

Annual Report 2012

A photograph of a large crowd of people at a protest. Many individuals have the word "NO" written on their palms, which they are holding up. The word is written in red ink on some hands and black ink on others. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, and the background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the people in the foreground.

socialplatform

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 45 pan-European networks of NGOs, Social Platform campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

Editorials

Lobby and advocacy for the good cause: tackle the social impact of the crisis!

In 2012 Social Platform and its members greatly mobilised and called for the priority of social justice, active inclusion, poverty eradication, fundamental rights and anti-discrimination in EU policies. Although some EU leaders consider the worst of the crisis to be behind us, the *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2012* report reveals evidence of the social consequences of the crisis: rising unemployment and in particular long term unemployment, unacceptably high youth unemployment and an increase in poverty and social exclusion.

Social Platform used its potential and recognition by European institutional partners to submit proposals and recalibrate the focus on the social dimension of the crisis. Partial progress has certainly been made such as with the Social Investment Package and in the field of social services but the main orientation is the Economic and Monetary Union. Although we defend the Europe 2020 strategy - the Country Specific Recommendations and National Reform Programmes do not translate to a more social orientation, but contribute to the weakening of the welfare states and the European Social Model. There is also an important democratic deficit in decision making and not only in the Troikas action in those countries suffering from austerity policies.

Besides the social partners, the European institutions recognise Social Platform and its members as relevant interlocutors for social policies. As President of Social Platform whose mandate comes to an end after three terms (as stipulated in our statutes), I leave it now to my successor to lead the Platform in these turbulent times. I was proud to have the trust and mandate of our members as well as the recognition of our institutional partners and civil society allies, but I would have appreciated even more at this stage to state that social progress had really been made.

Representing one of the 45 members I will stay involved and do all I can to safeguard the particular position of Social Platform and work together with other members. I think the Platform and its members can be proud of the work realised in the last years and can build on the differences and unity of its members who will now decide on a New Strategic Orientation.

Thanks to all members, partners and allies, to all colleagues of the secretariat for their tireless work and bon courage to the newly elected management committee!



Conny Reuter, President

Economy for the people, by the people

The only certainty in 2012: EU austerity policies have been a failure for the poorest in our societies. They have not delivered on the EU leaders' primary objectives of growth and jobs. In fact there was a recession, with GDP shrinking by 0,3% and austerity policies continued to have dramatic social consequences with unemployment at 10,7%, youth unemployment at 23,4% and 120 million were at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

With the aim of serving people, in particular those in difficult social situations, we focused our efforts on:

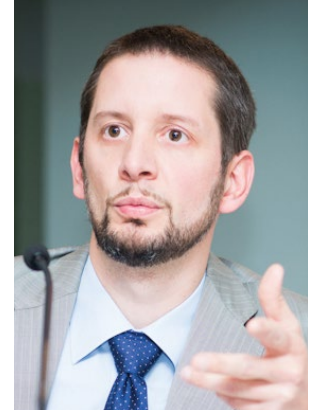
1. Including a social pact in EU economic policies to ensure that social cohesion takes precedence over economic objectives
2. Supporting the creation of quality employment
3. Enabling the development of social services and social enterprises in the internal market
4. Ensuring EU policy is also based on civil dialogue

Having the right message is essential, so is delivering it to the right people which we did. For the first time we met with President of the Council, Herman van Rompuy, and Commissioner Olli Rehn, Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro. We addressed Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission and Secretary General Catherine Day. We also met with the cabinet of the Commissioner of the Internal Market. We continued

to address ministers of employment and social affairs at the informal EPSCO Councils and Commissioner Laszlo Andor, Employment and Social Affairs.

But knocking at the right door is one thing, being heard is another: unfortunately the social dimension of EU economic policies was still not integrated in 2012. Current EU policies are not the ones we want or support. Policy making for the people and by the people is about democracy. With fewer and fewer people perceiving the EU as positive, current priorities must be changed. The focus must not be only about the economy but include social investment and political choices that put people first. Solidarity should be our leading principle, with the poor in our societies and with those countries under threat of austerity priorities.

In 2013 Social Platform will continue to fight to ensure that Europe is at the service of its people.



Pierre Baussand, Director

Our Achievements



■ EU Budget

In 2012 the EU and member states continued negotiating the EU budget, the Multi Annual Financial Framework (MFF), for the next seven years 2014-2020. The MFF sets out political priorities on how the EU should spend its money. This money is an important source of investment at a time when EU funds have become a key source of public funding to steer social and economic development in member states towards common European objectives. Therefore we advocated against any attempt by member states to cut the EU budget, and in particular the amounts allocated to social and territorial cohesion policy.

We developed [proposals](#) and a campaign with our members to ensure that the structural funds are used in a strategic way to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the entire EU. These funds should also ensure adequate funding for social inclusion, the fight against poverty, access to quality employment and public services, the fight against discrimination, and the promotion of equal opportunities for all. Civil society organisations should also be recognised as full partners in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these funds. On this last point we sent a [joint letter](#) with 40 other NGOs from different sectors.

Throughout 2012 we targeted the European Parliament (who were mostly in-line with our proposals), the European Council and member states. Our campaign reached the competent ministers in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Belgium, the UK, Germany and France.

Along with 20 other NGO's we joined a campaign coordinated by our member EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network) to urge member states to support the Commission's proposal for the European Social Fund (ESF): ensure the minimum allocation of 25% of the cohesion policy funds to the ESF and earmark 20% of the ESF to social inclusion and the fight against poverty. The campaign gathered over 11.300 signatures and a joint letter was sent to the General Affairs Council representatives.

We lobbied the EU institutions in conjunction with the Spring Alliance (consisting of Social Platform, the European Environmental Bureau, the European Trade Union Confederation and Concord) and the Civil Society Contact Group (NGOs of the social, environmental, development, culture and education sectors).

We also developed [proposals for amendments](#) on the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation and the Rights and Citizenship Programme.

“Use the EU budget to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth for the entire EU”

■ Inclusion

With 120 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and inequalities on the rise, in 2012 we focused on ensuring social inclusion and combating poverty became an EU policy priority on its own. We pushed the EU to recognise that these issues are as important as economic policies for the future of Europe.

“Combating poverty cannot wait for growth and jobs – it must be a priority policy on its own.”

We contributed to the Social Protection Committee assessment report on the social impact of the crisis and fiscal consolidation. On the basis of our [contribution](#), the Committee dedicated a section of their third crisis monitoring report to the impact of the crisis on services of general interest.

We campaigned for member states to switch their focus from austerity measures to sustainable and inclusive long term plans. We [addressed](#) the Annual Convention of the Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion highlighting that austerity measures are resulting in increased inequalities, poverty and social exclusion.

We formulated proposals for the EU and member states on how to implement the Europe 2020 poverty and social inclusion target and on the inclusion of social objectives in European Economic Governance. We also called for the development of an integrated poverty and social exclusion strategy as combating poverty cannot wait for growth and jobs – it must be a priority policy on its own.

We held discussions with Commissioner Lazlo Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and Catherine Day (Secretary General of the Commission) focusing on the social priorities in the Annual Growth Survey for 2013. For the first time we also met with Commissioner Olli Rehn, vice-president of the Commission (Economic and Monetary Affairs) to discuss how the implementation of social objectives can ensure an inclusive and sustainable recovery. He acknowledged that the social dimension of economic governance was an important subject to be built into the European semester.

■ Employment

By the end of 2012 almost 11% of the EU population was unemployed, rising to 25% for those under 25. Current employment policies do not focus on providing access to quality employment or a work-life balance. Instead they have led to an increase in precarious jobs and working poor. Against this background, we concentrated our work on advocating for an investment in quality and sustainable employment.

“We must invest in the creation of quality employment particularly in the social sector.”

We asked the Commission to include in the Annual Growth Survey for 2013 our [concrete proposals](#) for action by member states concerning among others the investment in the creation of, and access to, quality and sustainable employment and support of quality job creation in the social sector - in particular as a response to demographic changes.

We also asked member states and EU institutions to bring the labour market closer to all people and to include the issue of in-work poverty and equality in discussions on growth and jobs.

We campaigned for the effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the sustainable inclusion of youth in education, society and employment. We presented [our proposals](#) to the informal EPSCO meeting of ministers of Employment and Social Affairs in April during the Danish Presidency. Member states agreed on a recommendation for the establishment of a Youth Guarantee in March 2013 and the Council has called for it to be rapidly implemented.

■ Rights

Every person should be treated with dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights which should be respected, promoted and protected. Across the EU inequalities are increasing, exacerbated by the on-going financial crisis with more and more people being excluded from society. This increases the risk of discrimination (and discrimination increases the risk of exclusion from society) which also plays a crucial role in preventing people from accessing education and the labour market. In 2012 we focused on investing in equality as a way to achieve sustainable, economic and inclusive growth.

We successfully called on the Commission and the Danish Presidency to dedicate the [Equality Summit 2012](#) to investing in equality as a way of supporting

the Europe 2020 Strategy headline social targets. We also campaigned for the [Fundamental Rights Agency](#) to have a clear mandate for 2013-2017 to work on strengthening social rights to enable the poorest in the EU to access their fundamental rights.

“Investing in equality is a way to achieve sustainable, economic and inclusive growth.”

In Europe the [Fundamental Rights Charter](#) is the main legal basis for the protection of people’s rights, but there is still much work to be done on its implementation. We organised training for our members on the Charter and held a roundtable on its effective implementation with representatives from the Commission, the Parliament, the Council, member states, NGOs and academics.

Using the expertise of our diverse membership we formulated a [comprehensive position](#) towards EU actions against all forms of bias violence. This position outlined long-term efficient policy strategies to fight against the consequences of the economic crisis where victims of violence have fewer resources to be safe, to flee and to protect themselves.

We also continued to call on the Council and the EU Presidencies to move ahead on the [Equal Treatment Directive](#) as all grounds of discrimination should be prevented not just within the labour market but also in accessing goods and services.

■ Social Services

Equal access to high quality, affordable services is a way to guarantee fundamental rights are respected – and helps contribute to social cohesion, inclusion, economic development and the creation of jobs. Throughout 2012 we focused in particular on social and health services, to ensure their specific mission is safeguarded in internal market rules and that profit making does not prevail over the public interest.

In 2012 the European Parliament adopted a report on public procurement, taking on board many of our [proposals](#), which bans contracts being awarded on the basis of lowest cost only. In the case of contracts for social and health services public authorities must take into account quality. Public authorities can also decide to provide social and health services themselves or entrust their provision to third parties. In the latter case, under certain conditions public authorities can decide to organise the choice of providers in a way that is different from public procurement. Public authorities can organise the choice of social providers using procedures that are more suitable than public procurement to provide for the public interest. These procedures for example will better ensure the participation of users and the continuity and personalisation of services.

We also worked on financial services by developing [recommendations](#) on access to bank accounts for all. However having access to a bank account is not enough to prevent financial exclusion therefore we also made recommendations to ensure access to insurance and credit and proposed actions on how to tackle over-indebtedness.

“Profit making should not prevail over the public interest.”

Finally we made [proposals](#) on the Social Business Initiative to make sure that the Commission’s action plan supports well-established social economy players across Europe. Our recommendations included how to: facilitate access to private and EU funding for social enterprises; improve the legal environment; increase their visibility; and reinforce their managerial capacities, professionalism and networking. In recognition of our expertise social platform was appointed a member of the Commission’s Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship.

Policy Papers

- [Position paper towards EU actions against all forms of bias violence](#)
- [Position paper on the Social Business Initiative](#)
- [Recommendations to ensure financial inclusion](#)
- [Contribution to the SPC annual report on the social impact of the economic crisis and the ongoing fiscal consolidation in 2011](#)
- [Contribution to the Informal EPSCO Council – **Social Services under pressure**](#)
- [Contribution to the Informal EPSCO Council - **For the sustainable inclusion of youth in education, society and employment and the effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee**](#)
- [Contribution to the Informal EPSCO Council - **European social NGOs call for a more social, democratic and participative economic governance and Europe 2020 strategy**](#)
- [Contribution to the 2013 AGS – **Strengthen the social dimension and rights based equality of the Annual Growth Survey and European Semester to meet the needs of people in the EU**](#)
- [Briefing on the Multi Annual Financial Framework](#)
- [Briefing on the activities carried out with the Civil Society Contact Group on the MFFF](#)
- [Comparative analysis on the voting of the EP on the EUPSCI and our recommendations](#)
- [Proposals for amendments on the EP own-initiative draft report on social business](#)
- [Response to the Commission’s consultation on bank accounts](#)
- [Proposals for amendments on the public procurement directive](#)
- [Response to the Commission’s consultation on personal and household services](#)
- [Proposal for compromise amendments on the EP IMCO Committee report on public procurement](#)
- [Proposal for amendments on the Commission’s proposal for regulation on the EU Program for social change and innovation](#)
- [Proposal for amendments on the EP Employment Committee’s draft report on the EU Program for social change and innovation](#)
- [Proposal for amendments on the Commission’s proposal for regulation on the European Social Fund](#)
- [Proposal for amendments on the Commission’s proposal for regulation on the Common Provision Regulation on structural funds](#)
- [Proposal for amendments on the Commission’s proposal for regulation on the Rights and Citizenship Program](#)

Our Year in Brief



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General Assembly

April 26, 2012

Who we met

- President of the Council, Herman van Rompuy
- 2 informal EPSCO Councils (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)
- Joan Burton, Irish Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Sotiroula Charalambous, Cypriot Minister of Labour and Social Insurance
- Commissioner Olli Rehn (Economic and Monetary Affairs)
- Commissioner Laszlo Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)
- Secretary General of the Commission Catherine Day
- 16 meetings with the Commission (Directorate Generals and cabinets)
- 2 meetings with the Social Protection Committee
- 1 meeting with the EMCO chair (Commission Employment Committee)
- 1 meeting with the EP EMPL committee (Employment and Social Affairs)
- 1 meeting with the chair of the EP EMPL committee (Employment and Social Affairs)
- 13 meetings with MEP rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs
- 5 meetings with the Civil Society Contact Group
- 1 meeting with the Cypriot Permanent Representation
- 1 meeting with the Italian Permanent Representation
- 1 meeting with the Irish Permanent Representation
- 1 meeting with the cabinet of Herman van Rompuy
- 1 meeting with the Spring Alliance and MEPs
- 1 meeting with the Committee of the Regions
- 3 meetings with the EESC (European Economic and Social Committee)
- 5 meetings with the Informal Network for Sustainable Development in Public Procurement

2012 in numbers

Spoke at

36

external events

Held

8

skills-sharing sessions



50

organisations joined us at our event in Cyprus



29

Internal meetings

2 lunch debates,
3 documentary screenings
3 photo exhibitions

Represented in

18

EU advisory / expert groups



42 weekly updates



1100 Facebook Fans,
280 twitter followers and
our website was viewed **41,210** times



30 campaign letters



Financial Report 2012



Global budget (in Euro)

Income

EC Core Budget	697,438.37
Membership eligible fees	51,568.00
Membership non-eligible fees	18,589.00
Co-Finance expert fees	8,853.53
Other sources	36,480.00
TOTAL	812,928.90

Expenditure

Staff costs	481,017.68
Other expenditures	316,131.90
Social Provision	11,858.64
Non eligible expenditures	3,920.68
TOTAL	812,928.90



About Us



Social platform is governed by a General Assembly which convenes yearly; it takes constitutional decisions and elects the Management Committee. Political decisions are formed in Working Groups, submitted for consultation across the membership and then approved by the Steering Group, in which every full member organisation is represented. The smooth running of Platform is ensured by the secretariat, which is based in Brussels.

In 2012 we welcomed one new member to Social Platform, Dynamo International, the international network of social street workers. They are composed of more than 40 member platforms around the world, involves thousands of street workers and hundreds of associations. All these platforms work in close contact with people living on the street and facing poverty and social exclusion. Their activities mainly concern persons working and/or living on the street as well as those who spend a wide part of the day on the street. Thus, the members work covers a broad range of target groups and settings: homeless people, prostitutes, drug addicted individuals, persons living or begging for money in the street in order to survive, early school leavers, migrants, etc.

Our Management Committee

The seven members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years and meet regularly to provide political leadership, ensure the good running of the platform, and oversee the implementation of the annual work programme.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President	Conny Reuter
Vice-Presidents	Heather Roy Rodolfo Cattani
Treasurer	Michel Mercadié
Ordinary members	Catriona Williams Michaela Moser Julien Dijol



Our Team

The secretariat, based in Brussels, ensures the smooth running of the Platform.

Director	Pierre Baussand
Finance and Administration Officer	Ruw Jayasuriya
Policy Advisor	Valentina Caimi
Policy Officer	Annica Ryingbeck
Policy Officer	Herlinde Vanhooydonck
Communications Officer	Alison Coleman
Development Officer	Ariella de Gennaro

We would like to thank Marie-Paule Bockstal for her 9 years of dedicated work and wish her well in her retirement.



Our members



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Cover photo: Cypriot demonstrators showing their palms reading "No" during a protest against an EU bailout deal outside the parliament in the capital, Nicosia, on March 18, 2013. (Credits: PATRICK BAZ/AFP)



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