

BRUSSELS, 19 NOVEMBER 2013

« ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Do not use the crisis to destroy social protection».

Conference-debate: « "Social Protection, Citizenship and Street Work"», notably in the presence of Lieve Fransen (European Commission), Olga Zrihen (Senator), Ellen Nygren (European Trade Union Confederation).

On 22 November 2013 at the Committee of the Regions, from 9h00 to 15h30
Salle VM1
Rue Van Maerlant 2, B-1049 Bruxelles

Ahead of the forthcoming annual Convention of the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion, and in the frame of the European Year for Citizenship, Dynamo International - Street Workers Network reminds the importance of social protection and the need for effective policy coordination among the EU countries to fight against poverty. The policy recommendations of the Network will be presented at the conference-debate "Social Protection, Citizenship and Social Street Work," on 22 November 2013 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

The press is cordially invited to meet the debaters who will speak at the day of the event (agenda enclosed) and to take note of the recommendations of Dynamo International - Street Workers Network.

In this current economic climate, a significant proportion of European citizens find themselves living in extremely precarious situations, depending on State-provided social services. It is not merely individuals who are facing poverty and social exclusion, but increasingly entire families. Unfortunately, sometimes poverty becomes a legacy that is handed down from generation to generation. While public austerity policies seem unable to curb this phenomenon, the victims of exclusion are being increasingly singled out.

Faced with the urgency of the situation, social protection must feature as a priority on political agendas. It is time to ask ourselves: what importance does the European Union place on its citizens and to what extent do social protection systems facilitate the inclusion of marginalised individuals within society?

*"The argument crisis is now systematically used to justify the dismantling of social policies, says Edwin Boevé, director of Dynamo International – Street Workers Network. Our society produces each day more and more wealth while redistributing it ever more unfairly. In Europe, the number of people in poverty and insecurity increases dramatically. At the same time, under the guise of efficiency, the conditions of access to social benefits are increasingly demanding, restrictive, and finally guilt-discriminatory. The result is evident: many people are likely to find themselves on the streets without any support. **Social protection should be universal, inalienable and indivisible. To make of it a meritocratic system is the worst resignation of a government against its citizens.**"*

Dynamo International – Street Workers Network encourages European institutions and European Union member states to adopt a social protection system that is accessible to everybody, equally, without discrimination. Thus, if public authorities and policy makers play a crucial role, it is only through the mutual commitment and mobilisation of everyone that we can build long-term policies and avoid making our society unbearable.



Street Workers Network

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Annex

- « *Policy Recommendations on Social Protection* », Dynamo International - Street Workers Network, 2013
- *EU tools for social protection in brief*
- *Agenda of the conference « Social Protection, Citizenship and Street Work »*, Committee of the Regions, 22 November 2013

About Dynamo International – Street Workers Network

Dynamo International coordinates the **International Network of Street Social Workers** who work on the ground with people (children, young people, adults) living in street situations. The Network is currently made up of 48 national platforms of street workers from countries of both the North and South. A real Network of solidarity, it is recognised as a European Anti-Poverty Network. It promotes sharing of practices, training, speaking out by grassroots workers, challenging political powers and other organisations in combating exclusion and inequality.

Approximately **4000** street social workers are represented within the Network through their member platforms. The 48 member platforms of the Network are made up of over **800** local and regional organisations of street workers in more than **290 towns or cities** and **150 regions**. The work of these Network members provides direct support to over **385,000 people living in street situations** and by virtue of this, over **1,540,000 parents, and community members** are indirectly impacted by these actions.

Social action through street work

Dynamo International – Street Workers Network believes that street work shall be at the heart of social action. In accordance with basic human rights, street work strives to protect and provide the most vulnerable populations with the means to protect them. By virtue of their regular, often daily, contact with particularly vulnerable populations, who are often victims of human rights violations, street social workers are a valuable partner for the local authorities and institutions concerned.

www.socialstreetwork.org

