



PRESS RELEASE - 25 September 2013 - BRUSSELS

Front-line action to deliver inclusive Europe

Europe could make a real impact on the growing challenges of unemployment and social exclusion by more strongly supporting front-line action in its cities.

New EURO CITIES research finds that city governments already have some effective schemes in place for developing skills and jobs and can do much to alleviate disadvantage in their communities. But with limited capacity they are having insufficient impact on what is a growing problem. If the Commission can ensure resources from the European Social Fund (ESF) are set aside for cities, mayors will be able to make a real difference for people furthest from the labour market.

Henk Kool, chair of the EURO CITIES Social Affairs Forum and deputy mayor of The Hague, said:

“Economic recovery is not just a question of macro-economics. Cities with rising levels of poverty and unemployment require social investment now to help people back into employment and reduce the risk of social exclusion. Dedicated, ring-fenced funding for Europe’s cities would be a big step in the right direction.”

The research is the result of a five year partnership carried out by members of the EURO CITIES network which recommends that the EU should keep a strong focus on preventing social exclusion and support cities to do more. Increasing levels of poverty and unemployment are hitting cities hardest.

The final report of the Cities for Active Inclusion (CfAI) partnership is being issued today at a full day conference in Brussels. The partnership was funded by the European Commission and looked at how European cities work to fight exclusion among disadvantaged citizens and help to create jobs, which is also referred to as ‘active inclusion.’

László Andor, European commissioner for employment, social affairs and inclusion sent a message to conference participants:

“The ‘Cities for Active Inclusion’ partnership has been an ideal vehicle to promote and implement European social policies such as the 2008 recommendation on active inclusion. The Commission firmly believes that city authorities have a front-line role in developing and providing social policies and services. Implementation of the Commission’s February 2013 Social Investment Package, which advocates better performing active inclusion strategies and a more efficient and more effective use of social budgets, requires the strong support and active involvement of city authorities.”

The final report highlights the challenging range of measures being taken by Europe’s city authorities to promote active inclusion. These include prevention and early intervention, social innovation, education and lifelong learning, and health promotion.

The five recommendations from the final report to the European Commission are:

- provide specific EU funding for active inclusion policies that is accessible to city governments
- strengthen the focus on active inclusion in key EU programmes
- promote active inclusion activities at all levels of government
- the principles of active inclusion should be extended and integrated into all the actions put forward in the European Commission’s Social Investment Package
- European, national and regional levels of government should work in partnership with municipalities in the putting together of active inclusion policies.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Final report and policy recommendations of Cities for Active Inclusion: <http://bit.ly/1aSynRN>
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Cities for Active Inclusion is a partnership between EUROCITIES members Barcelona, Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Lille Metropole Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm. It is funded under the European Commission's PROGRESS programme. The partners share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of active inclusion strategies at the local level. Visit: www.eurocities-nlao.eu.

- EUROCITIES: www.eurocities.eu.
- EUROCITIES on Twitter: www.twitter.com/eurocitiestweet.
- The Twitter hashtag for the Cities for Active Inclusion conference is [#CfAI2013](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CfAI2013).

EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities towards the European institutions. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 34 countries.