

Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion

Survey Report

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1 Basic Information

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), through its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform, conducted a survey to assess the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy between mid-February and May 6, 2013.¹

More than 80 million people in the EU are facing the risks and adverse effects of poverty. One in four of them are children and eight percent are among the working population. At the same time the Europe 2020 Strategy sets the goal to reduce poverty and social exclusion by 20 million by 2020.²

The survey conducted by the CoR and summarised in this report seeks to assess the effects and value added achieved through the actions under the flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAPSA) from the perspective of local and regional authorities. In addition, it aims to provide a first assessment of the role and utility of the recent Social Investment Package (SIP).

The survey is also part of a broader monitoring and assessment exercise of all seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives, which the CoR launched on 8 October 2012. The results of these individual assessments will provide the backdrop for seven conferences – one for each flagship initiative assessment – that will subsequently feed into the contribution of the Committee of the Region to the EU Commission’s mid-term review of the strategy due in 2014.

The present survey report is based on 37 responses³ from 15 EU Member States (Figure 1) and its findings will be presented on 29 May 2013 in Brussels.

¹ The questionnaire and basic background information can be found at <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/MonitoringFlagships/Pages/European-Platform-against-Poverty-and-Social-Exclusion.aspx>.

² See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catID=961&langId=en>.

³ The results presented in this draft final report are based on 36 responses. The last response will be included in the final report.

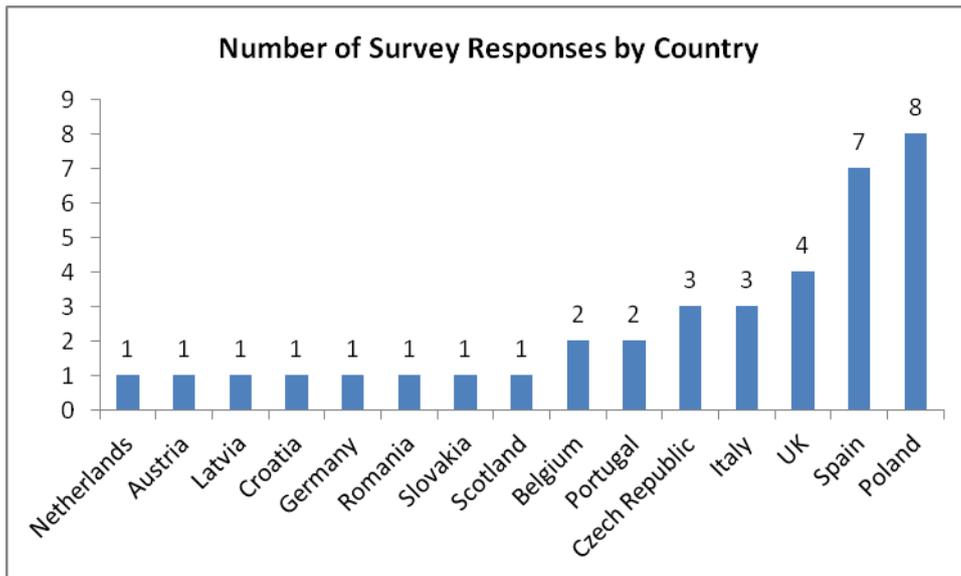


Figure 1: The number of responses received by EU Member State

The majority of responses came from or on behalf of regions (35%), followed by cities, towns and municipalities (32%) and counties/provinces (19%). One response was submitted by an association of local and regional authorities (COSLA), a second from a network of organisations promoting socio-economic initiatives and activities in 7 EU countries (European Social Network) and a third from a European street workers network. Just under half of the 37 responses received (46%) state that they are members of the Committee of the Region’s Monitoring Platform for the Europe 2020 Strategy.

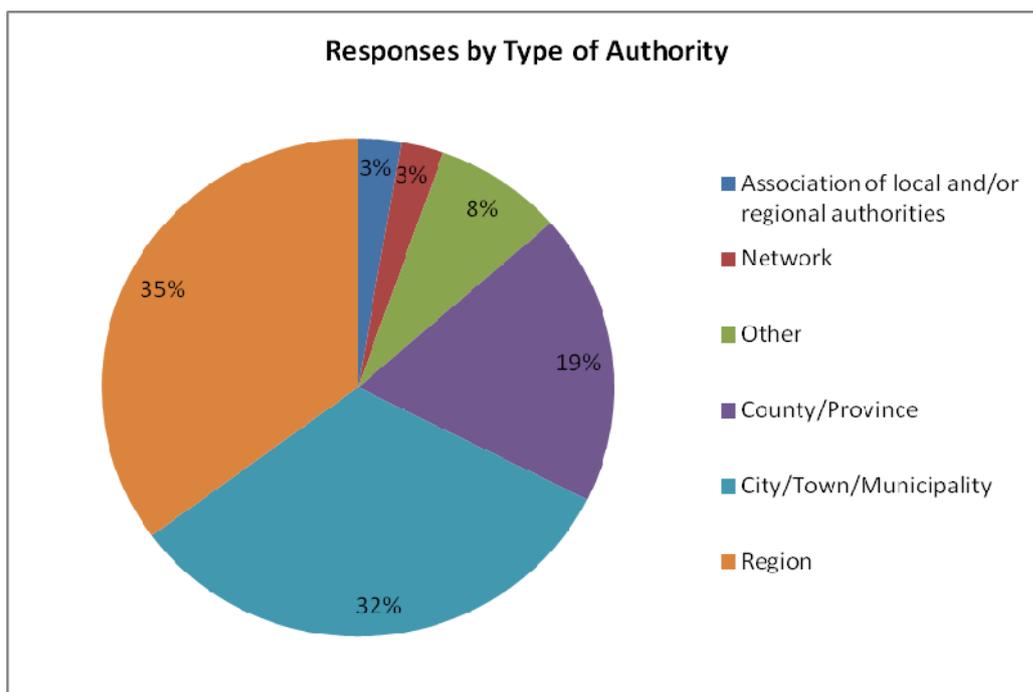


Figure 2: Survey responses by type of authority. Note: Other includes associations of local and regional authorities and the European P'ACTS Network, an association of organisations promoting socio-economic initiatives and activities in 7 EU countries

The survey report is organised into four main blocks (sections 3 to 6 in the report) in accordance with the blocks of questions included in the survey questionnaire. These blocks are:

- **Policy challenges and responses at regional and local levels.** The questions in this block address the main challenges facing the respondents' administrations; coherence between EU and national aims and targets as well as the respondents'; the type of actions implemented and the use of additional indicators/targets.
- **Relevance of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAPSE) for the respondent's city or region.** This block of questions asks respondents about the objectives and lines of actions that are most relevant to their city or region and the extent to which they have led to setting more ambitious policy goals at regional or local level. This block of questions also addresses the relevance of the new Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted by the EU Commission on 13 February 2013 and what the strengths and weaknesses of the EPAPSE flagship initiative are and what specific changes to the flagship initiative the respondents would suggest following the Europe 2020 mid-term review in 2014.
- **Relevance of country policies to respondent's city or region.** Here, it is of interest to gauge whether the NRP adequately respond to the needs of the respondents' territories in the policy areas covered by the EPAPSE initiative, whether they had an opportunity to contribute to the NRP's drafting in this area, and what changes they would suggest to make in the next 2013 NRP.
- **Policy and funding issues.** The last block of questions concerns the sources of funding available to the respondent's organisation/authority to finance the actions under EPAPSE, specifically the role of the European Structural Funds. In light of the economic difficulties and consolidation of fiscal households in many Member States, the questionnaire also asks whether any EPAPSE-related programmes, actions, or initiatives have been jeopardised by cut-backs in funding addresses the implementation of the Flagship initiative. This block also asks about the respondents' direct or indirect involvement in the preparation of the forthcoming Partnership Agreement and how poverty issues should be addressed in it. Any additional comments could also be provided here.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a brief summary of the context for European anti-poverty policies. Sections 3 to 6 summarise the responses for each of the four blocks of questions received. First, the general findings are given before each question is analysed

individually. Examples and comments were selected to support the statements made. These examples are chosen according to both clarity and to demonstrate variation both in terms of geography and content (e.g., types of programmes used to address the challenges posed by poverty). Conclusions are presented in section 7. Supplemental material, such as the list of respondents and list of actions and initiatives, is included in the appendix.

2 Overview of Key Issues in the Field

2.1 Policy History and Context

In the mid-1990s the EU began to extend the conventional concept of **income poverty** to include aspects of **social exclusion** and the **non-monetary dimension of poverty and labour market exclusion**. This allowed the development and utilisation of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction that takes into account the complexity and diversity of situations and priorities across the EU.

Since its creation the EU has created a robust legislative framework in the field of social, employment and social inclusion policies, concerning in particular working conditions, social policy information and consultation, health and safety, mobility, social security, gender equality and non-discrimination.

In 1993, the Social Protocol to the Maastricht Treaty included “integration of persons excluded from the labour market”. “Combating social exclusion” was first mentioned by the Nice Treaty in 2003 (both now part of Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU). “Inclusion National Action Plans” were created and joint reports published in 2001 and 2003 until they were integrated in a new ‘National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion’ covering the period 2008-2010. Since 2011, reporting on the Europe 2020 headline targets is part of the European Semester and is included in National Reform Programmes (NRP).

Addressing **social exclusion** became a general objective of EU policy with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 (Article 3, Treaty of the European Union) and Article 4 of the TFEU states that social policy is a shared competence of the Union and Member States "for the aspects defined in this Treaty". Article 9 TFEU introduces a horizontal obligation to take a "high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, [...]" into account, when defining and implementing other Union policies and actions.

The shared competence is elaborated in Article 153 TFEU, which states that the Union shall "support and complement" the activities of the member states with regard to [...] "(h) the integration of persons excluded from the labour market [...]" and (j) "the combating of social exclusion [...]". For these and other issues, the article invites the Council and Parliament to adopt "measures designed to encourage cooperation between Member States through initiatives

aimed at improving knowledge, developing exchanges of information and best practices, promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States". There remains, however, a lack of direction regarding the introduction of "minimum requirements for gradual implementation" for combating social exclusion.

The concept of **active inclusion** was defined in a European Commission Recommendation in 2008⁴ as "policy coordination among local, regional, national and EU authorities in the light of their particular roles, competences and priorities" and a mix between the three pillars of income support, labour market and social services with a view to maximise synergies. However, according to a study by the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion⁵, implementation of active inclusion policies has been "extremely limited" in the majority of Member States with only five countries having such policies for people able to work and three for people unable to work.

The EU Commission has increased **stakeholder involvement** through biannual stakeholder dialogues since 2011 and annual conventions at the end of 2011 and 2012 that brought together high-level speakers and several hundreds of representatives of public administrations and non-government organisations.

In February 2013 the EU Commission adopted, among other policies, the **Social Investment Package**, which lays out a plan for creating more 'anticipating' welfare systems, including social protection services that are build on a life-cycle approach, the provision of simplified and better targeted social policies contributing to sustainable social protection systems, more efficient social policy spending and the upgrading of active inclusion strategies.

A relatively new concept that has emerged is that of **social innovation**, which is related to social products, services, structures and approaches and that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social interaction. Social innovation and its development through experimentation have thus far been funded primarily through Cohesion Policy funds, namely the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund (integrated urban development) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The European 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological

⁴ European Commission (2008): Recommendation of 8 October 2008 on active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, COM(2008) 5737.

⁵ Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (2013): Assessment of the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on active inclusion: A study of national policies, January 2013.

Development (FP7) has also provided funding for a few projects examining social innovation aspects and approaches.

2.2 Indicators to measure Poverty and Social Exclusion

The currently used indicator *Population living at risk of poverty or social exclusion* is defined to include persons belonging to one or more of these categories:

- people at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers with an equivalised⁶ disposable income below 60% of the national median;
- severely materially deprived people having living conditions constrained by a lack of resources and experiencing at least four out of nine key aspects of deprivation⁷;
- people between 0 and 59 years of age that live in households with very low work intensity, i.e., where the adults worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year.

2.3 Recent Policy Developments and their Relation to Poverty Levels

According to the most recent available figures, 24.2% of European citizens, almost 120 million people, are currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Despite a commitment made by EU Heads of State and Government in 2000 to eradicate poverty by 2010, this number has actually increased since 2009 by nearly 6 million people. Eighteen of the 27 Member States have experienced a net growth in poverty rates. In parallel, unemployment has reached a new high of more than 26 million people or 10.7% of the total EU population. The youth unemployment rate has grown even more to 22.7%, which means that 7.5 million Europeans between the ages of 15 and 24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

One contributor to this negative trend is the dual economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009 and subsequent pressures on fiscal households at all levels of

⁶ 'Equivalised income': In order to reflect differences in household size and composition, the total household income is divided by the number of 'equivalent adults' using a standard (equivalence) scale, the so-called 'modified OECD' scale, which attributes a weight of 1 to the first adult in the household, 0.5 to each subsequent member of the household aged 14 and over, and 0.3 to household members aged under 14. The resulting figure is called the equivalised income and is attributed to each member of the household.

⁷ Severely materially deprived persons have living conditions severely constrained by a lack of resources, they experience at least four out of the following nine deprivation items: they cannot afford to i) pay rent or utility bills, ii) keep their home adequately warm, iii) pay unexpected expenses, iv) eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) have a week's holiday away from home, vi) buy a car, vii) buy a washing machine, viii) buy a colour TV, or ix) have a telephone.

government. And while neither the occurrence of the crisis nor its depth was foreseen in 2000, these increases are unsustainable.

The Europe 2020 Strategy has set the ambitious social headline target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 20 million between 2008 (reference year) and 2020. This marks the first time that poverty reduction is linked to a numeric, time-bound objective at EU level. The headline target is connected to the implementation of the flagship initiative “European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion”, which itself is embedded in the European Semester process and coupled with several ‘policy packages’, awareness rising among all stakeholders and the programming of the structural funds for the period 2014-2020.

The EU Commission has foreseen five actions for the delivery of the flagship initiative:

- delivering actions across the policy spectrum;
- greater and more effective use of the EU Funds to support social inclusion;
- promoting evidence-based social innovation;
- working in partnership and harnessing the potential of the social economy; and
- enhanced policy coordination among the member states.

Based thereon a number of initiatives and legislative proposals were proposed in the fields of active inclusion, social and health services, child poverty, pensions, anti-discrimination, Roma integration, and integration of third-country nationals.

In October 2011, the EU Commission proposed new priorities and rules, especially in terms of earmarking budget shares, for the **European Social Fund (ESF)**⁸ to facilitate growth in employment opportunities, improvements in the education and lifelong learning sectors, to enhance social inclusion strategies, contribute to combating poverty, and improve the capacity of public administrations to serve citizens and job-seekers better.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the draft Common Provisions Regulation and the draft ESF Regulation include specific references to social innovation, in particular in the form of "capacity building for social innovation through supporting mutual learning, establishing networks, and disseminating good practices and methodologies". In addition, the new EU

⁸ European Commission (2011): Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Council regulation (EC) No 1081/2006; COM(2011) 607 final of 6 October 2012, replaced by COM(2011) 607/2 on 14 March 2012.

Programme for Social Change and Innovation will address issues related to social innovation. The European Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry launched the initiative "Social Innovation Europe" in March 2011, which is financed under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and includes the launch of a first "European Social Innovation Competition" in October 2012, whose winner will be announced in May 2013.

Trans-national and cross-border activities to reduce poverty and fight social exclusion in the 2014-2020 programming period are primarily carried out with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF), the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation (PSCI), and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

In addition to the proposed revisions of the regulations governing the EU Structural Funds and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, recent debates in the European Parliament have focused on the **Social Investment Pact**⁹ and on the **Social Investment Package**¹⁰ (SIP). The SIP's sets out a framework for policy reforms to make social protection and the services and budgets it entails more adequate and sustainable, to invest in people's skills and capabilities, and to support people throughout all stages of their life (life cycle approach). Within the framework of the European Semester, the SIP is meant to provide guidance on reforms towards the Europe 2020 targets and on how EU funds can best be used to support the implementation of Country-specific Recommendations (CSR) that follow the analysis of the NRP by the EU Commission and the assessment of member states' progress in implementing reforms.

And lastly, in January 2013 the European Commission endorsed the launch of a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) on **universal income**¹¹, which asks EU institutions to promote preliminary studies and to give serious consideration to the development of an unconditional basic income as a minimum safety net for people at risk of poverty, building on EP Resolution 2010/2039(INI), Article 156 TFEU and on the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

⁹ 2012/2003 (INI).

¹⁰ Draft motion for a resolution of 16 April 2013 on the on the Commission Communication "Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020"

¹¹ See <http://basicincome2013.eu> for more information.

2.4 Progress to achieving the EU 2020 Headline Target on Poverty and Social Exclusion

The achievement of the headline target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 compared to 2008 requires strong action at the national level, in part because of the negative impact of the economic and financial crises. Recent poverty and social exclusion statistics reveal that disparities between and within member states have increased. In most of them the rates of poverty, severe material deprivation and numbers of low work intensity households are on the rise since 2009. Especially at risk are single parent families, the unemployed and low-skilled and non-EU migrants. When looking at the poverty distribution by age, children and young adults are at most risk.

In 2008 (the reference year for the headline target) the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion was 115.7 million in the EU27. While it decreased to 113.8 million in 2009, it shot up again by almost six million people by 2011 to stand at 119.6 million (24.2% of the EU population). Even if all 27 EU Member States met their national poverty reduction targets (not all have even specified one), this would translate only to lifting approximately 12 million people out of poverty. Factoring in additional spill-over effects, the figure could rise to 15 million, which is still 25% below the EU headline target.

3 Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level

This section of the survey includes the following questions:

1) What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of (i) preventing child poverty (ii) providing decent housing conditions and (iii) combating the social exclusion of vulnerable groups?
2) Please briefly describe what type of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, highlighting their specific contribution to the above targets (see Box 1).
3) Are any of the policy programmes/actions described in the above question carried out in partnership with different tiers of government and/or with other stakeholders (regional or local NGOs, representatives of the social partners, the business sector or service providers). If yes, please state (a) the administrative levels involved (b) the practical arrangements taken to manage such joint action (c) who the main partners were and (d) how you worked with them (work organisation and time).
4) Ensuring effective access to and participation in cultural activities for all is an essential part of promoting an inclusive society. In what way can participation in cultural and creative activities be instrumental for helping people and communities overcome poverty and social exclusion? Please refer to specific examples and existing initiatives.

Table 1: List of questions included in the first thematic block of the survey

3.1 General Findings

The challenges named most frequently by the respondents are

- **Affordable, decent housing** (72% of respondents named this issue)
- Fighting **child poverty**, including in some cases the issue of “poverty inheritance” (36%)
- **Unemployment** as a main contributor to rising poverty and social exclusion levels (36%)
- Unsustainable levels of **individual and household indebtedness** as both a cause for and root of poverty (17%)
- Dealing with the **effects of the economic crisis, tightened public finances, and structural changes in the economy and demographic make-up of the population** (14%)

A large share of respondents (39%) state that their city or region has experienced an **increase in unemployment, especially long-term unemployment** due to the economic crisis. Unemployment has hit certain population groups particularly hard, including youth and older adults, low-skilled workers, immigrants, and people with disabilities, and is seen as a leading contributor to the rise in poverty rates in many regions.

Additional challenges named by the respondents include the **integration of people with disabilities, migration or criminal backgrounds, low professional skills, and the very young and old into the labour market and society**. The integration of **Roma** people was referred to several times in the responses from Romania, Spain, Slovakia and the European Social Network.

Differences in the levels of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion are also observed between **rural and urban areas** and one respondent stated that the largest increase in poverty is affecting **families with children** due to the additional financial and time demands and the lack of affordable housing. **Structural causes of poverty and social exclusion** are also cited, including **deindustrialization**, a growing demand for higher-skilled jobs in the technology sector but a **plummeting of the number of jobs available to low-skilled workers** or workers in traditional manufacturing sectors, as well as **changes in family structure** and the overall **ageing of the population**.

In response to these challenges the respondents' authorities and organizations are implementing a **large variety of programmes and actions**. Nonetheless, the main thrust of action is observed in the areas of (i) supporting families with children, (ii) improving availability and access to affordable housing, (iii) providing support and training to find jobs and adjust to changing labour market needs, (iv) reducing discrimination and improving integration of vulnerable population groups into society and the labour market, (v) improving educational opportunities and fairness, and (vi) creating better access to health care services, especially for seniors and children.

All respondents state that partnerships, collaboration and/or coordination of activities exist. Strengthening these forms of cooperation is in fact seen as critical, helpful and imperative for most respondents considering that poverty and social exclusion are multi-faceted and their solution requires a long-term commitment of financial and human resources. The fiscal consolidation of public funding in the area of poverty and social services is seen as an additional driver to make the most of the available resources, including building more effective horizontal and vertical cooperation between agencies, authorities, businesses and the third sector.

The EPAPSE flagship initiative feeds into the “inclusive growth” objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Cultural activities for all is an essential part of promoting an inclusive society. All but two respondents (94%) have affirmed this statement and provided examples of how their cities or regions engage with residents, especially the elderly and socio-economically disadvantaged, and provide opportunities for communal interaction, free or reduced cost participation in cultural and physical activities, and community building exercises. These examples range from TV and movie shows to city festivals, educational opportunities, reduced/free tickets for public transportation or sport facilities, and programmes to foster cross-cultural knowledge.

3.2 Specific Findings

Q1: What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of (i) preventing child poverty (ii) providing decent housing conditions and (iii) combating the social exclusion of vulnerable groups?

All respondents answered this question. The following issues dominated.

- Affordable, decent housing (72%)
- Fighting child poverty (36%)
- Unemployment as a main contributor to rising poverty and social exclusion levels (36%)
- Unsustainable levels of individual and household indebtedness as both a cause for and root of poverty (17%)
- Dealing with the effects of the economic crisis, tightened public finances, and structural changes in the economy and demographic make-up of the population (14%)

A total of 17% of respondents believe that **poverty and social exclusion are multi-dimensional problems** that require coordinated, sustained counter measures. The rise of child poverty and in “legacy poverty” is seen by some as a looming threat for the future persistent entrapment of certain population segments in poverty and social exclusion that is fueled in part by lack of educational and job opportunities, discrimination, and mismatch between political will and the needs of local authorities on the ground (e.g., the financial support allowance in Romania for a family of two is €50, which does not even permit a first step out of poverty).

The **social/public housing stock** has been neglected in many cities and regions according to the respondents. Its quality is often low and the number of available units have not kept up with growing demand. Accessibility is another problem: bureaucratic and administrative hurdles are sometimes

considerable and many eligible people either do not know about their rights or are on long waiting lists.

For many the first step into poverty and associated risk of social exclusion is the loss or lack of employment, especially if it is long-term. It is compounded by other social stigmata such as being an immigrant (City of Vienna), having a disability (e.g., ESN about disabled children in the Czech Republic) or criminal background, being a school drop-out or having only basic work skills (City of Vienna), being homeless (e.g., Town Council of Pardubice). Combined, these factors can lead to a general sense of hopelessness and resignation.

Examples of the intricate, structural, and often persistent problems of poverty and social exclusion are the following:

Krapina-Zagorje County:

“Factors that increase the risk of social exclusion, many of them are present in our region – loss of employment, living in rural areas, poor access to public transport and other significant challenges are related to ageing of population, substantial number of single person households, above average number of unemployed persons with disabilities.”

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA):

“Tackling homelessness: Despite progress, challenges remain in offering an adequate and sustainable housing stock, addressing fuel poverty and achieving energy-efficient buildings and more challenges will arise from the anticipated reduction in housing revenue from welfare reform changes.”

In addition, it is noteworthy that three respondents highlighted the challenge of not having enough data or information to identify the population groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which is the first step in recognizing and addressing the problem: the Regional Government of Valencia, the Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków and the Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region.

Q2: Please briefly describe what type of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, highlighting their specific contribution to the above targets (see Box 1).

All respondents answered this question and the variety of programmes and actions that are being implemented is as diverse as the circumstances facing the respondents' organizations and authorities. Although these programmes

may include indicators or other means to assess and document progress, only two respondents stated explicitly that they have set measurable goals or defined indicators for monitoring (City of Vienna, Krapina-Zagorje County). While the full list of programmes is included in Appendix II, a few examples are shown below for illustrative purposes. In general it can be said that the LRAs recognize the multi-dimensionality of poverty and are working on many fronts simultaneously – sometimes with extremely limited funds (e.g., County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau).

Government of Catalonia on eradicating child poverty:

1. *Develop a catalog of services, benefits and resources supporting single or large families, newcomers' families who are in vulnerable situations.*
2. *Strengthen training spaces and groups of discussion for parents to improve their parenting skills (positive parenting).*
3. *Use educational leisure spaces to cover the basic needs of children and adolescents in situations or at risk of social exclusion.*
4. *Improve screening instruments and evaluation of risk and helpless situations.*
5. *Develop the social and educational care measures in situations at risk for children and adolescents under the Law of rights and opportunities in childhood and adolescence.*
6. *Improve prevention and protection in relation to child abuse.*
7. *Aid to families in economically disadvantaged situations: transportation, school meals and access to leisure educational and fun activities.*

The Flemish Government on eliminating child poverty¹²:

- *Local community-oriented care services*
- *Across Flanders projects related to 'family support with bridges to education / work' are being implemented*
- *Prenatal care is expanded, in urban areas, priority is given to the coordination of health care and psychosocial support for vulnerable pregnant women*
- *The preventive family support is being revised with respect to content, organization and institutional level with particular attention to families in poverty. There is a reinforced preventive family support, with 'Houses of the Child' as a key lever.*
- *There is support/commitment for an affordable, high-quality, accessible and adequate supply of child care for vulnerable young children and their parents.*

¹² The complete set of actions that the Flemish government implements in terms of poverty reduction are listed in the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction.

- *The outpatient and mobile offerings from the Centers for Child Health Care and Family Support is strengthened and expanded to provide care and support for smaller children in crisis or risk situations. Educational and behavioral problems are addressed early, especially for disadvantaged groups.*
- *The initiatives 'Farmers at a Crossroads "and" Between Step' promote family counseling for entrepreneurs in difficulties. Persons/families with financial problems are supported with regard to their overall family situation and with increased attention to the specific situation of young children in these families.*
- *Sustainable kindergarten participation is one of the priorities within the education policy.*
- *The affordability of education is improved by focusing on better communication of existing and new measures and the automatic granting of the education subsidy.*
- *Within the complementary education, many projects are already funded that also work on tackling child poverty. These projects are very diverse and focus among others on parenting and family support.*

Town Council of Pardubice on child poverty, financial exclusion and over-indebtedness:

The Town Council of Pardubice works with the NGO “Civic Advisory Pardubice”, which provides expert social consultancy as well as through the project called “Debt Consultancy” funded by the Czech-Slovak Business Bank and ERA Post bank.

The City also works with the NGO “Lexus” within the project “Back, Differently” using structural funds of the EU. The long-term negative financial situation of some users has not been successfully solved yet. The Project’s focus is on the support of the whole family rather than only on children.

Q3: Are any of the policy programmes/actions described in the above question carried out in partnership with different tiers of government and/or with other stakeholders (regional or local NGOs, representatives of the social partners, the business sector or service providers). If yes, please state (a) the administrative levels involved (b) the practical arrangements taken to manage such joint action (c) who the main partners were and (d) how you worked with them (work organisation and time).

All 36 respondents (100%) answered this question affirmatively. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), for example, states that “Achieving [the programmes] “Our Potential”, “Early Years Framework” and “Equally Well” have been designed, agreed on and implemented jointly by the Scottish Local Government and the Scottish Government.”

Krajina-Zagorje County responded “Cooperation of all stakeholders (NGOs, representatives of social partners, business sector, local authorities) is very intensive and most of the projects are carried out as joint activities.”

With regard to parts (b)-(d) of the question, some examples of the forms of collaboration and partnerships that are taking place are illustrated by the following examples.

City of Amsterdam:

In Amsterdam cooperation takes place “[a]t the municipal level for the Pact of Amsterdam, but without formal agreements. Partnerships bring together local businesses, civil society organisations and the city council. The City Council acts as an intermediary between business and civil society organisations, business interprets its CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility] policy and civil society organisations (such as the food bank) are supported in the implementation of their poverty-reduction tasks. In practice, this means that there are meetings of all interested parties three to four times per year and that there are also talks with other parties to see what they might offer or need.”

Ferreira do Alentejo:

Partnerships in Ferreira do Alentejo exist and involve “regional services of the state; are managed through the municipal council and meetings for assessing and planning services between the council and NGOS, CMFA and service providers.”

Municipality of Faro:

“The Planning Centre for Action on Homeless People (NPISA) holds monthly meetings, partners include: Municipality of Faro; Parish Council of Sé; Parish Council of S. Pedro; Public Security Police; Foreigners and Borders Service; Faro District Centre for Social Security; Drug Addict Support Group; AIDS Support Movement; Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Faro; Parish Centre of S. Pedro; Parish Centre of S. Luís; Algarve Regional Delegation for Drugs and Drug Addiction; Hospital de Faro; Algarve I Grouping of Health Centres – Central; Homeless Support Centre; Portuguese Red Cross – Faro Delegation and European Anti-Poverty Network.”

In general it can be concluded from the analysis that partnerships among different levels of government and with other stakeholders are so frequent because of the breadth of the causes and effects, i.e., the multi-dimensionality, of poverty and social exclusion, in conjunction with the narrow focus of the mandate and responsibilities of public agencies and authorities across the poverty spectrum. There is, therefore, a strong motivation for forming alliances to work together and also to share costs and achieve maximum impact. At the same time, 28% of respondents are requesting still greater levels of collaboration between vertical levels of government (figure is the combined result for questions 3, 7, 9, 10 and 14).

Q4: Ensuring effective access to and participation in cultural activities for all is an essential part of promoting an inclusive society. In what way can participation in cultural and creative activities be instrumental for helping people and communities overcome poverty and social exclusion? Please refer to specific examples and existing initiatives.

Two of the 36 respondents (6%) did not answer this question (Area Council of Berguedà and the Marshal's Office of the Lubelskie region, Lublin). All other respondents underscored the importance of providing access to and encouraging participation in cultural activities. Many do so through subsidized or free tickets to events in their city or region (56%).

Łódź City Council:

Thanks to the actions undertaken by the Social Integration Clubs, people threatened by social exclusion and of low income may participate in cultural services. There are trips to the Museum of Cinematography, visiting monuments of Łódź, visiting the temporary exhibitions in the Museum of Arts or participating in the Labour Fair. Under the Policy of Culture Development for the City of Łódź 2020+, activities are carried out that aim at raising the level of participation in culture, developing the competence of recipients, reaching out to communities at risk of social exclusion and mobilising them to participate in culture.

Some, such as the City of Vienna, also offer reduced public transportation to support means of getting to and from such cultural activities.

City of Vienna:

“The Vienna MobilPass allows use of public transportation at half price and participation in educational and leisure activities (e.g., Vienna swimming pools). It is available to those receiving need-based minimum social welfare and persons with low pensions. The Vienna KulturPass is for low-income and at-risk of poverty persons to allow access to cultural activities.”

Educational opportunities are reported by five of the respondents (14%) to be important means for fighting poverty and social exclusion (City of Vienna, Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków, Riga City Council, Vilanova i la Geltrú City Council, and Government of Catalonia). An example is given below.

Government of Catalonia:

*“1. Prioritize access for children and young people at risk of exclusion to activities and cultural resources and active leisure (sports, entertainment, etc.), facilitating their mobility and access to ICT.
2. Enabling children and families at risk of social exclusion access to education leisure resources (scholarships for recreation centers, tours, holiday activities, support for the operation of recreation centers).”*

4 Relevance of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAPSE) for the respondent’s city or region

This section of the survey includes responses to the following questions:

5) Which of the objectives and lines of action of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (listed in Box 2) are most relevant for the current situation in your region/city? To what extent have they encouraged you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answer.
6) How relevant is the new Social Investment Package adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2013 (Box 3) for your local/regional policies? Has it encouraged or helped you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answer.
7) What are the strong and weak points of the EU's policies addressing poverty and social exclusion? Were they sufficient in view of the challenges you are facing in this area? If not, would you recommend making any specific changes to the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion flagship initiative after the mid-term review of Europe 2020 in 2014, especially with regard to local and regional authority involvement?

Table 2: List of questions included in the second thematic block

4.1 General Findings

The general aims of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion were considered relevant by nearly all the respondents. Particularly, the objective of **promoting social inclusion and integration into the labour market** was cited by 23 respondents (64%).

The new **Social Investment Package (SIP)** adopted by the EU Commission on 13 February 2013 was generally seen as either too new to have yet been considered sufficiently or not applicable to the work or context of the respondent’s organization or authority (25%). Among the respondents that are aware of the SIP, the prevailing opinion is that it is useful or even highly relevant and that it aligns with the work the local and regional authorities and organizations are already doing, but not necessarily leading to more ambitious policy goals (25%).

With respect to the **strong and weak points of the EU's policies addressing poverty and social exclusion** and how they should be changed in order to meet local needs the opinion of the respondents diverges noticeably. While the majority of respondents (33%) applauds that the EU is tackling poverty and social exclusion through the EPAPSE flagship initiative, opinions vary on how harmonized and centrally coordinated the actions should be. Some respondents prefer giving more responsibility, flexibility and leverage to local and regional authorities (City of Pilsen, COSLA), others demand that actions are coordinated at national and even cross-national level (Riga City Council, Wielkopolska Regional Government).

Three respondents (8%) point out that proper funding is critical and that results will be futile without strong systemic growth in the EU region in terms of jobs and economic activity. Better coordination across the three pillars and seven flagship initiatives is also requested (Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region).

4.2 Specific Findings

Q5. Which of the objectives and lines of action of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (listed in Box 2) are most relevant for the current situation in your region/city? To what extent have they encouraged you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answer.

All but three respondents answered this question (92%, no response from the City of Vienna, City of Nuremberg and the Dynamo International – Street Workers Network). A summary of the responses is shown in Figure 3.

Overall, the EPAPSE objectives have broad appeal across the respondents to the survey. Those which were seen as having most relevance for the largest number of respondents were to promote inclusion in society and the labour market of the most vulnerable members of society (23 mentionings, 64% of respondents), to eradicate child poverty (13 references, 36%), to provide decent housing for everyone (11 references, 31%) and to overcome discrimination and increase social integration of vulnerable groups (11 references, 31%).

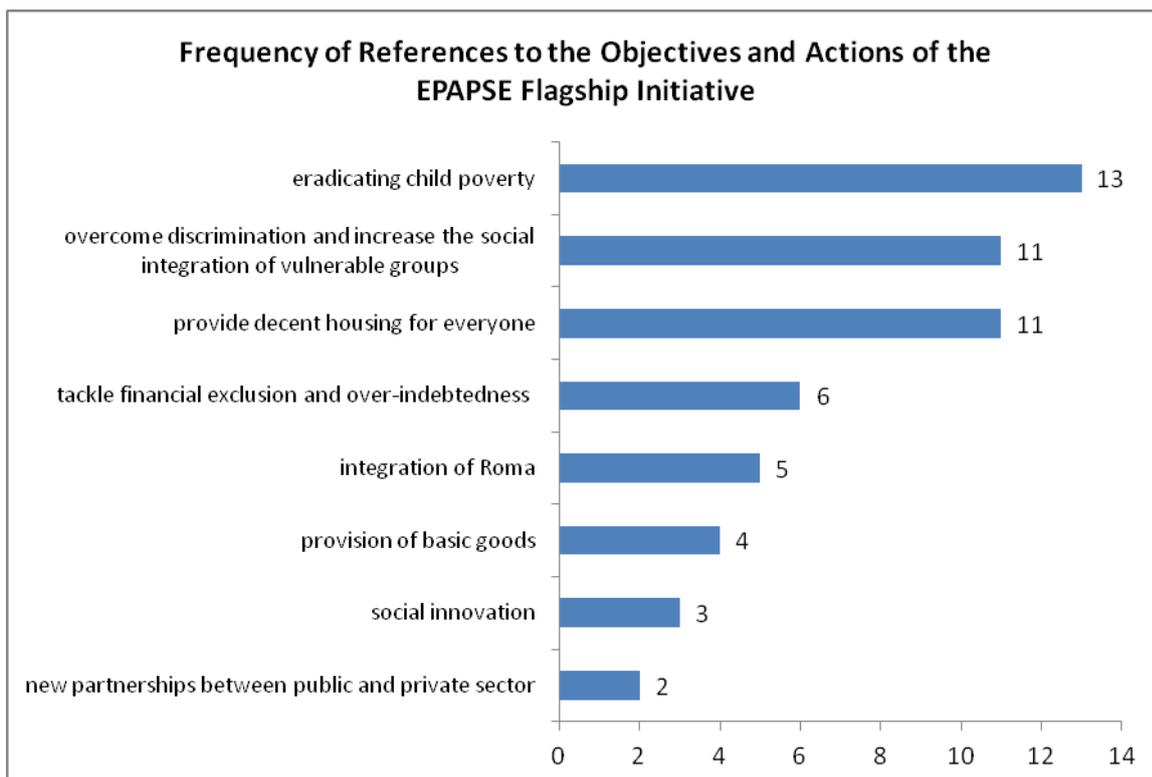


Figure 3: Frequency of references to the objectives and actions under the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion made by respondents in question 5 of the survey.

Some examples of responses that also address the ability to set more ambitious goals or targets are shown below:

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA):

“It is not possible to determine if the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion has further encouraged Councils [to set more ambitious goals]. In general, it can be said that the following objectives and actions are in line with the good practice and service provision that is taking place in Scotland: eradication of child poverty, active inclusion in society and labour market, provide decent housing, overcome discrimination, improved access to essential services, social innovation, and new partnerships between public and private actors.”

Veneto Region:

“The platform's objectives help to set higher policy goals and implement targeted actions.”

Lombardy Region:

“The objectives of the European Platform respond to the complex and heterogeneous needs of the area. Especially, the objective “promoting the active inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in society and labor market”, with particular attention to the search for new forms of cooperation between public and private, even if already prominent in the history and the same Statute of the Lombardy Region with regard to the non-profit, in times of crisis should be raised and supported with the interception of new subjects (companies, private profit) also finding innovative partnership tools able to create a significant “critical mass”. The encouragement has ensured regional and local projects more coherent with European Directives, in particular with respect to the most vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion.”

Preston City Council:

“Preston City Council’s current administration’s manifesto has the aim of promoting equality in Preston. Therefore the actions described in section 2 are part of their ambitious policies to create more equality amongst Preston’s residents. These in turn link with the objectives and actions of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.”

Q6. How relevant is the new Social Investment Package adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2013 (Box 3) for your local/regional policies? Has it encouraged or helped you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answer.

All but four of the 36 respondents (89%) answered this question (no response from the City of Vienna, City of Nuremberg, Lombardy Region and Dynamo International – Street Workers Network). Seven respondents (19%) said that the **SIP is still too new to have been fully considered** or taken into account in the development of programmes or actions. Five respondents (14%) stated that the **SIP has no immediate impact on their work** (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków, Municipality of Faro, Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region, Vilanova i la Geltrú City Council). Two respondents (6%) said the SIP is not applicable to their work or responsibilities (Krapina-Zagorje County, Regional Government of Valencia). The remaining respondents said that the new Social Investment Package is relevant to them, in part because it provides guidance and input to their agenda-setting (e.g., City of Riga) and in part because it mirrors their ongoing work and therefore serves as a confirmation (e.g., Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Municipality of Faro).

Q7. What are the strong and weak points of the EU's policies addressing poverty and social exclusion? Were they sufficient in view of the challenges you are facing in this area? If not, would you recommend making any specific changes to the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion flagship initiative after the mid-term review of Europe 2020 in 2014, especially with regard to local and regional authority involvement?

All but three answered this question (92%, no response from the City of Nuremberg, Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region and Dynamo International – Social Workers Network). The strengths and weaknesses are compiled in the following table (panel a) and b)).

Table 3a)

Strengths	Frequency
Simplification and better targeting of social policies, adequate framing of the issues, and clear identification of priorities and actions	5
Adequate link between EU and territorial programmes and commitment to horizontal and vertical cooperation, including with other stakeholders (NGOs, businesses, etc.)	3
Increased awareness of poverty and social exclusion, including boost in visibility for Roma issues, child poverty, homelessness and other issues affecting the most vulnerable population groups	2
Recognition of the need to innovate and implement new programmes and actions	2
First time a numerical index measuring poverty and social exclusion has been included in EU policy	1
Enforcing actions to integrate the socially excluded	1
Recognition of multi-dimensionality of poverty and social exclusion	1
A rich volume of best practices and other information is now available due to the reporting requirements	1

Table 3b)

Weaknesses	Frequency
Problem is in implementation of the EPAPSE (NRPs too vague, lack of funding, differences in national and local priorities, complexity of programmes and lack of coordination, no inclusion of budget-balancing measures in the Platform or Europe 2020 Strategy)	4

Weaknesses	Frequency
Need for continued monitoring and evaluation, better and more comprehensive indicators, and recognition of the multi-dimensionality of poverty and social exclusion	3
Too little attention given to specific issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving financial situation of the poor - Spurring economic growth that creates jobs and hence addresses one of the main causes of poverty - Increase focus on the working poor - Recognize the value of preventive action 	4 (individual issues counting together)
Platform lacks immediate impact and actions	1
Lack of visibility of EU policies in the poverty and social exclusion sector	1

Table 3a and b: List of strengths and weakness of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

5 Relevance of country policies to respondent's city or region

This section contains the following three questions.

8) To help meet the headline targets and objectives (see Boxes 1 and 2), your country has set its own country targets, which you can find at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf . To what extent are the targets set by your country appropriate to your local situation? Please explain.

9) Does your country's 2012 (current) National Reform Programme (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (see Box 1)? If not, would you suggest any changes in your country's NRP for 2013?

10) Do you have the opportunity to contribute to the drafting of your NRP, or your National Job Plan, in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, even if this takes place indirectly through the organisations that represent cities and regions in your country? If yes, please state how in brief.

Table 4: List of questions included in the third thematic block

5.1 General Findings

With respect to the **appropriateness of the national targets** set for the poverty and social exclusion indicators in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the **majority of respondents (53%) believe that they are compatible with their local situation**. In a few instances (14%), the local or regional situation is better or worse than the national target, but the respondents nonetheless agree that the national targets serve as a useful point of reference, albeit some acknowledge that a continued negative economic climate could put their achievement in jeopardy. Krapina-Zagorje County states that this question does not apply because the Republic of Croatia implements the Joint Inclusion Memorandum that has been signed with the European Commission and the Strategy of Social Welfare Development in the Republic of Croatia is directly linked to Europe 2020.

ESN pointed out that the political targets are sometimes seen as **too abstract or removed from specific local contexts** (e.g., response to Question 8). This makes them less relevant, unrealistic or missing the actual root causes of the problem they aim to resolve. This attitude is also reflected in the assessment of the strong and weak points of the EPAPSE flagship initiative (see above).

Ten of the 36 responses received (28%) agree that the 2012 NRP adequately responds to their local or regional needs with respect to the areas covered by the EPAPSE. Among those that responded negatively, the reasons are predominantly a deteriorating situation vis-a-vis public funds and resources to implement the actions and strategies outlined in the 2012 NRP or the vagueness of the descriptions and lack of commitment given to these actions in the document.

Nearly half of respondents (44%) that answered the third question in this block said that they had a chance to contribute to the development of the 2012 NRP. Involvement generally took the form of consultations to participation in working groups tasked with drafting different sections of the NRP. The City of Vienna, for example, wrote that their representatives, together with delegates from the Austrian Association of Cities and Municipalities, contributed substantively to the main document as well as specific examples to the Appendix. And Łódź City Council was actively involved in the consultation and evaluation of strategy papers on the national level. It also cooperated actively with non-governmental organizations within the framework of a broad forum including the needs and voices of the citizens.

Another nine respondents (25%) were indirectly involved, for example, through their associations of local and/or regional authorities (City of Vienna, COSLA, City of Amsterdam, Ferreira do Alentejo, Municipality of Faro, Riga City Council, Wielkopolska Regional Government, Lombardy Region), or by submitting comments to the draft NRP that were taken into consideration (Mazovia Province). Limited involvement was possible for two respondents (6%), for example, because individual employees of the respondent's organization participated in NRP related matters or by submitting comments that might not have been taken into account (Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region, Mikołów City Council).

5.2 Specific Findings

Q8: To help meet the headline targets and objectives (see Boxes 1 and 2), your country has set its own country targets, which you can find at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf. To what extent are the targets set by your country appropriate to your local situation? Please explain.

All but three respondents answered this question (92%, no response from Marshal's Office of the Lubelskie region, Lublin, City of Nuremberg, Dynamo International – Social Workers Network). Two respondents (6%)

said that this is not an area of responsibility for them (Krapina-Zagorje County, Regional Government of Valencia).

Among the four opinions (11%) that find achieving the national targets difficult is the Basque Government, which states that *“the targets set by Spain do not suit us at this time to present the evolution of the State. The established social objectives are difficult if not impossible to achieve. The current job creation forecast for 2020 will hardly allow recovery to employment rates seen at the end of the last decade, and they are still below 70%.”* Another relevant critical comment was submitted by the Government of Catalonia regarding the proportional allocation of the national target to the regions: *“Spain has set a national goal of reducing the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion to 1.4 - 1.5 million people by the year 2020. The translation of this goal for Catalonia results in the reduction of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 240,000 people, but this proportionality does not respond in any way to regional particularities. Given that the rate of people at risk of poverty in Catalonia stands currently at 27% of the population (according to the Arope indicator), the reduction target by 2020 is far removed from being significant and useful to the situation.”*

The Regional Authority of the Usti Region says that *“generally speaking these theses are too general to allow commentary about specifics relevant to our region.”*

And as Preston City Council highlights, the UK has not set any targets under the poverty and social exclusion pillar of the Europe 2020 Strategy, except for *“existing targets set down in the 2010 Child Poverty Act which are profiled as percentages.”*

Q9: Does your country's 2012 (current) National Reform Programme (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (see Box 1)? If not, would you suggest any changes in your country's NRP for 2013?

Five respondents did not answer this question (14%).

A total of 10 respondents (28%) said that their current NRP adequately fits their needs in the social and poverty fields, while five (14%) did not answer the question and two (6%) said that they do not know or have no ability to judge. The remaining respondents brought forward a range of critiques and shortcomings in how the NRP addresses local and regional needs in the areas covered by the EPAPSE.

For example, a separate assessment of NRPs by the European Social Network (ESN)¹³ found that eight of them gave **too little weight to social and poverty issues**, which is **a lesson that should be incorporated in the 2013 European Semester**.

Shortcomings were also cited in the following responses.

Preston City Council remarked that the NRP puts **too much focus on jobs**, although this is seen as only one factor influencing poverty and social exclusion.

The Lombardy Region has a similar concern, namely that the Italian NRP **responds only partially to the new phenomenon that young people with high qualifications have difficulty accessing jobs** and the early exit from the labour market resulting from the pensions reform that affect those over the age of 60.

The Basque Government also demands that the NRP **consider the broad range of factors affecting poverty and social exclusion**, including social services, employment, housing, education and health and suitable wage incomes, as well as inclusive labour markets.

Aside from being too narrow in focus, other respondents criticize their NRPs for being **too vague and politically coloured**. The Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków, for example, laments a **lack of specific details**. The response states that the strategic areas are only vaguely described and that it is to be hoped that political lobbying will not conceal the true problems of poverty and social exclusion.

The Government of Catalonia also says that the Spanish 2012 NRP **does not include specific measures to combat poverty** and to fulfil the goal of reducing the population at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion to 1.5 million in 2020. This absence is reflected in the Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme of Spain, which highlights an increase in the number of people at risk by 1.1 million in 2012 and emphasizes the high poverty rate of temporary workers compared to that among permanent workers.

¹³ The ESN made reference to this assessment, which is not part of the survey that this report analyses.

Q10: Do you have the opportunity to contribute to the drafting of your NRP, or your National Job Plan, in the policy areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, even if this takes place indirectly through the organisations that represent cities and regions in your country? If yes, please state how in brief.

A total of 32 respondents answered this question (89%). Eleven respondents (31%) said that they were directly, indirectly or to a very limited extent involved in the drafting of the NRP. Five said there were not involved (14%). In general it can be said that the respondents who could contribute to the drafting of their country's NRP could do so either through direct consultation or through their membership in associations of local or regional governments.

The nine respondents (25%) that were directly or indirectly involved through their associations of local and/or regional authorities are the City of Vienna, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the City of Amsterdam, Ferreira do Alentejo, Municipality of Faro, Riga City Council, Wielkopolska Regional Government, Mazovia Province and Lombardy Region.

The Riga City Council, for example, reported that “*cities express their points of view through the intermediary of organisations representing local and regional authorities (for example, the Lithuanian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the Association of Major Lithuanian Cities).*”

Limited involvement was possible for two respondents (6%), because individual employees of the respondent's organization participated in NRP related matters or by submitting comments that might not have been taken into account (Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region, Mikołów City Council).

6 Policy and funding issues

This section contains the following seven questions:

11) What sources of funding are used to finance your actions under the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (as provided under question 2)? In particular: what is the role of the EU Structural Funds in funding actions relating to the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion?
12) Have any of the goals pursued in fighting poverty and social exclusion been jeopardised due to fiscal consolidation policies and subsequent financial difficulties?
13) Were you directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the forthcoming Partnership Agreement which is to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020? If yes, please explain how in brief.
14) How should poverty issues be addressed in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement mentioned in the above question?
15) Please add any further comments you wish to make on the issues covered in this questionnaire.

Table 5: List of questions included in the second thematic block

6.1 General Findings

Overall, it can be said that the **respondents use a variety of funding sources to develop and implement policies and actions** and that in almost all cases at least some of them as well as planned future activities are in jeopardy due to fiscal reforms and austerity measures. The economic crisis and resulting shortage of public funds has led to prioritization of projects, sometimes to the detriment of the multi-dimensionality and structural nature of poverty.

While many respondents (34 out of 36 answered this question, 94%) said that they use a variety of funding sources, including their own, **the role of the European Structural Funds (ESF and ERDF) has been highlighted as important** as well in about one third of the responses received and is described as critical by a few (e.g., Ferreira de Alentejo).

A total of 27 respondents (75%) provided recommendations on how poverty issues should be addressed in the Partnership Agreement and 20 respondents (56%) said that they were or are directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the Agreement. Four respondents (11%) would like to see a **greater role of local and regional authorities** in implementing and/or

allocating funds to projects (City of Amsterdam, Veneto Region, Regional Authority of the Usti Region and Preston City Council). Other recommendations include the mainstreaming of poverty issues into all aspects of EU strategy, to allow the combined use of EU funds to find innovative approaches that recognize the multi-faceted character of poverty, the creation of its own issue area for social and territorial cohesion, and increasing the focus on the most pressing problems such as distressed inner-cities.

6.2 Specific Findings

Q11: What sources of funding are used to finance your actions under the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (as provided under question 2)? In particular: what is the role of the EU Structural Funds in funding actions relating to the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion?

All but two respondents answered this question (94%). Thirteen (36%) of them explained that actions relating to the EPAPSE are funded through a combination of local and/or regional, EU and in some cases private funds, but with varying levels of dependence.

In Ferreira do Alentejo **ESF is the only source of funding** and the Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków also relies solely on ESF and ERDF. In contrast, COSLA said that Scottish local governments use their own and Scottish Government funds (albeit the Scottish Government will make 15 million £ of unused ESF funds available to support a youth initiative). Krapina-Zagorje County used CARDS, PHARE, IPA and PROGRESS financial contributions. The Regional Government of Valencia provided the funding for the PIPES programme. The City of Pilsen mostly uses funding from its own budget or grants from the Czech or Pilsen regional budget. The City of Amsterdam combines municipal, national and European funds with EU monies accounting for around 7.7% of the budget. The Riga City Council uses its own budget for some activities but also states that the EU Commission's food aid programme for the most deprived has been a great support to needy and disadvantaged people.

Q12: Have any of the goals pursued in fighting poverty and social exclusion been jeopardised due to fiscal consolidation policies and subsequent financial difficulties?

This question was answered by 32 of the 36 respondents (89%) and six (11%) answered that fiscal consolidation has not or not yet led to limitations or

financial difficulties in fighting poverty and social exclusion (Krapina-Zagorje County, the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH), the City of Nuremberg, the Government of Extremadura, the County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau and the Nitra Self-Governing Region). In all other cases the respondents described a range of impacts.

For example, the Regional Government of Valencia wrote that the responsible government departments have listed the items that will no longer be funded. The Social Workers Network Dynamo International said that funding is already declining in several Member States and that lack of funding has led to worsening conditions due to (i) tedious administrative procedures, (ii) short-term funding, (iii) long waiting periods for approval, and (iv) variability in funding from year to year. In the Lombardy Region the reduction of resources has affected all areas of intervention with the risk of nullifying the results achieved to date. The Flemish Government has been less affected but nonetheless has postponed some programmes.

13) Were you directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the forthcoming Partnership Agreement which is to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020? If yes, please explain how in brief.

This question was answered by 30 out of 36 respondents (83%). While ten respondents (28%) said that they are or were involved directly or indirectly, there were also eight respondents (22%) who said they are not, namely, the Veneto Region, the Municipality of Faro, the Regional Government of Valencia, the County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau, Regional Authority of the Usti Region, the Town Council of the City Pardubice, the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia and the European Social Network (ESN).

Faro Municipality and the Regional Government of Valencia say this work does not fall within the realm of their responsibilities and the Regional Authority of the Usti Region explained that they receive this information from the central government authorities. The Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia said that they do not know the content of the Agreement.

Among the ten authorities who had the opportunity to contribute, the majority participated in meetings (Wielkopolska Regional Government), prepared investment plans (City of Riga), or sending delegates from each of the country's NUTS 3 units to participate in the working group Partnership for

policy coherence, which manages the preparation of the Partnership agreement of for the period 2014-2020 (Nitra Self-Governing Region).

14) How should poverty issues be addressed in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement mentioned in the above question?

This question was answered by 24 of the 36 respondents (67%), five of which said that they could not answer the question because they do not know the Agreement or because this topic does not fall within the scope of their work. The remaining respondents' comments are summarised in the following table.

Response	Recommendations on how poverty issues should be taken into account in the new Partnership Agreement
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	The current [Scottish] programme has already as one of its focus deprivation and indeed a quite sophisticated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is being used as additional indicators to target EU monies to a number of local areas.
Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków	It is important to be truthful and consistent. The provisions of these agreements are very brief and the problems are too generalised.
City of Amsterdam	The agreement should be about broad brushstrokes so that there is sufficient room for regional adaptations within each Member State.
Veneto Region	It should take into account the recommendations of municipalities and non-profit networks and organisations in the region.
Ferreira do Alentejo	The Partnership Agreement should induce the empowerment of the beneficiaries.
Municipality of Faro	The Partnership Agreement does not apply to the role and direct action framework of the Municipalities.
Mikołów City Council	Consultations in this area are currently underway. Therefore, it is not possible to exactly determine the way of fighting poverty in the future Partnership Agreement.
Wielkopolska Regional Government	Social issues and poverty-related issues were already included in the Partnership Agreement.

Response	Recommendations on how poverty issues should be taken into account in the new Partnership Agreement
Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)	It should be integrated into all EU strategies and it needs its own policy framework to be included in Partnership Agreement. Its linkages and impacts on other policies should be highlighted.
Belfast City Council	It should enable the combined use of EU funds to permit innovate, flexible projects that recognize multifaceted dimension to poverty and social exclusion.
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	In a future partnership agreement the topic of social and territorial cohesion should constitute a separate area.
	Focusing on the most problematic areas, and - very importantly - the deprived neighborhoods in the cities, is a very good decision
	It is important that the need to improve health is perceived. It is worth noting that the strategic emphasis was placed on strengthening the capabilities that ensure future growth. A clear weakness is that there is a lack of measures to combat poverty among children and lack of indicators measuring it and its effects.
Government of Extremadura	Should start from an analysis of poverty and social exclusion closer to each of the regions that compose it.
Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia	The various recommendations made by the European Commission can help set guidelines for action, but without adequate funding they are insufficient to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.
Basque Government	So that would guarantee social cohesion, with a more equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and ensuring decent living conditions and participatory inclusion for all citizens.
Government of Catalonia	The Association Agreement should include explicit measures and initiatives to reduce the population in poverty and social exclusion.

Response	Recommendations on how poverty issues should be taken into account in the new Partnership Agreement
	In addition, the Agreement should reflect an allocation of resources that ensure implementation of policies to combat poverty and social inclusion effectively and with a proximity criteria.
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Wider financial resources could be allocated on the regional level, where basic and high-school education is provided and where is the know-how on the problematic.
The Nitra Self-governing Region	MAN – EDUCATION – WORK – MOBILITY = conditions to solve issues of poverty.
European Social Network (ESN)	ESN does not follow the Partnership Agreements in enough detail to be able to comment.
Preston City Council	The Partnership Agreement should enable the EU funds to be used as flexibly and innovatively as possible to enable activities to tackle poverty and social exclusion to be delivered – at the local level where they are best tackled.

Table 6: Summary of suggestions of how poverty issues should be addressed in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement.

15) Please add any further comments you wish to make on the issues covered in this questionnaire.

Only three respondents (8%) provided additional comments, namely the Mazovia Province, the City of Pardubice, and Dynamo International – Street Workers Network. Since these comments are rather different in nature, they are not further summarized. Mazovia Province emphasised that policies addressing poverty and social exclusion should be coherent with other policy areas and investments made in these areas. It can be assumed that this comment relates to the many linkages between the fight to reduce poverty and social exclusion and other socio-economic, cultural and health aspects.

The comment from the City of Pardubice draws attention to the disparities between public policy (especially at the national and EU levels) and the realities at the local level. The respondent states that there is in fact “a lack of interest” by the former to fully understand and appreciate the challenges faced by those working with people in need every day. It is, therefore, not helpful to use generic prescriptions, such as national and international strategies, to solve the problems, but what is needed is real “transformational knowledge”.

And lastly, the Dynamo International network of street workers writes in its comments that it has prepared recommendations based on the 2nd International Forum “Street work, children’s rights, poverty and social exclusion” that took place in 2010 and which are available for reference and further information.

7 Conclusions

The Committee of the Regions conducted this survey to provide information regarding the ability of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAPSE) to deliver the intended added value to communities and regions throughout Europe. The questionnaire contains 15 questions and focuses on four themes:

The survey received a total of 37 responses from 15 countries. The majority of responses came from or on behalf of regions (35%) followed by cities, towns and municipalities (32%) and counties/provinces (19%). Two responses (6%) were submitted by networks (European Social Network and the Dynamo International Network of Social Workers) and one (3%) was submitted by an association of local and regional authorities (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).

The findings yield a number of conclusions concerning

- the **challenges** faced by the regions and cities vis-à-vis poverty and social exclusion;
- the **types of programmes and actions** that have and are being implemented by local and regional authorities and what **kinds of partnerships** they use to succeed;
- the extent to which **cultural integration and participation** are seen as means to alleviate poverty and social exclusion;
- the relevance of the EU Commission's **Social Investment Programme** for local and regional policies;
- the **strengths and weaknesses** of the EPAPSE flagship initiative;
- the **role of the NRP** and the ability of local and regional authorities to contribute to its drafting;
- the **role and impacts of funding availability**, especially the EU Structural Funds, on accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Platform and
- the **role of and potential changes** that could be implemented in the new **Partnership Agreement** following the mid-term review in 2014.

Challenges faced by the regions and cities

There was comparatively strong agreement across the responses received regarding the main challenges faced by local and regional authorities. Ranked highest among them (72% of respondents listed it) is the need for housing that is both affordable and appropriate for persons and families at risk of and living in poverty and social exclusion. Albeit within the control of LRAs, publicly supported housing (“social housing”) has been neglected in many of

the cities, counties and regions and not only since the beginning of the economic and financial crises. The housing stock is too small and often in bad condition to support a growing number of poor people, especially households with children.

The economic and financial crises have also been named directly and indirectly as important causes for rising poverty rates. Both have led to surges in unemployment rates (mentioned in 36% responses), which pushed many families and individuals into poverty due to their long-term inability to find new, decent employment. But the dual crises also uncovered growing systemic and structural problems (mentioned by 14%) such as unsustainable public finances, shifts in the composition of the economy and demographic changes.

Perhaps most disconcerting is the frequently mentioned challenge to fight child poverty (mentioned by 36%), in particular the danger that it becomes a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty that is threatening to trap poor children for life.

Types of programmes and actions being implemented and kinds of partnerships established

LRAs are recognizing these multi-dimensional problems and are focusing in particular on combating child poverty and its repercussions. Child care programs, financial support, education and job-search support for the parents are just some of the initiatives being strengthened. LRAs also work on integrated solutions to the problems faced by other vulnerable groups such as poor and low-income families with children, people with disabilities, young adults with little or no professional qualifications, and the homeless.

In most instances, the LRAs are working in cooperation with national authorities (vertical partnerships) and/or with other local stakeholders such as nonprofit organizations, businesses, and across agencies (horizontal partnerships). These collaborations range from formally established agreements to informal and not necessarily regular collaborations. They tend to be driven by common interests or missions, the need to pool resources and/or expertise, and to address multiple poverty- and exclusion-related issues in a coordinated manner.

The role of cultural integration and participation

The Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion feeds into the Europe 2020 objective to become a more inclusive society. Access to and integration of the poor and marginalized members of society is therefore an important contributor to achieving the goal. It can be said that LRAs actively work to offer cultural, educational, and community-building activities to their

residents. These activities are often supported by public funds (see conclusions on funding below) and may or may not specifically target socially excluded and poor population groups. But activities mentioned by LRAs also include town/city festivals, access to physical recreation opportunities, historical and heritage celebrations, and movie/radio programming.

It is noted that LRAs that are home to a significant Roma population have created specific cultural programmes to better integrate them into society, to raise awareness and remove the stigmata that have historically been attached to this people.

Role of the Social Investment Package

The relevance of the SIP to local and regional authorities falls into three main responses:

- it is still too new to have been considered or used;
- it is not relevant to the work of the LRA, because it offered no significant changes in the way of thinking about social policy;
- it is highly relevant (but may also come with constraints such as increased funding)

Strengths and weaknesses of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion flagship initiative

The survey provides evidence that the Platform recognizes to a large extent the **multi-dimensionality of poverty and social exclusion** as evidenced by the compilation of strengths and weaknesses in the following table (panel a) on strengths and panel b) on weaknesses).

a)

Strengths	Frequency
Simplification and better targeting of social policies, adequate framing of the issues, and clear identification of priorities and actions	5
Adequate link between EU and territorial programmes and commitment to horizontal and vertical cooperation, including with other stakeholders (NGOs, businesses, etc.)	3
Increased awareness of poverty and social exclusion, including boost in visibility for Roma issues, child poverty, homelessness and other issues affecting the most vulnerable population groups	2
Recognition of the need to innovate and implement new programmes and actions	2
First time a numerical index measuring poverty and	1

Strengths	Frequency
social exclusion has been included in EU policy	
Enforcing actions to integrate the socially excluded	1
Recognition of multi-dimensionality of poverty and social exclusion	1
A rich volume of best practices and other information is now available due to the reporting requirements	1

b)

Weaknesses	Frequency
Problem is in implementation of the EPAPSE (NRPs too vague, lack of funding, differences in national and local priorities, complexity of programmes and lack of coordination, no inclusion of budget-balancing measures in the Platform or Europe 2020 Strategy)	4
Need for continued monitoring and evaluation, better and more comprehensive indicators, and recognition of the multi-dimensionality of poverty and social exclusion	3
Too little attention given to specific issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving financial situation of the poor - Spurring economic growth that creates jobs and hence addresses one of the main causes of poverty - Increase focus on the working poor - Recognize the value of preventive action 	4 (individual issues counting together)
Platform lacks immediate impact and actions	1
Lack of visibility of EU policies in the poverty and social exclusion sector	1

Table 7: Summary of strengths and weaknesses reported in the survey.

Whilst the agreement on the strength of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion is quite homogeneous, the criticisms and perceived weaknesses are more diverse as Table 7b) demonstrates.

The contribution from the European Social Network (ESN) in particular highlights the sometimes stark contrasts between social programmes and services available in one country versus another and the discrepancies that sometimes even exist within a country. The same is true for access and information available to those in need. The EPAPSE is not specifically designed to address these discrepancies but rather offers an umbrella strategy for action that needs to leave room for adjustment at local and regional levels.

Role of the National Reform Programme and LRA's ability to contribute to it

The NRP was seen by about a third of respondents as adequately responding to the needs of local and regional authorities to the issues addressed by the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The criticism concentrated on it being too narrowly focused (mostly on job creation), too vague in its policies and aims, driven by abstract political considerations instead of local realities, lacking recognition of regional and local differences, and too short on providing exact guidance and funding information.

The LRAs would like to have greater influence on the drafting of the NRP, although 11 respondents could contribute directly, indirectly or in a very limited form. Such participation would help to ensure that the actions and programmes included are reflective of local needs and realities and contain appropriate measures to monitor progress.

Role and impacts of funding availability, especially the EU Structural Funds

It is noted that the EU Structural Funds play a role only in about half of the respondents' budgets for programmes and actions related to the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Thirteen respondents explained that actions are funded through a combination of local and/or regional, EU and in some cases private funds, but with varying levels of dependence.

The economic downturn has impacted the majority of LRAs in their ability to fund existing programmes and to support new ones that are needed due to the rise in poverty and social exclusion. However, six respondents (11%) answered that fiscal consolidation has not or not yet led to limitations or financial difficulties in fighting poverty and social exclusion. The main conclusion on funding is that social and anti-poverty programmes are generally multi-dimensional and longer-term, which means that their survival and success depends heavily on consistent planning and stable resource allocation, both of which are threatened by prolonged economic contractions and fiscal consolidation.

Role of and potential changes to the forthcoming Partnership Agreement

The forthcoming Partnership Agreement is both seen as an opportunity to strengthen the role, visibility and horizontal recognition of poverty issues in EU policies. But the Agreement is also not yet widely enough known or understood. Five respondents could not answer the question.

With respect to proposed changes to the Partnership Agreement, they can be categorized into content- and funding-related changes:

Content:

- The Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion should be concise and objectives should be specific and measurable both at macro and micro levels for local authorities.
- The EPAPSE should be reviewed and evaluated every year.
- Make the cross-cutting relationships and commonalities of the EPAPSE and other flagship initiatives more visible, especially the flagship initiative New Skills and Jobs and the flagship initiative Youth on the Move. Also in this context, need greater recognition that poverty/social exclusion policies impact growth and these should not be dealt with in isolation. Instead, there needs to be a direct link between bringing people out of poverty/exclusion and growth and economic aims of EU and national governments.
- Increase general awareness of EU policies in this sector, including at local and regional levels.
- Better coordination of EU and Member State actions to allow for regional differences within the Member States to be better reflected, whilst also offering a broader spectrum of solutions.
- Include prevention measures in the EPAPSE.

Funding:

- Allocate more resources to fighting poverty, because this is a long-term, multi-dimensional effort that is undermined by (i) fiscal austerity measures, (ii) funding insecurity and (iii) difficulty in accessing funds and information by those in need.
- Recognise and counteract the true impact of the economic downturn and reduced budgets for local authorities, which can detrimentally affect performance against targets.
- Simplify and align the funding mechanisms for the EU Structural Funds and allow multiple sources of funding to be applied for simultaneously. They are critical sources of financial support for actions under the initiative
- Increase awareness of the initiative and its measures in the EU Member States, including the SIP. It should be evident which institutions in the country are responsible for the implementation of measures in any particular initiative.
- Simplify the bureaucracy and system for applying for grants, as well as accounting procedures.

8 Annex I – List of Respondents

No	Name of the LRA	Country	Type	Member of Monitoring Platform
1	Harghita County Council	Romania	County/Province	No
2	Ferreira do Alentejo Municipality	Portugal	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
3	TS-LKD Panevezio miesto skyrius	Lithuania	City/Town/Municipality and Region	No
4	City of Malmö	Sweden	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
5	Scarborough Borough Council	United Kingdom	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
6	Regional Labour Office, Kielce	Poland	Region	No
7	Hengelo Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
8	Purmerend Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
9	Barneveld Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
10	Ministry of the German-Speaking Community in Belgium	Belgium	Region	Yes
11	Province of Reggio Emilia	Italy	County/Province	No
12	European P'ACTS Network	France	Association of organisations	No
13	City of Vienna	Austria	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
14	Alentejo Regional Delegation	Portugal	Region	Yes
15	Olomouc Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	Yes
16	Szamotuły County	Poland	County/Province	No
17	Province of Groningen	Netherlands	County/Province	Yes
18	City of Strzelce Opolskie	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	No
19	Parliament of Extremadura	Spain	Region	No
20	Region Västra Götaland	Sweden	Region	Yes
21	City of Delft	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
22	Urban Community of Dunkirk	France	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
23	Tolna County Council	Hungary	County/Province	No
24	Pardubice Municipality	Czech Republic	City/Town/Municipality	No
25	Employment and Learning Department of Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	Region	No
26	Lombardy Region	Italy	Region	Yes
27	Auvergne Region	France	Region	No
28	City of Solna	Sweden	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
29	European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation – Galicia-Northern Portugal (GNP-AECT)	Spain and Portugal	Association of LRAs	No
30	Prešov Self-Governing Region	Slovakia	Region	Yes
31	Regional Office of Extremadura in Brussels	Spain	Region	No
32	Madeira Autonomous Region	Portugal	Region	Yes
33	Government of the Canary Islands	Spain	Region	No

No	Name of the LRA	Country	Type	Member of Monitoring Platform
34	Kobylnica Town Council	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	No
35	Autonomous Government of Catalonia	Spain	Region	No
36	Pardubice Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	No
37	Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw	Poland	County/Province	No
38	Trenčín Self-Governing Region	Slovakia	Region	Yes
39	Vysočina Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	No
40	Västerbotten county	Sweden	County/Province	No
41	Uusimaa Regional Council	Finland	County/Province	Yes
42	Flemish Government	Belgium	Region	Yes
43	Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia	Spain	Region	Yes
44	Łódź City Council	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
45	Government of Catalonia	Spain	Region	Yes
46	Council of the Picardie Region	France	Council of the Picardie Region	No

9 Annex II – List of Local/Regional Initiatives reported in contributions

Authority	Initiative
City of Vienna	introduction of need-based social welfare for low-income people in Vienna in September 2010 and improvements in services offered and administrative protocols; greater support for under-age children; more services for job integration; (ii) goal to reduce recipients of need-based social welfare through better job placement and improved coordination between Viennese trainee guarantee and and labour market service centers; Qualifications Plan 2020 aims to increase educational skills by promoting school and job skills, continuing education for adults, and information and motivational actions. Specifically, the plan aims to:
COSLA	In the broader policy framework of Achieving Our Potential , Scottish Local Authorities together with the Scottish Government and other Scottish partners have committed themselves to address the drivers of poverty and take a long term approach across a variety of policy areas and services. Places an emphasis on early intervention and prevention (especially child poverty).
COSLA	Scottish Local Authorities work to improve the well-being of children, most notably through the Early Years Framework . It is underpinned by ‘Getting it right for every child’ (GIRFEC), following the principles of early intervention and co-ordinated and coherent support to young people and families.
COSLA	At the local level, Community Planning Partnerships (CCPs) play a key role in focusing resources and services and addressing child poverty across policies including education, care, housing etc. COSLA is also working with Councils, Scottish Government and Scottish stakeholders on policies (e.g. Children and Young People Bill etc.) to ensure that Scottish LRAs can offer high quality and sustainable services in early childhood education and care.
COSLA	Scottish Councils are also working hard to tackle health inequalities, for instance in the Equally Well framework , a joint strategy by Local Government and the Scottish Government. A joint Task Force on Health Inequalities has drawn up a set of priorities to effectively address health inequalities from an integrated approach.
COSLA	Scottish local government is in fact engaging in a variety of activities including local employability partnerships , activity agreements, and participation as employers in national programmes (e.g. ‘ Get ready for work ’) as well as preventative work (16+ Learning Choices, Curriculum for Excellence). Local Employability Partnerships (‘ Workforce Plus ’) led by Councils with key stakeholders and local employers have worked to identify potential opportunities and future skills needs.
COSLA	Councils have also agreed on a living wage (well above national minimum wage) for local government employees with the lowest salary.
Krapina-Zagorje County	Social and health measures of Krapina-Zagorje County, Plan for Health of Krapina-Zagorje County, Development Strategy of Krapina – Zagorje
Krapina-Zagorje County	Regular updating of Social indicators at regional level, Strategy for social inclusion of persons with disabilities; Action plan for employment of persons with disabilities and Human Resources Strategy - comprises various programmes and measures to reduce child poverty , to raise the active inclusion in society and especially in the labour market
Regional Government of Valencia	The Valencia Region's 2nd Plan for Inclusion and the Prevention of Social Exclusion (PIPES) is aims to help persons at risk of exclusion and poverty for the period 2011-2013. The Plan's overall aim was to eradicate poverty and ensure the proper attention to and protection of socially dependent individuals. The Plan was developed along five strategic lines: Line 1. - Working to achieve a more cohesive society Line 2. - Ensuring fairness in education Line 3. - Promoting access to employment Line 4. - Making progress on health as a social good Line 5. – Making use of R+D+i in tackling social inclusion
City of Pilsen	Community Plan for the Development of Social Services in the City of Plzeň 2008-2015 , an implementation plan is established annually in collaboration with all stakeholders to react to the situation in the social sphere for the given period

Authority	Initiative
City of Pilsen	The Community Plan defines all the key target groups of service users and areas of care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family, children and young people • Socially excluded areas and the homeless • People with disabilities • Senior citizens • Foreigners and immigrants
City of Pilsen	Community Plan provides for prefinancing, cofinancing, partnerships, in-kind contributions
City of Pilsen	Grant programmes are announced in addition to those for running social services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare and support for the disabled and the elderly • Support for those with health problems • Integration of foreigners and support for minority activities • Social and other services and activities in the social sphere • Active pro-family policy
City of Pilsen	Other programs: "Integration of foreigners at local authority level – Tackling the issue of people migrating to the city of Plzeň for work", "Distribution of school books and materials for children from socially disadvantaged families", "Food help", "Providing services for the homeless", "Immediate humanitarian help to foreigners in difficult social circumstances" and "Education support and mentoring".
Association of Catholic Families St. Wojciech (Adalbert) Parish in Radzionków	Since 2005 we have participated in the PEAD programme , which supports the poorest residents of the European Union. Over the last seven years nearly 4 000 residents were able to benefit from the programme on a regular basis.
City of Amsterdam	1. New lines of cooperation between the public and private sector: Pact for Amsterdam: a network for poverty reduction bringing together the city council, businesses, and civil society organisations. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to work, welfare, basic services (healthcare, housing etc.) and education: various social services, such as extra support for provision for the over 65s, education allowance, PC allowance, social lending scheme for education, public care insurance. • Better use of EU funds to stimulate social integration and combat discrimination: European Integration Fund (creation of language practice workshops), European Refugee Fund (project to promote labour market participation amongst refugees), European Social Fund (helping those ineligible for benefits into work, promoting employment of older workers (over 55)).
Veneto Region	The planning and financing of the network of social and health inclusion services .
Veneto Region	The financing of social protection instruments in case of unemployment .
Veneto Region	Labour market integration projects for the disadvantaged .
Ferreira do Alentejo	Local Contract Social Development, through training actions for vulnerable population groups to build skills.
Area Council of Berguedà	Intervention programmes for people/families at high risk of exclusion
Area Council of Berguedà	Prevention programmes such as better coordination among primary care professionals
Area Council of Berguedà	Training and awareness programmes to help people take charge of their lives and build the necessary skills, while also raising awareness of poverty and social exclusion in the county at large.
Municipality of Faro	Under school social work measures, a meal service is offered to all children attending pre-school and 1st Cycle , the menus being developed in collaboration with dieticians and meeting nutritional and hygienic criteria.

Authority	Initiative
Municipality of Faro	In the absence of empty homes and in view of the need to respond to urgent situations, Temporary Accommodation Units (AATs) have been created (2 apartments for up to 6 people each)
Municipality of Faro	The rules of procedure of the Faro Social Network (CLASF) provides for the creation of Working Groups on specific issues . Three working groups have been created to respond to the priorities for action identified, the homeless, RIVA (clothing and food integrated response) and the elderly, with the aim of providing integrated responses to the specific needs of the groups in question.
Riga City Council	Riga's strategic guidelines and the activities set out in the city's long-term development strategy for the period up to 2025 and in the Riga development programme .
Riga City Council	The mission and vision for the city of Riga's social services and welfare assistance system and the strategic objectives set in 2008 as part of the strategy for the development of this system for the period from 2008-2013 .
Riga City Council	In 2012, Riga City Council adopted the City of Riga Action Plan for implementing the 2012-2014 integration agenda (integration in the sense of fostering sense of belonging to Riga)
Riga City Council	City of Riga Health Strategy for 2012-2021 "Veselīgs rīdzinieks-veselā Rīgā" (Healthy inhabitants in a healthy city).
Mazovia Province	<p>1. Systemic Projects within the framework of the Operational Programme Human Capital (OPHC) Following projects aiming at combating poverty and social exclusion have been realised in the Masovian Voivodeship under the framework of the OPHC:</p> <p>1.1 In the area of social assistance and social integration</p> <p>(a) "Together for Mazovia - education in action", Measure 7.3.1. under OPHC (b) "Calculator of the costs of neglect - introduction of innovative solutions in the region of Mazovia in terms of social policy, in the area of analysis of the costs of not taking any activating or supporting actions", Measure 7.3. under OPHC. (c) "Coordination for active integration", a project within the framework of Measure 1.2.1 under OPHC. (d) "The Internet for Mazovia", project within the framework of the Measure: Preventing information exclusion under Regional Operational Programme for the Masovian Voivodeship [RPO WM]. (e) "The return of women to the labour market", competition project of OPHC, Sub-measure 7.2.1.</p> <p>1.2 In the field of education</p> <p>a) "Children's Academy of the future – equalization of educational chances of students through extracurricular activities aimed at developing key competences in elementary schools"- systemic project OPHC 9.1.2 (b) "Equalization of educational chances of students through extracurricular activities aimed at developing key competences - Let's play for success"- systemic projects OPHC 9.1.2 (c) "Open pre-schools", systemic project OPHC 9.1.1 (d) "Vocational education - condition, potential, needs II", systemic project, Measure 9.2 OPHC (e) "Children's Academy of the future – equalization of educational chances of students through extracurricular activities aimed at developing key competences in elementary schools"- systemic project OPHC 9.1.2</p> <p>1.3 In the area of the labour market</p> <p>a) "Self-employment, an effective remedy to unemployment", systemic project OPHC Sub-measure 8.1.2 (b) "Entrepreneurship Academy V", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (c) "Entrepreneurship Academy VI", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (d) "Time for business III", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (e) "Time for business IV", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (f) "Small Business School of Płock V", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (g) "Small Business School of Płock VI", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (h) "Business of Radom II", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2</p>

Authority	Initiative
	<p>(i) "Your own company-your chance", project OPHC, Measure 6.2 (j) "Start a company with WUP [Voivodeship Office of Employment]", systemic project OPHC, Measure 6.2</p> <p>2. Voivodeship Programs</p> <p>a) Voivodeship Program on the Equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and preventing their social exclusion and Assistance in achieving the objectives fostering employment of people with disabilities in the Masovian Voivodeship in the years 2009-2013. (b) Regional Plan for Employment for the year 2013 (c) Plan for the development of social economy in the region of Mazovia for the period 2013-2020 - a document in the course of approval. (d) Masovian Mental Health Programme for the years 2011-2015 (e) The implementation of the Voivodeship Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for the years 2011-2015 (f) The implementation of the Voivodeship Programme for Preventing and Solving Alcohol-related problems for the years 2011-2015</p> <p>3. The realization of the objectives in strategic actions</p> <p>1. Implementation of the Strategy for the development of the Masovian Voivodeship by 2020 (current document update until 2030) 2. Implementation of the Voivodeship Strategy on Social Policy for the Masovian Voivodeship in the years 2005-2013 - annexed to the Strategy for Development of the Masovian Voivodeship until 2020 (document updated for the period 2014-2020)</p>
Łódź city council	<p>Measures to fight against poverty and social exclusion are based on the Integrated Development Strategy for Łódź 2020 + and the Strategy for Solving Social Problems in Łódź for the period 2011-2015. These include in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation and improvement of the quality of life for seniors • Active Seniors' District Centres • Community assistance to meet the basic necessities of the residents of Łódź • Promoting care for children and family • Help for the elderly and disabled persons • Social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities • Help for people with mental disorders and their families • Preventing domestic violence • The fight against digital exclusion
Marshal's Office of the Lubelskie region, Lublin	<p>Regional Social Assistance Centre in Lublin carries out the following actions and programmes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Policy Strategy for the Voivodeship of Lublin, which main aim is to achieve full social integration and a high standard of living, meeting the needs of all residents, effective problem solving with the use of the potential of human capital, the activity of non-governmental organizations and local communities. 2. Voivodeship Programme for the Elderly, which goal is to improve the quality of life of older people, the strengthening of intergenerational integration and creation of a positive image of older people in the public consciousness. 3. Voivodeship Programme of broadening, diversifying and modernising of assistance and social support for people with mental disorders in terms of: living and housing aid, stationary aid, community self-help. 4. "Training and consultancy improving skills of the employees of social assistance and social integration institutions"- Systemic project co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund, which aims to raise qualifications, increase competence and substantive potential of staff and volunteers of social assistance and social integration institutions and of human resources at Organizational Units of Social Welfare, as well as to increase the competence of the personnel of social assistance and social integration institutions through advisory services. 5. A long-term regional action plan for the promotion and popularisation of social economy and development of the institutions of the social economy sector and its surroundings in the region – "A Signpost of social development ". The main objective of the project is to develop and implement a vision for the development of social economy through the development of cooperation mechanisms and a modern and effective system of support for the social economy in the Voivodeship of Lublin. <p>Within the framework of the regional component of the Operational Programme Human Capital, the 7th Priority - "Promotion of social integration" – is</p>

Authority	Initiative
	<p>carried out in the Lublin Voivodeship. The Department of the European Social Fund serves as the Intermediate Body on behalf of the Self-government of the Voivodeship of Lublin. The Regional Labour Office in Lublin is the Implementing Institution (the Intermediate Body of the 2nd degree) for this priority. Projects implemented within the Priority VII, "The promotion of social integration" aim primarily at increasing the chances of finding employment by persons from groups in the specific situation on the labour market and facing the problem of unemployment. These are, therefore, persons at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded. In the framework of the pursued projects the following forms of support play the primary role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -active integration as a whole (including social contracts, PAL, programs for people with disabilities, social work; -support for the creation and/or operation of social integration subjects -support for the creation and operation of non-school forms the social integration of young people -trainings and courses aimed at acquiring, increasing, or changing qualifications and professional competences and the development of social skills and competences -psychological and psychosocial counselling, leading to social and professional integration -support for establishing, joining or getting employed in a social cooperative.
Mikołów City Council	<p>Creating of the Centre of Social Initiatives aiming at empowerment of vulnerable and socially excluded persons, helping them to get independent of the social welfare system and to return to the market. CSI realized a project "Your chance at your fingertips". Social Welfare Center in Mikołów carried out the following projects financed from the ESF: "Contract your future" [Zakontraktuj swoją przyszłość] on social exclusion - and "Have a chance with us." [Miej szansę z nami] on children development. The Municipality of Mikołów, carries out a programme of cooperation with non-governmental organisations, in which one of the fields is "Strengthening social welfare and charitable activities" (activities mitigating the effects of poverty and organizing leisure time for children and young people from families which are poor or threatened by social exclusion). Funding from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy obtained for two projects in the field of "Activities for professional and social integration and re-integration of people at risk of social exclusion" - 1) the improvement of housing conditions through engaging of the unemployed in the implementation of social contracts, 2) organization of workshops and events for families benefiting from the services of the Social Welfare Center in Mikołów.</p>
Wielkopolska Regional Government	<p>Activities directly related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Voivodeship of Wielkopolska undertaken by the Regional Social Policy Centre in Poznań:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Building Social Partnerships based on the Rule of EU Solidarity and Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - implementation of partnership projects relating to social economy, people with disabilities, older people II. Information, Promotion and Popularisation of Activities relating to the Theme of the European Year of the Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010), of Volunteering (2011) and of Intergenerational Integration (2012) III. Direct Actions for People at Risk of Poverty and Exclusion. IV. Support for the Development of Personnel working on Social Integration and Enhancing Quality of Operation of the System of Social Aid and Integration V. Social Campaigns promoting Volunteer Work for the Benefit of People at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion and Campaigns Combating Discrimination and Prejudice against Elderly and Disabled People.
Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)	<p>Local councils setting up schemes for emergency payments for people in severe hardship such as extra funding to food banks, vouchers or household goods.</p>
Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)	<p>Consultation/engagement with people In social housing so they understand impact of new "Spare Room Subsidy" that may make many relocate to smaller social housing.</p>
Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)	<p>Local authorities working on individual basis - no Yorkshire and Humber wide scheme. Involve Yorkshire and Humber is an organisation working with LGYH and Councils to support and help people deal with new reforms.</p>

Authority	Initiative
Belfast City Council	Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) through Belfast health Development Unit (BHDU) developed draft framework that highlights addressing poverty. BHDU started plans for addressing poverty and has developed poverty screening tool.
City of Nuremberg	Action Plan Against Child Poverty in Nuremberg
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	In accordance with the objectives and tasks formulated in the updated National Reform Programme Europe 2020 adopted by the Council of Ministers 25.04.2012r., various activities are carried out in the Lodz region in the areas covered by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Tackling social exclusion is carried out in the following areas:
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	A low cost housing, continuation of the program of social housing and communal and protected flats, and houses for the homeless
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	The development of social enterprise for people at risk of social exclusion
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	The development of the social economy sector
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	Tackling social exclusion, including among children and adolescents
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	Social and economic rehabilitation of the disabled
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	Social integration of immigrants
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	Design of the system of social services responding to the new challenges of social exclusion
Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region	Construction of a coherent system of family support and child care
Government of Extremadura	The programs / actions already implemented or in process of implementation for (iii) are: the " draft Law on Extremadura Basic Income ", currently being processed in the parliament , the " draft Law on Extremadura Social Services ", the " Network of Extremadura Basic and Specialized Social Services " addressed at the following vulnerable groups: Homeless, Roma, Immigrants, Returned migrants, LGBT Collective. As well as measures to promote Voluntary work and the Third sector.
Vilanova i la Geltrú City Council	The actions of the Action Plan for Social Inclusion fully coincide with the objectives of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.
Basque Government	The main action to combat poverty in the Basque Country is made up of the benefit system of income support set from late 80s . It is currently configured for RGI benefits (including associated accessories, such as single parenthood or stimulus to employment), PCV and AES. In 2011, 79% of public spending on the contingency of social exclusion in the CAE corresponded to the benefits system.
Government of Catalonia	During 2012, the Department of Social Welfare of the Government i Família de Catalunya allocated more than 150 million euros to the fight against poverty . From April 2011 to February 2012 a set of measures and actions have been developed in conjunction with the various federations and associations excelling in the fight against poverty, then the Paper proposals have been assumed as an agreement for Government. The measures and actions undertaken, among others, are:

Authority	Initiative
Government of Catalonia	<p>From the perspective of eradicating child poverty:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a catalog of services, benefits and resources supporting single or large families, newcomers families who are in vulnerable situations. 2. Strengthen training spaces and groups of discussion for parents to improve their parenting skills (positive parenting). 3. Use educational leisure spaces to cover the basic needs of children and adolescents in situations or at risk of social exclusion. 4. Improve screening instruments and evaluation of risk and helpless situations. 5. Develop the social and educational care measures in situations at risk for children and adolescents under the Law of rights and opportunities in childhood and adolescence. 6. Improve prevention and protection in relation to child abuse. 7. Aid to families in economically disadvantaged situations: transportation, school meals and access to leisure educational and fun activities.
Government of Catalonia	<p>With respect to promoting active inclusion of vulnerable groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote measures that allow the alternation of training and work in ways that enhance job prospects for the unemployed, especially young people who have left their training early. 2. Promote more flexible programs in the field of active employment policies. 3. Improving the employability of young people currently or formerly under tutelage by the Generalitat of Catalonia given that they are particularly vulnerable. 4. Promoting digital literacy programs.
Government of Catalonia	<p>To ensure decent housing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish new channels of communication between the courts and the basic social services in eviction proceedings. The purpose is to act before eviction occurs and to find alternatives and solutions for families. 2. Facilitate the use of emergency financial benefit. 3. Optimize the supply of housing for social inclusion. 4. Mobilize the public housing stock to let people in situations at risk access as soon as possible.
Government of Catalonia	<p>To end discrimination and improve social integration of people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, immigrants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporating the third sector as a key player in serving the most vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, mental health problems, long-term unemployed without benefits, with unshared family burdens, etc.). 2. Promote access to housing for young people under tutelage by the Generalitat of Catalonia. 3. Alleviate social isolation of older people through community work. 4. Prevent and detect cases of abuse of the elderly.
Lombardy Region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support to local actions, led by municipalities, for the implementation of network initiatives with other local actors to foster active search for employment by young people. 2. Regional managed initiatives to encourage the recruitment of young people by enterprises. 3. Regional managed initiatives for the start-up of business and the sustainability of new businesses over time. 4. Support to apprenticeships. 5. Application of the Skills Certification System. 6. Initiatives for social and employment inclusion of vulnerable groups. 7. Interventions for linguistic integration and social guidance. 8. Interventions for the housing integration of migrants. 9. Interventions for vulnerable groups (prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families).

Authority	Initiative
County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau	<p>i. - Social programmes for children and their families through projects aiming natural family reintegration of children under protective measures in a residential structure, with financial support;</p> <p>- Service reorganization in residential centers type "family homes", vocational counseling for youth in care, to enable them an independent life and socio-professional insertion through vocational centers;</p> <p>-Increased access to social services through diversification of information and counseling families at risk;</p> <p>-Conducting information campaigns and counseling in schools, dropout prevention, child trafficking prevention, juvenile delinquency;</p> <p>-Active participation of the community in the management of social issues through the development of volunteer networks involving NGOs.</p>
County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau	<p>ii. - Development of projects to achieve two shelters for homeless.</p> <p>- Involvement of local authorities to facilitate access to utility networks for disadvantaged families, by involving community volunteers.</p>
County Paying and Social Inspection Agency in Buzau	<p>iii. - Providing social benefits to all persons who meet the eligibility conditions laid down by law;</p> <p>- Targeting social assistance programmes to vulnerable groups;</p> <p>- Professional advice and guidance activities aimed at career planning and socio-professional integration of people with disabilities;</p> <p>- Carrying on home care for the elderly, but also other categories of persons who have identified such needs;</p> <p>- Promoting the concept of "proactive aging" and involving older people in the community, promote models of good practice in this regard.</p>
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Region „Ústí nad Labem“ realise the individual projects focused on support of social service for prevention, so these can develop and can go ahead a better quality.
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Support of prevention social service from the city and region budget.
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Acceptance of the ordinances limiting the gambling and the hazard in some cities of the region.
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Effort of cities to introduce a possibility of „social living“, or so-called permeable living.
Regional Authority of the Usti Region	Effort of some cities to develop a concept of „social living“.
Town-council of the city Pardubice	Eradication of the infant poverty and solution of the financial exclusion and over-indebtedness: realised by NGO Civic advisory Pardubice through the expert social consultancy and through the project funded by Czech-Slovak Business Bank and ERA Post bank called “Debt consultancy.” NGO Laxus within the the project “Back, differently” – OPLZZ: structural funds of the EU. The other providers deal with the issue in the frame of the basic advisory incorporated into their service. Long-term bad financial situation of some users has not been successfully solved yet. Focus is on the support of whole families, persons, than children themselves.
Town-council of the city Pardubice	Worthy living – homelessness: solves the consequences of the loss of the place to live. SKP – CENTRUM NGO: Asylum house for men, City asylum house for woman and mother with children, Hospice for men and hospice for women, The house in the middle of the way, Accessible day centre, Field program. Romodrom NGO: expert social consultancy for people sentenced to imprisonment and their families and the people coming from jail and their families. Laxus NGO within the project “Back, differently” – OPLZZ: Structural funds of the EU, within the expert social consultancy. City-council of the city Pardubice: program Social Living. The helper in action NGO: within the sponsorial nurturing service (the help with the housekeeping economy).

Authority	Initiative
The Nitra Self-governing Region	1. The program of economical and social development of the Nitra Self-governing Region 2012-2013. Priority II. – Human resources, Specific goal 2 – Social development. Proceedings: 2.1 Assurance of availability and variability of social service, de-institutionalization and humanization of social service. 2.2 Assurance of availability and variability of health care. 2.3 Support of cultural, sport and communal life in the region. 2.4 Decrease of the occurrence of socially pathological cases.
The Nitra Self-governing Region	2. Concept of the development of the social service in the Nitra Self-governing Region.
The Nitra Self-governing Region	3. A call for tender on social programs, to which apply accredited subjects providing social and advisory help for risk groups.
Flemish Government	<p>The actions that the Flemish government implements in terms of poverty reduction are listed in the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction. It identified a number of priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The introduction of a poverty test for new regulations - As many automatic allocations of rights - Special attention to colored poverty - Encouraging networking between community/social workers - Increasing knowledge about poverty (including the establishment of a scientific Flemish Centre for Support for Poverty) - The valorisation of poverty research - Support of debt assistance - The introduction of a Flemish leisure ticket - Cost control of secondary education - Actions on the issue employment - The introduction of an automatic housing subsidy for people who are on the waiting list for a long time - Accessible primary health care - Fight Child poverty <p>On the issue of reduction of child poverty the following actions are undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working on a social support, among other through the development of a society / business case - Local community-oriented care services continue to be supported - Over all of Flanders projects related to 'family support with bridges to education / work' are rolled out - Prenatal care is expanded, in urban areas, priority is given coordination of health case and psychosocial support for vulnerable pregnant women - The preventive family support is redrawn on content, organization and institutional level with particular attention to families in poverty. There is a reinforced preventive family support, with 'Houses of the Child' as a key lever. - There is support/commitment for an affordable, high-quality, accessible and adequate supply of child care for vulnerable young children and their parents. - The outpatient and mobile offerings from the Centers for child healthcare and family support is strengthened and expanded to provide care and support for smaller children in crisis or risk situations. Educational and behavioral problems are addressed early, especially for disadvantaged groups. - 'Farmers at a Crossroads "and" Between Step' promote family counseling for entrepreneurs in difficulties. The people who end up with problems are supported in the overall family situation with increased attention to the specific situation of young children in these families. - A sustainable kindergarten participation is one of the priorities within the education policy. There are specific efforts undertaken to inform vulnerable parents of young children about the (importance of) pre-school/kindergarten education. - A new system should be developed whereby the kindergarten education is even better framed. - The affordability of education is better ensured by focusing on better communication of existing and new measures and an automatic grant of education subsidy. - The use of better communication between the school and the parents. Schools should impose special efforts to reach towards the parents. Parents can also develop actions on this.

Authority	Initiative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within the complementary education, many projects are already funded that also work on tackling child poverty. These projects are very diverse and focus among others on parenting and family support. - As part of the Work and Investment Plan and the alternatives to job deductions we will focus on specific pathways for people (including parents) in poverty and this from the perspective of a package of measures. - In the context of the right to (social) housing the presence of children in the family is explicitly taken into account. This is particularly the case with programming social housing, rent calculation of the social rent, the bonus for the rent and the improvement and renovation and adjustment bonus. - In social research in the context of minimum gas supply by the CPAS, the presence of children is explicitly taken into account. - In the (re) construction of caravan sites a child-friendly environment will be included as an issue of consideration. - The Flemish Urban Fund provides the necessary space to implement programs or actions to tackle child poverty. Examples of this are projects aimed at family support, social artistic projects with children, play streets etc. - The support of local initiatives aimed at tackling child poverty is promoted. Flanders contributes to the creation and continuation of local projects which build on the transversal fight against child poverty. - Tourism Flanders funds and supports Social Tourist associations according to the decree Tourism for All. In this way, families without holiday experience can approach these organizations for the right framework and support. - Children from families that are not organized in associations should be able to enjoy holidays participation. To reach this, increased tailored guidance and an improved and better outreach to people in poverty is promoted. - By supporting 'Leesweb association' we try to promote the elimination of illiteracy. This phenomenon still causes a lot of barriers in our society and especially occurs in groups at risk (e.g. children in poverty, ethnic minorities). - The play opportunities for children under 6 years and specifically children in poverty need to be increased. - It is going to be examined how the discount system of 'The Line in time' can be automated (Remark Franziska: couldn't find info on what this is). In addition, it is examined how the discount system can be made more transparent. - With regard to media, awareness raising and education of all stakeholders around poverty and child poverty is promoted. - The fight against child poverty will be part of the program on social innovation. <p>The whole set of actions and programs is needed to tackle poverty in an integral way.</p>
European Social Network (ESN)	<p>ESN's priorities over the last three years have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community care and integration of people with disabilities • Mental health and wellbeing • Child poverty and wellbeing • Long-term care and social inclusion for older people • Choice and control for service users • Impact of and responses to the economic crisis
Preston City Council	Preston City Council is an accredited Living Wage employer
Preston City Council	The Council is promoting worker co-operatives to increase the amount spent on goods and services in the local economy, and through this create a number of new worker owned businesses
Preston City Council	The Council is exploring ways of re-establishing a credit union within the city to enable its residents to access cheaper loans as a credible alternative to payday lenders
Preston City Council	Preston City Council is investigating installing District Energy Systems within the city.

Authority	Initiative
Preston City Council	A collective energy switching scheme (PeoplePower) has just been piloted in Preston and across Lancashire (see section 3 for further details). The aim of this scheme is to encourage residents to reduce their energy bills by switching providers.
Preston City Council	Council is requiring 30% affordable housing on developments of 15 units or more.
Preston City Council	The council is also in the process of negotiating a City Deal with the UK Government, which would entail significant infrastructure investments
Preston City Council	The Council has a small fund for community grants which is targeted at community and voluntary sector organisations which deliver services to combat poverty and social exclusion.
Preston City Council	Through its Community Engagement Officers, the Council works with specific deprived wards within the city.
Preston City Council	Food banks
Preston City Council	The Council together with other partners has recently set up a Social Forum. The aim of the Forum is to enable a two-way dialogue between Preston City Council and forum members concerning equality.
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	national programmes , often at ministerial level and sometimes in collaboration or responsibility-sharing with local authorities
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	collaborations between different social services providers and including the private and charitable sector
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	As part of the funding that Dynamo International receives through the PROGRESS Programme , the NGO takes part in activities providing support to associations of street workers (capacity building, etc) and conveys the voice of grassroots workers and vulnerable populations
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	At the local level, several representatives from street worker associations (in Slovakia, Spain, Slovenia, etc.) highlighted outreach work and collaboration underway with other key actors in combating poverty and social exclusion. These networks of multi-disciplinary services help to prevent the causes which can lead to people finding themselves in situations of poverty and social exclusion.
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	Platforms have sometimes been created (e.g. the Committee of local councils in Sofia, Bulgaria, that has preventive objectives particularly in terms of young people in vulnerable situations; a social platform in Lisbon).
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network	Subsidised initiatives are primarily geared towards offering a temporary remedy to urgent situations without dealing with the root of the problem