

The European Parliament organised on 27-28 January 2011 in Brussels its third Citizens' Agora, which was devoted to "crises and forms of poverty". The event will be organised in close partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee in the framework of the European Years for Combating Poverty and

Social Exclusion (2010) and Volunteering (2011). In the plenary session **Staffan Nilsson, the new president of the EESC**, underlined that "the citizens agora comes to balance the political discussion and can contribute to the definition of sustainable solutions for the groups of people living in poverty".

Three parallel workshops were organized focusing on the following aspects:

- The economic and financial crisis and new forms of poverty

-The impact of the economic and financial crises on migration flows and integration processes

- The economic and financial crisis: access to a decent and sustainable way of life for persons in situation of precariousness –challenges for a European model of society

CEDAG participated in third workshop entitled "the economic and financial crisis and new forms of poverty". The third workshop stressed the need to take a holistic approach when dealing with poverty. Participants argued that special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, including women, young people, the elderly, people with disabilities and immigrants. In particular, attention was paid to the fact that the crisis has brought new forms of poverty such as the phenomenon of the "working poor" (low pay, low skills, precarious and often part-time employment).

Although employment is the direct way to escape poverty and social exclusion it does not guarantee alone protection against poverty. Act

ions aiming to reduce poverty can be effective if they focus not only on education and training but on a wide range of aspects such as access to services and human rights.

The workshop called for action to reduce the wage gap between men and women by 1% per year and proposed drawing up a roadmap with specific objectives.

The target of 20 000 millions of people out of poverty should be therefore achieved focusing on the most vulnerable and not on the ones with an easier access to services and rights.

Increasing the spaces and the opportunity for participation was also underlined as one of the key aspects in enhancing human rights and find solutions adapted to the real needs of citizens.

Implementing a wide range of actions should go hand in hand with a proper assessment of the impact of policies on poverty through the horizontal social clause in the new treaty. The

workshop called for action to reduce the wage gap between men and women by 1% per year and proposed drawing up a roadmap with specific objectives and a range of indicators for combating poverty, with annual progress assessments.

[Please read the full report on the Citizens' agora website](#)