



## **CEMR-EP/EPSU Joint Statement on the Active Inclusion of Those Furthest from the Labour Market**

### **EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Regional and Local Government**

#### **Background:**

1. CEMR-EP and EPSU welcome the Communication on *“Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market “* COM (2007) 620
2. We underline that social inclusion is an important issue for the EU, Member States, and social partners (in all sectors) given that 16% of the EU population is at risk from financial poverty, including 8% of employed workers.
3. CEMR-EP and EPSU point out that the role of local and regional authorities in promoting active inclusion is threefold: as employers, promoters of economic development and employment, and as providers of public services, including services for the most vulnerable groups.

#### **The EU strategy on active inclusion:**

In response to the issues raised in the consultation paper:

4. We welcome further work on active inclusion within the framework of the OMC and would like to see further support for joint evaluation and sharing of best practice, as a key element to improve quality of services and employment policy in local and regional government.
5. The development of statistics concerning active inclusion at EU-level, within the OMC, could be a tool in comparisons between member states. Such comparisons could serve as an incentive for member states in their work on active inclusion.
6. CEMR-EP and EPSU agree with the common EU principles on active inclusion. We consider these should remain broad and general in order to allow for their implementation in a large diversity of local and regional realities, on the basis of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles.

7. We welcome the Commission's recognition of the crucial role played by public services in promoting active inclusion. In this respect we query the distinction made by the Commission in 4.3 between services of general interest (SGI) and social services of general interest (SSGI). All public services, e.g. also education, public transport, childcare provision are important to ensure social cohesion and inclusion. We do not think it is possible for the EU-level to give priority to certain public services over others.
8. We would also like to stress that the link between the quality of employment in local and regional government and the quality of the services provided needs to be better taken into account. Improving quality of work and well-being in the sector will contribute to improving efficiency and quality of services. This is an important theme in the EPSU / CEMR-EP social dialogue.
9. In this respect further research and evaluation is needed to find ways to properly measure and assess productivity and efficiency in local and regional administration as a tool to ensure high quality services (i.e. use of new technologies, work organisation, etc).
10. We consider the proposed Network of Local Observatories could constitute a potential instrument to exchange experiences and good practices on quality local public services. However, we warn against risk of leading to greater duplication and increased monitoring burden and therefore would like the Network to remain a flexible instrument. We also stress the need to involve all stakeholders in the work of the Observatories in a participative and transparent way.
11. CEMR-EP and EPSU have expressed in the past their continuing support to promoting active inclusion: *'The social partners in the local and regional government set a high priority to creating and preserving work for the most vulnerable groups on the labour market'* (CEMR-EP and EPSU Joint Statement on Employment, 1997). As part of our activities within the EU sectoral social dialogue committee on regional and local government, CEMR-EP and EPSU have recently adopted guidelines for the development and implementation of gender equality plans (December 2007) and have held a working group session on diversity policies and integration of migrants in public administration at regional and local level.
12. It is vital to provide local and regional government with the adequate resources and flexibility to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. Effective and modern public services should be sufficiently financed.
13. On the other hand, promoting active inclusion at local level can only be achieved by promoting joint-up work and partnership. This means that the implementation of active inclusion measures should be equally shared by all stakeholders, including private employers. In this respect social procurement can be an important tool to influence private providers of public services, ensure a level-playing field in employment conditions in the local and regional government sector, and indeed to stimulate quality employment across all sectors.

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