Gréboval at the EWL Secretariat: greboval@womenlobby.org

European Parliament supports 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

On 17 June the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The report reinforces the European Commission's proposal on a number of points, in particular by strengthening the Year's objectives (increasing the focus on rights, participation and political commitment), strengthening its thematic focus (to mention active inclusion, access to resources and services) and improving references to the participation of people experiencing poverty and civil society.

Yet EAPN is concerned that following negotiations with the Council, the Commission's

initial proposal has been watered down with regard to governance and dialogue with NGOs. As a consequence, the Commission expressed its commitment "underline the importance of facilitating access by all NGOs, including small and medium-sized organisations" in a statement entailed in the resolution.

A final agreement is expected with the Council in the coming weeks.

[Read the full text of the EP resolution](#)

European Council conclusions: what's in it for social Europe?

Heads of State met on the 19 and 20 June and discussed two main items: the consequences of and follow-up to the Irish 'No' to the Lisbon Treaty, and the policy implications of high food and oil prices.

A summary of conclusions relevant to Social NGOs:

- **Lisbon Treaty:** The 27 Member States decided that more time is needed to analyse the situation. In other terms, no concrete action is to be expected on that issue until 15 October 2008. However, the Council called for the ratification process to continue in other Member States.



- **Migration:** The Council emphasized the importance of combating the 'pull factors' of illegal migration and establishing sanctions against employers of illegal migrants. The Council called for intensifying work on highly qualified migrants. It also called for fighting terrorism more efficiently.
- **High food and oil prices:** While mentioning that this concerns more specifically low-income households, the Council decided that measures taken by Member States to alleviate the impact of rocketing food and energy prices should be short-term and targeted, to avoid "disturbing price signals and causing broad-based second-round effects on wages and prices".
- **Roma population:** The Council asks the European Commission to take this issue into account in the revised Social Agenda and will follow that up at the October Council meeting.

Read the [Conclusions of the Council](#)

Commission adopts common principles for immigration

On 17 June the Commission adopted a Communication, which puts forward 10

Common Principles to curb illegal immigration and avoid shortages of skilled labour by minimising the number of immigrants staying illegally in the EU and ensuring that Europe has enough people of working age.

The European Commission aims to establish a European Centre for Migration Policy as early as autumn 2008. A particular focus is to be placed on specific instruments for utilising research findings for the alignment of policy and the drawing up of specific measures.

Methods, best practice examples and databases on the demographic, economic, social, legal and political aspects of migration will be assembled and made available to all parties involved.

Download the [Common 10-point Strategy](#)

The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being is adopted

During a high-level conference on mental health on the 12-13 June 2008, a very weak European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being was adopted.

The [pact](#) is a follow-up to the consultation (Green Paper) on mental health which started in autumn 2005. Although most of the contributions highlighted the need for further,



stronger actions on mental health, the Pact remains rather weak and does not present any concrete actions to be taken by European decision makers, Member States or even stakeholders.

It calls on Member States to participate in its implementation, on the European Commission and Member States to establish a mechanism to exchange information, work together, and to organise a series of conferences. The European Commission is also to draft a Council recommendation on the matter for 2009.

[More information on Mental Health](#)

Commission launches lobbyists register - Major European NGOs disappointed

The European Commission launched on 23 June a voluntary register for lobbyists seeking to influence its policymaking.

Eight large European sectors of public interest organizations united in the EU Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG) expressed their disappointment arguing that the register is weak and fundamentally flawed.

Fintan Farrell, president of the CSCG and director of EAPN commented: "This flawed register gives the impression that the Commission is unwilling to improve lobbying transparency at EU level. The European

Commission expressed a commitment to "ensure that the Union is open to public scrutiny".

"A meaningful public scrutiny can only occur if the provided information is relevant and comparable", he continued. "How can the Commission expect that EU citizens trust Brussels if it fails to ensure basic transparency about EU lobbyists? What we need is a real transparency register that will require all lobbyists to disclose their names, budgets and lobbying expenditure", Farrell concluded.

[More information on the lobbyists register](#)

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Publications

What are the Europeans' social expectations? – Commission releases new Eurobarometer survey

A Eurobarometer survey published recently and entitled "Expectations of European citizens regarding the social reality in 20 years' time" reveals that almost half of the interviewees (49%) thought that life would be worse compared to what it is now. Less than four out of 10 European citizens (38%) anticipated that



life in their country would be better in 20 years' time.

Moreover seven Europeans in ten believe that young people's chances will depend less on their family and social background, opportunities at work will be more equal for women and men.

However eight in ten Europeans think that social inequality will increase in their countries and 57% think that people will earn less because of competition on the part of emerging countries. With regard to the political answers 9 Europeans in 10 think that political leaders must act to protect the environment, help those who dedicate time to the defence of social issues more and prevent the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

[Download the survey](#)

"Homelessness in the New Member States": FEANTSA's new magazine is out!

The summer 2008 edition of Homeless in Europe focuses on the issue of homelessness in Europe's New Member States, the twelve countries that have most recently joined the EU.

What the majority of these new members have in common is that they were under Soviet

domination for fifty years. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, they have experienced significant socio-economic and political changes, transitioning from planned economies to free-market models.

The far-reaching reforms and political liberalisation that have taken place have radically transformed institutional structures, including social services, and new solutions have had to be found to old and new problems.

[Download the magazine](#)

New Training manual for diversity management

This training manual for diversity management has been prepared for the European Commission in the framework of the "Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Training VT 2006/009" project, set up and funded by the European Commission.

The training manual provides concepts and practical tools which can help companies to try out or deepen their understanding about diversity management

[Download the manual](#)



Eurobarometer puts spotlight on discrimination in the EU

As a follow up of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, the European Commission just published a new Eurobarometer survey on Discrimination in the EU.

The findings from this survey provide a good insight into the perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and awareness of discrimination and inequality in the European Union in 2008.

In the report the six legally prohibited forms of discrimination in the EU are examined: discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, age, disability and sexual orientation.

Download the [Eurobarometer survey](#)

Households spend most on housing and food according to Household Budget Survey 2005 in the EU27

According to the Household Budget Survey 2005, which provides a detailed breakdown of the consumption expenditure of households by socio-economic aspects, a third of household expenditure in the EU27 in 2005 went on housing, including utilities and furniture

(33.1%), and almost a fifth on food, beverages and tobacco (19.4%).

Households with lowest income spend 60% of their expenditure on food and housing, compared with 45% for households with highest income. The figures were published by Eurostat on 19 June, just as the European Council was examining the current increases in the prices of food and fuel.

[Find the First analysis of the results](#)

European Commission publishes study on situation of social and health services in the EU

The European Commission has published the long-awaited synthesis report of a study on the situation of social and health services in the EU.

The study is part of the consultation process on social services launched by the Commission in 2006. It was commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to a consortium led by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna.

Download the [synthesis report of the study](#)



“Use the full potential of the EU’s anti-discrimination legislation”, says Fundamental Rights Agency in its first Annual Report

The potential of the strong European Union legislation against racial discrimination remains largely unexploited in many EU Member States.

The Fundamental Rights Agency’s Annual Report 2008, presented on 24 June to the European Parliament, provides ample evidence that racist violence and discriminatory behaviour persist across the EU.

The report also finds that in many countries these phenomena are not yet effectively addressed through the means that the EU’s anti-discrimination legislation offers.

Download [the report](#)

European Policy Centre report on the economic value of the non-profit sector for society

The European Policy Centre (EPC) has issued the report of its Policy Dialogue on “Demonstrating the economic value of the non-profit sector for society” which took place on 12 June 2008.

According to the speakers at this event, the non-profit sector is growing in every country and employs 14% of the national workforce in some EU Member States. Despite this, surprisingly little is known about its contribution to the economy. They underlined that the EU must “get serious” about ensuring that civil society’s economic contribution is recognised and all Member States - and Eurostat - should produce ‘satellite accounts’ to measure its economic value.

Download [the report](#)

FRA Report on Homophobia in the EU: Wider powers and greater measures needed to tackle homophobia

Equal protection by EU anti-discrimination law remains an ideal not a fact for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals (LGBT) living in many parts of the EU. Greater legislative protection and wider support within the EU is required.

Legal analysis covering the EU 27 released on 30 June by the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) identifies differences in treatment and protection by the law and a lack of full and equal enjoyment of rights in areas of EU competence particularly with regard to same sex partnerships.



The report finds that in 18 out of 27 EU Member States, any artificial “hierarchy” of those facing discrimination has been disregarded and members of the LGBT community enjoy legal protection and rights in the areas of employment, access to public goods and services, housing and social benefits.

Download [the report](#)

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