



Confederation of
family organisations
in the
European Union
coface

Newsletter 2010 n° 1

January 2010

Editorial	p. 3
EU news	p. 4
coface news	p. 10
Members' news	p. 11
Members' newsletters	p. 14
Stats of the month	p. 15
Publications	p. 15
EU programmes	p. 17
Meetings	p. 20

EU news

p. 4

- European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion launched.
 - ... in Europe
 - ... for coface
 - ... for its members
- New Commission 2010-2014.
- Spanish Presidency: protecting victims of domestic violence.

coface news

p. 10

- coface's priorities for 2010.
- coface's responses to two European Commission public consultations:
 - the future EU 2020 Strategy.
 - Preparation of a new EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020.
- coface's recommendations on pharmacovigilance.
- Seminar on the impact of the crisis on Member States' ability to tackle the demographic challenges.

Members' news

p. 11

- coface has a new German organization. Welcome, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen!
- Access Champions (Unapei, France)
- Equality code (Uncear, Spain)
- "Questions about school" campaign, Ligue des Familles (Belgium)

Members' newsletters

p. 14

Stats of the month

p. 15

Living conditions in 2008, 17% of EU27 population at risk of poverty. Higher risk of poverty among children and elderly (Eurostat, 18/01/10).

Publications

p. 15

- European Commission report on Equality between Women and Men 2010
- Report of the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion: Homelessness and housing exclusion
- Report Eurofound on Living conditions, social exclusion and mental well-being
- UNAF brochure "Mentor a local child"

EU programmes

p. 17

Meetings

p. 20

- Peer review: Germany's "Mother and Child" Foundation for the protection of pregnant women in emergency situations
- Early Childhood Intervention Project update meeting.
- Families and responsible consuming.

Editorial

The year began for us by having to tell all coface's members and past associates the sad news of the death of our **past Secretary General, Anne-Marie Buysse** on 4 January. For over fifteen years, Anne-Marie was a kingpin of coface, whose abilities and the countless cogently-argued documents she wrote were highly valued by all - family organizations and EU institutions alike. Her role in coface was mentioned at several points during her funeral service in Brussels, and since then both her family and the coface Secretariat have received a steady stream of heartfelt tributes to her.

Turning to **EU activities** last month - the stage is set, as they say in the theatre: the cast - actors, prompter, the public - is in place. It remains only to raise the curtain and - on with the show! But this is not playacting! And not all the actors are yet on stage.

The 750-odd members of the **European Parliament** may have been elected in June, but much wrangling and horse-trading has gone on before the parliamentary committees finally took shape. And the "Intergroups" have only just been finally set up.

Among these is one closest to our concerns - the "**Intergroup on Family and Protection of Childhood**" - which we are delighted to announce will be chaired by Ms. Anna Zaborska (SK/EPP). It also seems that the Intergroup's officers will be politically much more balanced than in the previous legislature - and that is a welcome move. It is only right and proper that the defence and promotion of families in Community law should be supported by MEPs from across the political spectrum.

I cannot go any further without offering both praise and thanks to Ms. **Marie-Panayotopoulos Cassiotou** (who formerly represented the Greek large families organisation in coface) for the many Intergroup meetings she chaired in her five year term, working tirelessly to get families acknowledged in all common policies.

One element that loomed large on the Community "stage" in January was the appointment of a highly-cultured and refined European Council President. At a recent conference in Brussels, Mr **Herman van Rompuy** took a very positive stance on families and civil society.

Finally, we are awaiting a meeting with Mr. **Laszlo Andor**, the Hungarian Commissioner who is likely to have the social affairs portfolio, taking over from Mr. **Vladimir Spidla** who is returning to the Czech Republic. We had extremely good relations with Mr Spidla, whose attitude and actions with reference to us during his tenure were decisive, and he goes with our heartfelt thanks. We are also seeking meetings with the other Commissioners in charge of issues of concern to us: Consumer Affairs, Health, Services, Education, etc.

So here we finally stand with a number of partners for our activities in place.

Our job now is to play our role in Brussels, our national capitals and provinces! It is what our member organizations do that determines how effective we are; we must keep up the representations to our national MPs, our MEPs, and our respective governments.

The Community dialogue between **civil society** – of which we are privileged to be a big part - and **the EU institutions** will be what we make it at all levels and in all our family organizations' countries.

Yves Roland-Gosselin
President

EU news

European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion launched.



The key objectives of the 2010 Year (EY2010) are to raise public awareness and to renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion. The Year's guiding principle is to give voice to the concerns of people who have to live with poverty and social exclusion, and to inspire every European citizen and other stakeholders to engage with these important issues. EY2010 also aims to challenge stereotypes and collective perceptions of poverty.

EY2010 website: <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/>

... in Europe



The European Commission and the Spanish Presidency launched the Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion at a high level conference at the Ministry of Health and Social Policy in Madrid on 21 January. coface was represented there by its President Yves Roland-Gosselin and Vice-President Marién Delgado.

The opening conference in Madrid was addressed by Spanish PM Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Commission President Jose Manuel Durão Barroso, and Spain's Health and Social Policy Minister Trinidad Jiménez. The EU's Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner, Vladimir Špidla outlined the key events for EY2010. The President of the Reflection Group on the Future of the EU, Felipe González, also delivered a message about the social Europe and the challenge of poverty and inequalities.



Yves Roland-Gosselin, President of coface, Trinidad Jiménez, Spanish Minister of Health and Social Policy and Marién Delgado, Vice-President of coface

The Foreign Ministers of Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Slovenia, Portugal, Hungary and Ireland, and the Spanish Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Equality and Housing were at the event, along with 400-plus stakeholders: trade unions, business leaders and NGOs, as well as international and European organisations and representatives of government agencies.

Objectives → The economic crisis has deepened poverty and social exclusion. In response, the EU is working on the new **Strategy 2020** and the new **European social agenda**, which will lay the foundations of future EU economic and social policies. The Spanish Presidency will develop initiatives for the most vulnerable groups like the elderly, people experiencing poverty, disabled people and Roma communities.

Three roundtables were held. One was a speak-out session for people struggling to improve their lot and overcome exclusion. Another discussed varying views on the progress and limitations of EU social inclusion strategies, particularly the Lisbon Strategy. Active aging, inclusion through employment and inclusion of ethnic minorities were the central issues for this roundtable. The third - on commitments going forward from 2010 - was held as an open forum.

The [conference programme](#) (Spanish/English) and other information on the meeting: <http://www.2010contralapobreza.msps.es/> (in Spanish)

[EU launches 2010 European Year: Stop poverty now!](#) Press release from the European Commission (20/01/2010)

... for **coface**

European Family Conference

coface is working under the Progress Programme – which has been co-financing its activities since 2008 - for Europe to promote the most permanent antidote to poverty: **a family-inclusive society**. coface is in no doubt that a properly cohesive Europe will only come about when all the families that comprise it can live fulfilling lives in it.

This is why coface is organizing a major **European Family Conference on 14 and 15 October 2010 in Brussels** under the auspices of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union. The conference will look at the family dimension of EU policies and chart a roadmap towards a socially inclusive Europe.

The conference is supported by the Belgian State Secretariat for the Budget and Family Policy, and the European Commission's Progress Programme. The two big issues – the importance of an EU focus on the family, and the EU's role in combating family poverty and social exclusion - will be addressed through videoed testimonies, introductions by family policy specialists and interactive workshops (sociologists, representatives of civil society and political figures).

More specifically, four key themes directly related to coface's policy working groups will be addressed at the conference:

- Family and social policies in a changing Europe.
- The long road to inclusive Europe. Progress and prospects for people with disabilities and care needs.
- The importance of a specific family approach to consumer policy.
- Making education and ICTs work for social inclusion.

coface is hoping that all relevant EU actors will see this major event as an opportunity to renew their commitment to solidarity, social justice and greater inclusion of families. As many recession-beleaguered families look at a future which seems more uncertain than ever, we feel it could hardly be better-timed.

coface's communication strategy

As well as the conference, coface has launched a communications strategy focused on the core issue of a family-inclusive EU.



A new **logo** has been produced and a special 2010 **poster** will also be designed for the big European Family Conference.

As well putting special pages on its site to exchange information and promote the EY2010 values, plus a purpose-designed poster and logo, coface is busy producing mini-documentaries to be shown throughout the conference. These **short films** will deal with family issues that cut across the four policy working groups but angled towards the focus that we want to put on the European Year 2010.

The key themes of the 2010 documentaries are:

- Work/life balance and poverty.
- Family carers and poverty.
- Access to credit and debt prevention.
- Education and Inclusion of migrants.

Publications planned for this year include a **summary looking back** over coface's three years of Progress Programme activity in a report which will be available in early 2011.

As well as this activity report, there will be a **special booklet** as groundwork for the discussions on the issues addressed at the European Family Conference, the **conference proceedings**, collecting the high-level speakers' contributions over the two days' discussions and workshops, and finally, a **compilation of all the policy positions** adopted by coface in the first three years of its Progress Programme support.

The idea is to put all these publications out in late 2010/early 2011, either as bilingual versions or separate versions in coface's two working languages (French and English).

Full details of the conference at:

<http://coface-eu.org/en/European-Year-2010/for-COFACE/EU-Family-Conference/>

... for its members

Local and national events will be run in each Member State. "Focus Weeks" will be held throughout Europe. National NGOs will be able to join in with the activities coordinated by the National Implementing Bodies (NIB).

COFACE urges all its members to get actively involved in this important European Year. **It is still not too late!** You can get involved either through [your NIB](#) or by giving poverty and social exclusion a higher profile in your planned activities.

You could, for instance:

- Put out a press release (coface can mock-up a "model press release" for your organization to customise).
- Give a press conference (to highlight the plight in your country).
- Publish an article on your website with logos and links to the Commission and coface official pages.
- Interview or get a speak-out account from a family vulnerable to poverty to publish in your magazine/newsletter.
- Show a film about this issue followed by a discussion.
- Stage a concert with musicians at risk of marginalisation, a sporting event (fun run, etc.), a breakfast/lunch with people experiencing poverty, an exhibition of photographs, a clothing/toy collection, etc.

Whatever event you stage must prominently feature the [EY2010 logo](#) and preferably also the coface 2010 logo.

Please contact Hayet Zeghiche (EU2010 Project officer) hzeghiche@coface-eu.org or Ana Perez (Communication officer) aperez@coface-eu.org for more details. We'll be delighted to help you put all your ideas into practice!

List of Focus Weeks

15-21 February: Ireland	5-11 July: Romania
22-28 February: Austria	29 August- 5 September: Norway
1-7 March: France	6-12 September: Estonia
8-14 March: Slovenia	13-19 September: Lithuania
15-21 March: Luxembourg	20-26 September: Belgium
22-28 March: Hungary	27 September-3 October: United Kingdom
5-11 April: Malta	4-10 October: Portugal
12-18 April: Czech Republic	11-17 October: EU Focus Week
19-25 April: Slovakia	18-24 October: Cyprus
3-9 May: Iceland	25-31 October: Sweden
17-23 May: Poland	1-7 November: Denmark
24-30 May: EU Focus Week	8-14 November: Greece
31 May-6 June: Spain	15-21 November: Italy
21-27 June: Germany	22-28 November: Finland
28 June-4 July: Bulgaria	30 Nov-7 Dec: Netherlands
	30 Nov-7 Dec: Latvia

New Commission 2010-2014.

After two weeks of hearings of the Commissioners-designate, the European Parliament will move to its final vote on 9 February in Strasbourg, confirming the appointments of the new Commission for 2010-2014. The future Commissioners have set out their stalls for their next term. We take a closer look at some of the Commissioners whose portfolios touch most closely on coface's concerns:



László ANDOR: Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (HU, socialist). Takes over from Vladimir SPIDLA (Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities). The Commissioner aims to make a significant contribution to the new EU Strategy 2020 so as to step up the social dialogue. He will see what scope there is for a comprehensive review of the Organization of Working Time Directive. He will set a debate rolling on a modern service sector, social protection systems that work and proactive policies for integrating immigrants. He will also launch a Green Paper to develop a European framework for adequate and sustainable pension systems and a debate on public and social services.



Viviane REDING: Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. Vice-President of the Commission (LU, conservative). Takes over from Jacques BARROT (Justice, Freedom and Security). Her portfolio will also include **equal opportunities**.

Ms Reding will head the DGs that deal with Fundamental Rights and Citizenship as well as Justice in DG Justice, Liberty and Security (JLS), the European Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the European Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST), DG Communication (COMM) and the EU's Publications Office.

Ms Reding has said she plans to launch the first-ever "enhanced cooperation" procedure to simplify divorce for mixed-nationality couples in the EU.



[John DALLI](#): **Health and Consumer Policy** (MT, conservative). Replaces Meglena KUNEVA (Consumer Protection) and Androulla VASSILIOU (Health). In a change from the previous portfolio, Mr Dalli will also be responsible for matters relating to the pharmaceutical industry.



[Androulla VASSILIOU](#): **Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth** (CY, liberal). Replaces Maros SEFCOVIC (Education, Training, Culture and Youth) and Leonard ORBAN (Multilingualism). Ms Vassiliou's key priorities will be to develop creativity and innovation in all policy areas within her remit. The Commissioner stressed the need to find new ways of teaching to help stimulate people's creativity. The mobility of students and young people in general is another priority of her programme.

[Full list of the new Commission 2010-2014](#)

Spanish Presidency: protecting victims of domestic violence



The Spanish Presidency put forward draft legislation on 7 January to protect victims of domestic violence in the EU. If the proposal becomes law, a Member State will be able to recognize and enforce victim protection measures taken in another Member State. The Presidency also wants Member States to do two specific things: introduce a **European protection warrant for the victims of crime** throughout the EU, and introduce a **single free European helpline on 116 016** for victims.

See also: [Spain seeks a common European strategy to deal with violence against women](#)

COFACE's priorities for 2010

<http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/docs/2010COFACEPRIORITIESEN.pdf>

coface's responses to two public consultations:

Future EU 2020 Strategy - coface has given a response to the European Commission public consultation on the future EU 2020 Strategy

While welcoming the consultation document as a good basis for discussion and the opportunity to contribute to the Commission strategy, coface stresses the need to take several key points into account.

The strategy fails to sufficiently address inequalities and the distribution of wealth. Inequalities can be tackled only through education and integration into employment. Many other things must also be addressed, including the creation of quality jobs, the redistribution of wealth, continued funding of social protection systems, quality, accessible and affordable services for families.

Growth in itself will not solve the problems of inequality, social cohesion and poverty. Proactive policies are needed to ensure that everyone reaps the benefits of sustainable development and growth.

Finally, coface stresses the need for periodic consultations to clarify the meaning and practical aspect of generic terms like innovation, growth, sustainable development and productivity.

Read [COFACE's response](#)

Preparation of a new EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 - coface has given a response to the European Commission public consultation on the preparation of a new EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020

coface's response first supports the European Disability Forum's (EDF) proposal for a European Pact on equal rights for persons with disabilities. It then calls for the new strategy to acknowledge the family dimension of disability and disability policies. This means mainstreaming this issue across relevant policies, stronger cooperation and coordination between Commission services, and consistent involvement of organizations representing families of people with disabilities. Finally, coface calls for a special focus on people with severe disabilities and/or complex needs.

Read [COFACE's response](#)

coface's recommendations on pharmacovigilance.

Ahead of the European Parliament's first reading of the "pharmacovigilance" section of the Pharmaceutical Package directive, coface wants to underline the importance of pharmacovigilance in the best interest of families who have special health needs and unique health vulnerabilities. Medicines and a quality, reliable pharmacovigilance system are essential in that respect, as exposure to a drug with serious side effects can have disastrous consequences for families and in many cases are shared by all family members following the same treatment. Furthermore, health related expenditures represent a significant portion of a family's budget, especially families with chronically ill children or parents.

This makes pharmacovigilance essential to ensure the quality and safety of drugs and their timely removal from the market. Also, coface insists that the therapeutic benefits of drugs must be proven before any market authorisation is granted.

coface makes six recommendations on: information on medicines, independence, patient information, notification of dangerous drugs, accessibility and marketing.

[COFACE's Open Letter on Pharmacovigilance](#) (18/01/2010):

Seminar on the impact of the crisis on Member States' ability to tackle the demographic challenges.



coface has been invited by the European Commission to contribute to a seminar on the impact of the crisis on Member States' ability to respond to the challenges of demographic change to be held on 22 February 2010 through the European Alliance for Families.

More specifically, coface has been asked to contribute to a workshop on promoting better conditions for families, by addressing the issue: **how might the financial crisis impact fertility and Member States' support for families?**

To prepare this properly, we would like input from our members on the situation in their respective countries for no later than 10 February 2010. Please send your contributions to C. Simonin (Policy Officer) csimonin@coface-eu.org

Members' news

coface has a new German organization. Welcome, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen!

AGF | Arbeitsgemeinschaft
der deutschen
Familienorganisationen e.V.

The German association AGF, die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen e.V. (The Commission of German Associations for Family Affairs), advocates for the rights and interests of families from a political and social point of view. The commission's goal is to reduce financial and structural disadvantages that confront families and form a family friendly and family oriented social environment.

The AGF links together five associations: [Deutscher Familienverband](#), [Evangelische Aktionsgemeinschaft für Familienfragen](#), [Familienbund der Katholiken](#), [Verband alleinerziehender Mütter und Väter](#) and [Verband binationaler Familienund Partnerschaften](#).

AGF aims to promote dialogue between family associations, organisations, and advocacy groups – institutions that care about family affairs and are responsible for it. AGF encourages the cooperation of family policy making organisations on both a national and international level and identify major family policy topics.

In the last two years, two main issues of concern to AGF were **1)** the reduction of value added tax on products and services for children, where we initiated a postcard initiative in Germany addressed to the Federal Finance Minister. And **2)** the prevention and fight against child poverty.

More about AGF: www.ag-familie.de

Access Champions (UNAPEI, France)

Unapei is marking its half-centenary with an "Access Champions" competition for prize-winning measures to make towns and cities more accessible and socially inclusive for people with learning disabilities.



[Access](#) is not a well-understood concept in relation to people with learning disabilities. Unapei's member associations' daily job is building partnerships that let people with intellectual disabilities take a greater part in society and have more of a social life that reflects their needs and differences. The aim with Access Champions is to up the profile of what they are doing and show that today's exception can become tomorrow's norm.

More information: <http://www.unapei.org/Concours-des-Victoires-de-l.html>

Equality code (Uncear, Spain)

In a bid to increase equality in society, the economy and the world of work, UNCEAR (Unión de Centros de Acción Rural) has developed an equality code under the Community Equal Initiative out of a consensus between business leaders and the IGUALMURE FAMME (IGUAL-FAMME) development groups.

The overarching aim is to close the gender gap, especially in the workplace. Specific aims:



- **To foster** a culture of recognition of the many factors and dimensions of equal opportunities.
- **To introduce** a new corporate culture based on equality of opportunity.
- **To introduce** economic and social policies that work in synergy to maximise competitiveness.
- **To promote** gender equality policies, women's access to positions of responsibility, and promote family-friendly policies (flexible working hours, reducing family burdens, and making work/life balance easier).

The code reflects the reality of changing economic and social conditions that are bringing new ways of taking part in work and society. It provides an integrated plan based on 6 specific areas:

- culture change,
- human resources management: knowledge and skills,
- improving the management process,
- more and better incentives,
- facilities for equal opportunities,
- mainstreaming all these equal opportunities policies in society.

A series of proposals of varying requirements are made for each of the above areas to ascertain compliance, improve practices, or address the demands of different types of companies.

“Questions about school” campaign (Ligue des Familles, Belgium)



Ligue des Familles will be launching its “Questions about school” campaign on 6 February. The campaign is the brainchild of a mix of associations who want to bring their diversity to bear on a free and frank approach to tackling issues of importance for today and tomorrow.

On the agenda are **five workshops** on: [the point](#): Should we carry on learning the same things? [success](#): Should we continue to invest in tackling educational under-achievement? [choice](#): Is competition between schools and alternative learning pathways the right way to go? [time](#): School, homework, out-of-school childcare, holidays and the daily grind... How to cope with it all? [team](#): Teachers, parents, associations, teamwork?

More information [here](#)

Members' newsletters

Association de parents et professionnels autour de la personne polyhandicapée (AP³)

[Newsletter](#)

Association des parents d'élèves de l'enseignement libre (APEL)

[Newsletter](#)

Publication [Famille et éducation](#)

Association des paralysés de France (APF)

[Newsletter](#)

Monthly magazine [Faire Face](#)

Associazione Italiana Genitori (AGE)

Magazine [AGE Stampa](#)

Confederación española de familiares de enfermos de alzheimer y otras demencias (CEAFA)

Magazine [En mente](#)

Centre d'action laïque (CAL)

Monthly magazine [Espace de libertés](#)

Confédération syndicale des familles (CSF)

Magazine [Nous](#)

Confédération nationale Associations Familiales Catholiques (AFC)

[Newsletter](#)

Magazine [La vie des AFC](#)

Familles de France

Magazine [Familles de France](#)

Familles rurales

Bimonthly magazine [Vivre mieux](#)

Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes (FPS)

[Newsletter](#)

Quarterly magazine [Femmes Plurielles](#)

FPS on [Facebook](#)

Gezinsbond

Monthly publication [De Bond](#)

Katholischer Familienverband Österreichs (KFÖ)

[Newsletter](#)

Publication [Familien](#)

KMOP

[Newsletter](#)

Ligue des familles

[Newsletter](#)

Monthly publication [Le Ligneur des parents](#)

Movimiento italiano genitori (MOIGE)

Magazine [Genitori Oggi](#)

Union nationale des associations familiales de France (UNAF)

[Newsletter](#)

Magazine [Réalités familiales](#)

UNAPEI

Magazine [Vivre ensemble](#)

Union Nationale des maisons familiales rurales d'éducation et d'orientation (UNMFREO)

Magazine [Le Lien](#)

Väestöliito

Quarterly publication [Pari & perhe](#)

Stats of the month

[Living conditions in 2008, 17% of EU27 population at risk of poverty. Higher risk of poverty among children and elderly.](#) (Eurostat, 18/01/10).

At-risk-of-poverty rates were higher for **children** than for the total population in 20 of the 27 Member States. In 2008, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for those aged up to 17 years was **20%** in the EU27. The highest rates were recorded in Romania (33%), Bulgaria (26%), Italy and Latvia (both 25%), and the lowest in Denmark (9%), Slovenia and Finland (both 12%).

Elderly people also face a higher risk of poverty than the total population. In 2008, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for those aged 65 years and over was **19%** in the EU27. The highest rates were observed in Latvia (51%), Cyprus (49%), Estonia (39%) and Bulgaria (34%), and the lowest in Hungary (4%), Luxembourg (5%) and the Czech Republic (7%).

This press release was issued by Eurostat to coincide with the opening conference of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, in Madrid.

Publications

[European Commission report on Equality between Women and Men 2010](#)



The European Commission released its annual report on equality between women and men in the European Union at the end of December 2009. The report shows that there is a positive trend towards a more gender-equal society and labour market, yet gender gaps persist, mainly to the disadvantage of women.

The report stresses that the current economic crisis has raised concerns that the achievements in gender equality are at risk and that the effects of the recession will put greater pressure on women. However, the European Commission also argues that these times of crisis offer a unique opportunity for change, given that gender equality is a precondition for sustainable growth, employment, competitiveness and social cohesion. The report stresses that gender equality therefore continues to be a core element of the EU 2020 strategy, and so gender equality policies should be considered as a long-term investment and not as a short-term cost.

Reducing the gender pay gap, improved work/life balance, social inclusion for women in particular vulnerable situations, and combating gender-based violence are all priorities for the future.

Where work/life balance is concerned, the report stresses the needs for care services for children, but also for disabled and elderly persons in an aging population. The report also trails a reform of tax and benefit systems to encourage secondary earners and main carers for dependents to take up work and ensure equal economic independence for women and men,

also with regard to the earning of pension rights, while still protecting those with atypical career patterns.

The European Commission will be publishing a follow-up strategy to the roadmap for equality between women and men before summer 2010.

[The report](#)

coface's Response to [the European Commission's consultation on the roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 and follow-up strategy](#)

Report of the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion: Homelessness and housing exclusion



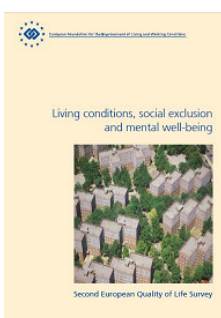
This report summarises the main findings from an analysis undertaken by the Network of experts in 2009; it covers the 27 EU countries. The experts analysed the "social and economic inclusion of homeless people" and the "access to adequate housing" in their respective country.

Drawing on both the national experts' analysis and the Network Core Team's assessment of the Social OMC, it also puts forward 15 concrete suggestions for addressing the key barriers to making progress at both national and EU levels in the fight against homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) – i.e., insufficient political commitment, lack of understanding of HHE and lack of agreement on definitions and appropriate indicators, absence of or inadequate data sources, and inadequate (if any) monitoring and reporting.

[The Report](#)

[Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion](#)

Report Eurofound on Living conditions, social exclusion and mental well-being



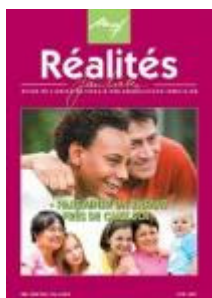
Over the past two decades, the concept of social exclusion has increasingly replaced the concept of poverty within the EU policy discussion on social vulnerability and disadvantage. It has been shown that unequal access to the labour market and poor living conditions negatively affect social participation and social contact, which in turn impact on the quality of life of Europe's citizens and lead to a sense of social exclusion. The second **European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)**, conducted by Eurofound in 2007, offers a wide-ranging view of the diverse social realities in Europe today. This report looks at the relationships between living conditions, social exclusion and mental well-being.

One of the main key findings is the role of financial and social support. The role of the family in providing financial support varies between the European countries; but when we talk about moral support, the major source of this support is **family** (considered as the primary source by about two-thirds of European citizens in all country groups). Overall, at the same level of

lifestyle deprivation, individuals who have access to financial or moral support tend to show lower levels of perceived social exclusion.

[The report](#)

UNAF brochure "Mentor a local child"



Local mentoring is a way to forge links between two families focused on a child's development. It is not about giving money, or adoption: local mentoring is about supporting a child or teenager and (with their parents) helping them to grow and fulfil their potential. France's UNAF (national union of family associations) has been working to develop local mentoring for 10 years.

Local mentoring covers many areas of family welfare. It is based on creating family ties in the widest sense and getting families to act together. It is also very much about prevention. It is good for all those involved in the relations. It is about families reaching out to one another; it supplements existing provision and puts little drain on the public purse.

Simple, common sense, volunteering, prevention... the strengths of mentoring are probably also its weaknesses in terms of getting it recognised and mainstreamed into public policies and promoting it to families and professionals. The big challenges for mentoring today, therefore, are securing recognition for it as an organized, reliable and efficient form of provision, enhancing the quality of mentoring, and promoting it to families so as to maximise the benefits.

UNAF [press release](#)

EU Programmes



Citizenship Programme 2007-2013

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/about_citizenship_fr.php

Action 1 - Active citizens for Europe:

[Town Twinning](#)

[Citizens' projects and support measures](#)

Action 2 - Active civil society in Europe. Measure 3: Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations (15 February 2010)

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/funding/2010/call_action2_3_en.php

Youth in Action 2007-2013

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/about_youth_fr.php

Lifelong Learning Programme

http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_fr.htm

JSL (Daphne III, Rights and Citizenship,...)

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/intro/funding_rights_en.htm

7th Framework Programme (FP7)

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/projects_fr.html

Meetings

January

8: Working meeting of NGO members of the intergenerational solidarity coalition organized by AGE. Brussels. C. Simonin.

8: Data Protection Day briefing. Microsoft Briefing Center. Brussels. M. Schmalzried.

12: Active European Citizenship Group. European Commission. Brussels. A. Pérez.

13: Meeting with two representatives of the World Movement of Mothers. Family Platform. Brussels. L. Farrer.

14: Meeting with M. Wathelet's policy staff to prepare the COFACE European Family Conference on 14-15 October. Brussels. W. Lay, H. Zeghiche.

14: Family Platform meeting. Brussels. L. Farrer.

14: Public Services Intergroup: Working breakfast meeting. European Parliament. Brussels. M. Schmalzried.

14: High Level Stakeholders Meeting. DG Markt, European Commission. Brussels. M. Schmalzried.

15: Meeting with Antonia Carparelli, Head of Unit E.2, DG EMPL, European Commission. Brussels. W. Lay, C. Simonin.

18: Meeting of the Membership Accreditation Committee. Social Platform. Brussels. W. Lay.

18: Data Protection Day briefing. Microsoft Briefing Center. Brussels. M. Schmalzried.

18: Debate on Families and Responsible Consumption - Discussion with Ms Kuneva. European Women's Forum. Brussels. M. Schmalzried. **(SEE ARTICLE)**

19: Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care. Brussels. C. Simonin.

21: Opening Conference of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Madrid. Y. Roland-Gosselin, President, and M. Delgado, Vice-President.

- 21-22:** Peer Review: German "Mother and Child" Foundation for the protection of pregnant women in emergency situations. European Commission. Berlin. C. Simonin. **(SEE ARTICLE)**
- 21-22-23:** Early Childhood Intervention Project Update Meeting. Ljubljana, Slovenia. Fiametta Basuyau (APF, FR) **(SEE ARTICLE)**
- 25:** Meeting with the European Platform on Children's Rights organized by Plan/Eurochild. Brussels. C. Simonin.
- 25:** Meeting with Microsoft. Preparation of the «Data protection Day». Brussels. M Schmalzried.
- 25:** FEMM Committee. European Parliament. Brussels. C. Simonin.
- 26-27-28:** Grundtvig Conference "A decade of European Innovation in Adult Learning. European Commission. Brussels. A. Pérez.
- 26:** Presentation "Child online safety". Microsoft. Brussels, M. Schmalzried.
- 27:** Eurochild's Round Table "Europe's children in care - what role for the EU?" European Parliament, Brussels. C. Simonin, M. Schmalzried.
- 27:** Zero Poverty Act Now! campaign launch. Caritas Europe. Brussels. H. Zeghiche.
- 27:** Meeting with the BEUC. Brussels. N. Revenu (UNAF, FR), M. Schmalzried.
- 27:** Expert Meeting on Pharmacovigilance. European Parliament, Brussels. M. Schmalzried.
- 27:** Daphne Programme kick-off meeting. EU Commission. Brussels. L. Leroy (FPS, BE), W. Lay.
- 28:** Public Hearing on access to credit. European Economic and Social Committee. Brussels. N. Revenu (UNAF, FR) (speaker), M. Schmalzried.
- 28:** Public Hearing "Towards a new EU strategy for gender equality". European Parliament. Brussels. C. Simonin.
- 28:** Data Protection Day. European Parliament. Brussels. W. Lay, M. Schmalzried.
- 29:** Liaison Group. European Economic and Social Committee. Brussels. W. Lay.
- 29:** Preparatory meeting – Grundtvig project coordinated by Unapei. Paris. C. Simonin.

Focus

Peer review: Germany's "Mother and Child" Foundation for the protection of pregnant women in emergency situations.

coface took part in a peer review on Germany's "Mother and Child" Foundation in Berlin on 21 and 22 January 2010. Peer reviews are a key plank of the "**Open Method of Coordination**" on social protection and social inclusion. They widen the debate on social protection and inclusion policies in the EU Member States and foster mutual learning by assessing whether a "**good practice**" in one Member State might be effective in and transferable to others.

The host country representatives, peer countries, the European Commission and European social NGOs met in Berlin to scrutinize the policies implemented around the German federal "Mother and Child" Foundation, whose aim is to prevent pregnant women with low incomes or in households where they are the main breadwinner from falling into poverty during pregnancy and/or following the birth of a child.

The Foundation provides immediate, red tape-free financial support to women whose welfare benefits have not come through in time or at all. The funds are paid out through local pregnancy information centres, improving women's access to prevention and early intervention services. With annual funding of at least €92 million from the Federal budget, the Foundation provides help to around one in five pregnant women, a third of them of immigrant origin.

coface began by praising the German approach as a modern family policy that acknowledged children's rights and pursued an active inclusion strategy. The current system also enables early intervention, while delivery at the local level means that access by the most vulnerable groups seems fairly well assured. However, coface also pointed out that it was under-funded, and offered no guarantees of joined-up working with the prevention and early intervention services (especially parenting support, lack of evaluation and insufficient involvement by fathers).

The conclusion of the peer review was that the "Mother and Child" foundation could be a very useful force for active inclusion. But that means strengthening the mix of financial assistance, quality support, and parental empowerment and involvement. The system's early intervention role should be built up, including by ensuring outreach to all those in need. A more thoroughgoing performance assessment is also needed.

More information [here](#)

[Peer Review on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion](#)

Early Childhood Intervention Project update meeting.

coface was an invited to participate at the Early Childhood Intervention Project update Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from the 21st to the 23rd of January 2010 organized by the [European Agency For Development In Special Needs Education](#).

During the years 2003-2004, the Agency conducted an analysis of ECI in Europe highlighting the importance of ECI at both policy and professional levels. We were given the opportunity to contribute to the project update giving an overview regarding progress and main changes that have been made in participating countries since 2005. Health, education or social practitioners of 27 countries of the EU were present.

coface emphasized the family approach as the key element for the success of an early intervention process, families being one of the main contexts where children develop and learn. Parents are experts with respect to their child and they can bring a great deal of information that will lead to a collaborative relationship with service providers. They must be given the means to fully exercise their parental competences.

Childhood quality care services have proven to be a key positive factor for social inclusion of children with disabilities and their families. coface insisted on the question of quality evaluation of ECI services, raising the challenge of measuring processes and tools used for this evaluation.

We also emphasized the necessity to pursue the development of a multi-dimensional approach in ECI, implying adequate changes in health, educational and social training curriculum.

Families and responsible consuming.

Outgoing DG SANCO Commissioner Meglena Kuneva was guest speaker at a lunchtime meeting organized by the European Women's Forum on 18 January 2010. coface and Gezinsbond also attended and put a series of questions to the Commissioner, including on child-appropriate labelling, and the role of public procurement in bringing about a new model of production of sustainable, repairable and recyclable goods.

On labelling – especially food labels - the Commissioner said it was unlikely that the EU would adopt a standard “traffic light” labelling system (colour-coded labels stating how much sugar, fat, salt and other ingredients a product contains out of an average adult's daily intake requirements). Child-specific food labelling would also be very hard to get agreement on at European level, even though children's growth and specific metabolism means that their nutritional requirements differ from the recommended levels shown on food labels (calculated for an average adult).

Where sustainable consumption and production are concerned, the Commissioner confirmed that public procurement, which accounts for a significant share of a country's purchasing power, can have an impact on production. But because this is a Member State responsibility, the main way to influence their policies in this area is through pointing to "star pupils" and exchanges of best practice, including highlighting the Swedish example.

February

4: Info Day. Family Platform Project. Budapest.

12: Info Day. Family Platform Project. Milan.

22-23: Working Group "Exchange of information and experiences: mutual learning and capacity building" Brussels.

March

9: Working Group on Consumer, Services and Public Health Policies. Madrid.

10: coface seminar on sustainable development and financial services. Madrid.

25: Bureau & Administrative Council. Brussels.

26: coface Seminar "Social protection as a safety net for families against poverty and social exclusion". Brussels.

27: Working Group on Family and Social Policies. Brussels.



Subscription to this newsletter: secretariat@coface-eu.org

Comments and/or suggestions: aperez@coface-eu.org

COFACE aisbl

Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union

Londenstraat 17, Rue de Londres 17 B-1050 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 511 41 79 Fax: +32 2 514 47 73 Skype: [coface-aisbl](https://www.skype.com/name/coface-aisbl)

E-mail: secretariat@coface-eu.org Web: www.coface-eu.org

coface is a pluralistic organisation, at the heart of civil society, which aims at promoting family policy, solidarity between generations and the interests of children within the European Union. **coface** advocates a policy of non-discrimination and of equal opportunities between persons and between family forms, and specifically supports policies aiming at equality between women and men.

coface links together general and single-issue national family organizations. It currently has more than 51 member organizations across 20 Member States of the European Union. As such, it gives a voice to many millions of parents and children.



This newsletter is supported under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013). The views expressed in it are those of the authors and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html