

Y Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol

EUR(3)-02-11: Papur 2: 01 Chwefror 2011

Y diweddaraf am weithgarwch cynrychiolwyr Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau

Cyflwyniad

1. Mae'r papur hwn yn rhoi'r newyddion diweddaraf i'r Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol ("y Pwyllgor") ar gyfer ei gyfarfod ar 1 Chwefror 2011. Mae'n dilyn ymlaen o'r diweddariadau blaenorol a roddwyd i'r Pwyllgor ar 29 Medi 2009, 28 Ebrill 2009, 12 Ionawr 2010 a 21 Medi 2010.
2. Gofynnir i'r Pwyllgor nodi cynnwys y papur a rhoi ei gefnogaeth i'r alwad i Lywodraeth y DU gyflymu'n sylweddol y broses o ail-enwebu cynrychiolwyr Cymru i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau, fel ei bod yn debycach i brosesau aelod-wladwriaethau eraill, lle mae'r broses yn cymryd wythnosau yn unig, yn hytrach na rhwng 6 a 12 mis, fel sy'n digwydd yn y DU.

Effaith etholiad y Cynulliad a'r mandad ar gyfer 2010-2015

3. Penodwyd Christine Chapman AC a Rhodri Glyn Thomas AC yn ffurfiol i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ar 26 Ionawr 2010, a hynny gyda mandad pum mlynedd. Christine yw'r aelod llawn, a Rhodri Glyn yw'r aelod amgen.
4. Oherwydd bod etholiad y Cynulliad yn cael ei gynnal ar 5 Mai, a bod y Cynulliad yn cael ei ddiddymu'n ffurfiol am hanner nos ar 31 Mawrth, gwnaed cais am eglurhad ynghylch yr effaith y gallai hyn ei chael ar statws Christine Chapman a Rhodri Glyn Thomas a'u gwaith ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau. Mae'n glir y bydd y ddau yn peidio ag ymwneud â'u gweithgarwch ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau o hanner nos ar 31 Mawrth tan ar ôl yr etholiad ac ar ôl i Lywodraeth newydd Cymru gael ei ffurfio. Fodd bynnag, gofynwyd am eglurhad ynghylch a fydd angen iddynt ymddiswyddo o Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau'n ffurfiol ar y dyddiad hwn, neu a ellir gohirio hyn nes y bydd canlyniadau'r etholiad a ffurf Llywodraeth newydd Cymru'n wybyddus.
5. Mae Swyddfa UE'r Cynulliad wedi bod yn trafod hyn â Phwyllgor y Rhanbarthau a swyddogion Llywodraeth Cymru.
6. Ar 19 Ionawr 2011, anfonodd Christine Chapman a Rhodri Glyn Thomas lythyr ar y cyd at Brif Weinidog Cymru (gweler Atodiad A) yn amlinellu eu pryderon ynghylch yr effaith bosibl y gallai'r etholiad ei chael ar gynrychiolaeth Gymreig ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau, a hynny yn ystod

blwyddyn bwysig o ran y trafodaethau ar ddyfodol Cyllideb yr UE a rhaglenni'r UE ar gyfer y cyfnod ar ôl 2013.

7. Prif bryder Christine a Rhodri Glyn yw y dylid osgoi'r posibilrwydd o orfod haneru cynrychiolaeth Cymru ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau yn ystod 2011 ac efallai yn 2012, gan olygu na fyddai'r Cynulliad yn cael eii gynrychioli ar y pwyllgor. Mae hwn yn bosibilrwydd real os bydd rhaid iddynt ymddiswyddo'n ffurfiol ar 31 Mawrth, o gofio bod proses ail-enwebu'r DU yn gallu cymryd rhwng 6 a 12 mis.
8. Mae'r llythyr at y Prif Weinidog yn gofyn am eglurhad ynghylch a ellir osgoi ymddiswyddo'n swyddogol nes (i) y bydd canlyniadau'r etholiad wedi'u cyhoeddi a (ii) y bydd Prif Weinidog newydd Cymru wedi cadarnhau'r dewis o'r enwebeion ar gyfer Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau. Yn ôl y senario hon, pe na bai Christine a Rhodri Glyn yn cael eu hail-ethol i'r Cynulliad neu eu hail-enwebu gan Brif Weinidog newydd Cymru, byddent yn ymddiswyddo'n ffurfiol o Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ar unwaith. Fodd bynnag, pe baent yn cael eu hail-gadarnhau gan y Prif Weinidog, byddant yn gallu ailgychwyn ar eu gwaith ar Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau yn ddi-oed.
9. Mae'r llythyr hefyd yn gofyn i'r Prif Weinidog wneud cais i'r broses gael ei chyflymu o fewn y DU, oherwydd deallir mai wythnosau yn unig y mae'r broses yn ei chymryd mewn aelod-wladwriaethau eraill. Petai'r broses ail-enwebu ond yn cymryd mis neu ddau, byddai'r cwestiwn o ymddiswyddo'n ffurfiol am hanner nos ar 31 Mawrth yn llai arwyddocaol.

Rhoi barn ar y Platfform Ewropeaidd yn erbyn Tlodi

10. Yn ystod cyfarfod ECOS (y Comisiwn ar gyfer Polisi Economaidd a Chymdeithasol) ar 24 Tachwedd 2010, dewiswyd Christine Chapman yn rapporteur i gyflwyno barn Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ar y Platfform Ewropeaidd yn erbyn Tlodi ac Allgau Cymdeithasol, sef un o brif fentrau strategaeth Ewrop 2020. Bwriedir trafod drafft o'r farn a'i mabwysiadu yn ystod cyfarfod Comisiwn ECOS ar 9 Chwefror¹, a bydd yn mynd gerbron y cyfarfod llawn ar 31 Mawrth.
11. Enwebodd Christine Chapman Gregg Jones, cynrychiolydd y Cynulliad ym Mrwsel, yn arbenigwr ar y gwaith o baratoi'r farn.
12. Mae drafft o'r farn wedi'i pharatoi (gweler Atodiad B), a chafodd ei chyflwyno i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ar 13 Ionawr er mwyn iddi gael ei chyfieithu ac er mwyn caniatáu ystyried gwelliannau cyn 30 Ionawr. Cafodd y drafft ei seilio ar dystiolaeth a gasglwyd yn ystod cyfres o gyfarfodydd a gynhaliwyd ar 17 Rhagfyr ym Mrwsel gyda sefydliadau a oedd yn cynnwys Eurochild, y Rhwydwaith Gwrth Dlodi Ewropeaidd,

¹ Mae'r agenda a'r dogfennau ar gyfer y cyfarfod ar 9 Chwefror 2011 ar gael ar [wefan Comisiwn ECOS](#).

Eurocities, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a'r CEMR (Cynhadledd Trefi a Rhanbarthau Ewropeaidd). Cafwyd hefyd bapurau ysgrifenedig gan gyrff eraill, gan gynnwys Business Europe, ac mae Platfform Monitro Ewrop 2020 ym Mhwyllgor y Rhanbarthau wedi lawnsio arolwg byr er mwyn rhoi cyfle i randdeiliaid ar draws yr UE gyfrannu at y fenter. Roedd y farn hefyd yn ystyried mentrau polisi o Gymru, fel y strategaeth tlodi plant newydd.

13. Ychydig o amser sydd ar gael ar gyfer paratoi'r farn ond, o gofio y bydd gweinidogion cyflogaeth yn mabwysiadu'r casgliadau ar y thema ym mis Mawrth ac o gofio bod rhaglenni diwygio cenedlaethol yr aelod-wladwriaethau i fod i'w cytuno arnynt ym mis Ebrill, ystyriwyd ei bod yn hanfodol i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau fabwysiadu ei safbwynt mor fuan â phosibl – sef yn ystod ei gyfarfod llawn ar 31 Mawrth. Trafodwyd hyn yn fewnol gan Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ac, ar ôl iddo weld drafft o'r farn, cadarnhawyd yr amserlen gan Lywydd ac ysgrifenyddiaeth ECOS, a chafwyd cefnogaeth yr holl grwpiau gwleidyddol eraill.

Y Comisiwn ad hoc Dros Dro ar Gyllideb yr UE²

14. Rhodri Glyn Thomas yw aelod amgen Grŵp y Gynghrair Ewropeaidd ar y Comisiwn ad hoc Dros Dro ar Gyllideb yr UE, sef comisiwn a gafodd ei sefydlu er mwyn paratoi ymateb Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau i'r Adolygiad o Gyllideb yr UE. Mae Rhodri Glyn eisoes wedi bod i ddau o gyfarfodydd y gweithgor – y cyntaf ym mis Hydref a'r mwyaf diweddar ym mis Ionawr. Bydd hefyd yn mynd i gyfarfod ar 18 Chwefror lle bydd y comisiwn yn cytuno'n derfynol ar ddrafft o'r farn cyn i gyfarfod llawn Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ei mabwysiadu ar 31 Mawrth.
15. Yn ystod cyfarfodydd y comisiwn ad hoc, mae Rhodri Glyn wedi codi nifer o bwyntiau sy'n cysylltu'n uniongyrchol â gwaith y Pwyllgor ar ddyfodol y polisi cydlyniant a gwaith yr Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig ar ddyfodol y Polisi Amaethyddol Cyffredin. Mae hyn yn cynnwys pwysleisio'r gefnogaeth i bolisi cydlyniant cryf ar lefel UE eang, ailadrodd yr angen i gadw'r Gronfa Gymdeithasol Ewropeaidd fel rhan o'r polisi cydlyniant, a chodi rhai pryderon posibl ynghylch amodoldeb mewn llywodraethiant economaidd.
16. Mae Rhodri Glyn hefyd yn ceisio sicrhau y bydd y farn yn cyfeirio'n ddigonol at y Polisi Amaethyddol Cyffredin a datblygu gwledig, gan eu bod yn elfennau sydd ond wedi eu cyfeirio atynt yn "anuniongyrchol" yn y ddogfen drafod drafft gyntaf. Mae hefyd wedi gofyn am esboniad ynghylch y gwarantau a gaiff eu rhoi er mwyn sicrhau bod awdurdodau lleol a rhanbarthol yn cael eu cynnwys yn greiddiol wrth baratoi unrhyw Contractau Datblygu a Buddsoddi Strategol os caiff y cysyniad hwn ei gyflwyno fel rhan o'r strwythur llywodraethiant newydd ar gyfer Ewrop

² Gweler [gwefan y Comisiwn ad hoc Dros Dro ar Gyllideb yr UE](#)

2020 a pholisi cydlyniant y dyfodol (a rhaglenni cyllido eraill yr UE a gaiff eu cyflwyno mewn aelod-wladwriaethau).

Platfform Monitro Ewrop 2020

17. Yn ystod cyfarfod llawn Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ym mis Mehefin, penodwyd Christine Chapman yn ffurfiol yn un o ddau gydlynnydd gwleidyddol ar blatfform monitro Ewrop 2020. Yn y swydd hon, bydd Christine yn gyfrifol am gynnig cyfeiriad gwleidyddol i waith y platfform mewn perthynas ag elfennau cymdeithasol ac economaidd o strategaeth Ewrop 2020. Y cydlynnydd gwleidyddol arall yw Mr Nichi Vendola, Llywydd Rhanbarth Puglia yn yr Eidal.
18. Yn y swydd hon, mae Christine Chapman wedi goruchwylio llunio adroddiad monitro cyntaf Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ar strategaeth Ewrop 2020³, sy'n cynnwys asesiad o fewnbwn awdurdodau lleol a rhanbarthol ar draws 27 aelod-wladwriaeth yr UE wrth baratoi rhaglenni diwygio cenedlaethol sydd wedi eu llunio gan bob aelod-wladwriaeth. Cafodd yr adroddiad monitro ei fabwysiadu gan y Swyddfa Wleidyddol a'i gyflwyno gerbron cyfarfod llawn Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau ym mis Rhagfyr.
19. Mae'r adroddiad monitro'n ddatblygiad newydd o dan Ewrop 2020, a'r bwriad yw rhoi rôl greiddiol i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau yng nghylchdro llywodraethiant y strategaeth. Caiff ei lunio cyn y bydd y Comisiwn yn cyhoeddi ei Strategaeth Twf Blynyddol (a gaiff ei chyhoeddi ym mis Ionawr bob blwyddyn).⁴
20. Mae'r ddau gydlynnydd gwleidyddol hefyd wedi dadlau y dylai diwrnodau agored Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau a gynhelir dros gyfnod o wythnos ym mis Hydref bob blwyddyn ganolbwyntio ar Ewrop 2020, a hynny er mwyn rhoi rhagor o sail dystiolaeth i'r adroddiad monitro a rhoi fforwm cyhoeddus i randdeiliaid drafod ymarferoldeb rhoi'r strategaeth ar waith ar lawr gwlad. Bu hyn yn lled llwyddiannus, oherwydd Ewrop 2020 fydd un o dair thema'r wythnos o ddiwrnodau agored yn 2011. Fodd bynnag, hoffai'r ddau gydlynnydd weld hyn yn mynd ymhellach yn ystod y blynyddoedd i ddod.
21. Fel y nodwyd yn y diweddariad blaenorol, cadeiriodd Christine Chapman seminar ar ymchwil rhanbarthol ac arloesedd yn ystod un o Diwrnodau Agored 2010 ym mis Hydref ym Mrwsel.

Tîm Cymru

22. Mae'r pedwar cynrychiolydd o Gymru ar Bwyllgor y rhanbarthau, gan gynnwys y ddau gynrychiolydd o fyd llywodraeth leol yng Nghymru, yn parhau i weithio fel tîm o ran eu gwaith ar y Pwyllgor, ac maent yn

³ Gweler [gwefan Platfform Monitro Ewrop 2020](#)

⁴ Am fwy o wybodaeth am gylchdro llywodraethiant Ewrop 2020 gweler [gwefan Ewrop 2020 y Comisiwn Ewropeaidd](#)

cyfarfod yn anffurfiol yn ystod cyfarfodydd llawn o Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau a phan mae eu hymweliadau ym Mrwsel yn cyd-daro.

23. Mynegodd Christine Chapman a Rhodri Glyn Thomas eu cefnogaeth i farn y Cynghorydd Bob Bright fel rapporteur Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau⁵, a chroesawu cyfranogaeth y Cynghorydd Chris Holley yn y Pumed Fforwm Cydlyniant ym Mrwsel ar 31 Ionawr, a'i rôl ar Gomisiwn COTER Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau, sy'n paratoi safbwynt ar y Pumed Adroddiad ar Gydlyniant.
24. Yn yr un modd, mae'r cynrychiolwyr o Gymru'n croesawu agwedd agored a chynhwysol Aelodau Cymru o Senedd Ewrop, ac yn edrych ymlaen i weithio gyda'i gilydd er mwyn hyrwyddo buddiannau Cymru ym Mrwsel am weddill cyfnod y mandad.

21 Ionawr 2011

⁵ Gweler [barn Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau: Cydlynu Ewropeaidd mewn addysg a hyfforddiant galwedigaethol er mwyn cefnogi strategaeth Ewrop 2020](#)

Christine Chapman AM / AC
Assembly Member for Cynon Valley /
Aelod Cynulliad Dros Gwm Cynon

Constituency Office
28a Oxford Street
Mountain Ash
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF45 3EU
Tel: 01443 478026
Fax: 01443 478311

Swyddfa' Etholaeth
28a Stryd Oxford
Aberpennar
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF45 3EU

christine.chapman@wales.gov.uk

www.christinechapmanforwales.com

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister for Wales
Welsh Assembly
Government
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Date: 19 January 2011

Dear Carwyn

Committee of the Regions: Assembly elections and mandate

We write to you to raise our concerns about the potential impact of the Assembly elections on Welsh representation in Brussels, during 2011 (and potentially 2012), a crucial period in discussions over the future of EU Budget and EU funding programmes of particular importance to Wales.

Our current mandate to the Committee of the Regions runs until end of January 2015, following our nomination and appointment at the beginning of last year.

We are conscious that under the provisions of the Government of Wales Act (2006) we are required to cease all activities related to our work as Assembly Members from midnight on 31 March, which would include Committee of the Regions work.

We have been seeking clarification, through the Assembly's EU Office, as to whether this will require formal resignation from the Committee of the Regions on this date, or whether such a decision is delayed until the outcome of the election and the formation of a new Welsh Government.

The legal services of the Committee of the Regions have indicated that the formal dissolution would constitute a break in mandate, however, there is a degree of ambiguity as to whether or not this necessitates formal resignation - as there may be scope for the nominating body (in our case formally the UK Government, based on the names proposed by the First Minister of Wales) to make the case for continuation of mandate should they so wish.

The primary concern with going down the route of formal resignation is the length of time it takes for renominations to be processed, potentially anything from 6 to 12 months, given the requirement for the UK Prime Minister's office to agree the nominees and then Council of Ministers to formally endorse. We understand that this is a peculiarly UK problem as other national delegations are able to process renominations in a matter of weeks rather than months.

Therefore, we would request you to consider the following as a matter of urgency (given the timing):

- A commitment from the UK Government to process in a rapid manner future nominations (and re-nominations) from the Assembly to bodies like the Committee of the Regions (and also Council of Europe), to avoid Wales losing its democratic voice in Brussels during a prolonged period
- To clarify whether it is possible on this occasion, with your endorsement (and the formal agreement of the UK Government) to avoid formal resignations until the results of the Fourth Assembly election are known and a new Welsh Government has been formed.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,



Christine Chapman
Assembly Member for Cynon Valley



Rhodri Glyn Thomas
Assembly Member for
Carmarthen East and
Dinefwr

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

ECOS-V-012

**7th Commission meeting
9 February 2011**

**DRAFT OPINION
of the
Commission for Economic and Social Policy
on
THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL
EXCLUSION**

Rapporteur: Ms Christine Chapman (UK/PES)
Member of the National Assembly of Wales

This document will be discussed at the meeting of the **Commission for Economic and Social Policy** to be held **from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday 9 February 2011**. To allow time for translation, any amendments must be submitted by email to the commission secretariat by **no later than Sunday**

30 January 2011 (email address: ecos@cor.europa.eu).

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR TRANSLATION: 17 January 2011

Reference document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion*
COM(2010) 758 final

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Visibility and commitment...actions speak louder than words

1. Welcomes the commitment by the EU to lift at least 20 million Europeans out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 and welcomes the Communication from the Commission "*The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion*" (COM(2010) 758 final) as a dynamic framework for action to support achieving this target;
2. Welcomes the greater visibility given to poverty and social exclusion in the Europe 2020 Strategy, and agrees that the social dimension should be at the heart of this strategy;
3. Notes that the test of success of the flagship initiative will be the extent to which it initiates, encourages and supports actions that deliver real sustainable change on the ground;
4. Calls on the Commission and Member States to demonstrate genuine political will to translating the EU level commitments on poverty into real action in close cooperation with local and regional authorities, and take this opportunity to build a fairer, more just and more equitable society;
5. Notes, however, that poverty and social exclusion cannot be sustainably reduced, nor inclusive growth achieved, without tackling inequality; notes that increased growth and employment during the period 2000-2008 did not have a substantial impact on poverty, whilst inequality increased in many countries; this situation has worsened as a result of the impact of the ongoing social and economic crisis;
6. Emphasises that employment alone does not guarantee a route out of poverty and that further action is required to combat in-work poverty, and ensure access to quality, sustainable employment and regrets that the key issue of ensuring an adequate income, in line with Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC and the 2008 Commission Recommendation on Active Inclusion is not further emphasized;
7. Reiterates its call for targets on poverty and social exclusion to be brought within the broader framework of a new socio-economic model based on an overarching objective of high quality of life and well-being for all EU citizens;
8. Recognises that competence for delivery of actions on the ground in this area rests primarily with Member States and local and regional authorities, although the Commission can support this through EU funding and facilitating mutual exchanges of best practice, shared knowledge, and through proper assessment of the social impact of EU policies; welcomes in

this context the Commission's commitment to social impact assessments but requests these impact assessments to become territory-sensitive;

9. Reiterates the need to introduce a social horizontal clause which ensures that Single Market related legislation takes into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, a high level of education, training and the protection of human health, and does not limit in any way the exercise of fundamental rights as recognised in Member States and in the EU treaties;
10. Acknowledges the work undertaken during the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) to give greater profile to these issues; seeks the *European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion* to be used as a vehicle to ensure the European Year's legacy is rooted in the political priorities of the EU for the next decade;

Multiple-dimension of poverty and particular vulnerable groups

11. Welcomes recognition within the Communication of the multi-dimensional form of poverty and social exclusion, and in particular the explicit references to child poverty, young people, the elderly, the working poor (including lone parents and single-wage families), women, disabled people, migrants, ethnic minorities and the Roma people;
12. Welcomes recognition of the complex elements that contribute towards poverty, including access to employment, low income levels and personal debt, access to basic services, education, health, mental health, housing, as well as the challenge of inter-generational transmission of poverty and the territorial dimension to poverty;
13. Welcomes the reference to the importance of combating homelessness and recalls its recent opinion on the issue¹;
14. Refers to its opinion on the Green Paper on pensions² and welcomes the Commission's announcement to present in 2011 a White Paper to address sustainability and adequacy of pensions;
15. Reiterates the call for the Commission to set an ambitious European social housing agenda which will strengthen its role in social inclusion policies in the next generation of structural funds and confirm that the public service functions of social housing are to be defined at Member State level;
16. Agrees that a holistic and integrated approach, encompassing the needs of the different groups, and the particular challenges faced, is required to alleviate and prevent poverty;

¹ CdR 18/2010, adopted in October 2010.

² ECOS-V-008 CdR 319/2010 rev. 1 to be adopted on 27 January 2011.

17. Highlights the negative externalities associated with poverty and social exclusion, including the impact on health, mental health, impact on solidarity within society, lack of trust, disengagement, violence, and potential social unrest;
18. Calls for greater recognition from the Commission and from Member States that poverty is a shared problem and challenge for society as a whole, and not to be viewed as a stigma or failure of people who happen to be poor or socially excluded;
19. Welcomes the commitment to adopt at the June 2011 European Council a strategy for the social integration of the Roma;

Child Poverty

20. Highlights in particular the importance of addressing child poverty, which represents a badge of shame for EU society, and agrees that addressing child poverty is an important factor in tackling inter-generational transmission of poverty, which requires a holistic approach to prevention, placing the rights of children at the forefront;
21. Expresses disappointment that EU leaders could not agree to a specific child poverty target/commitment as part of Europe 2020;
22. Welcomes the references to tackling child poverty as a priority of the flagship initiative, however, regrets the limited commitment to doing this and the narrow perspective taken of child poverty, and sees no reason to delay adoption of the Child Poverty Recommendation in 2011;
23. Calls for a more comprehensive approach to the issue of child poverty, and notes that work is already advanced within the EU on this in terms of establishing “common principles”, evidenced by the declaration signed by the EU Presidency Trio (Belgium, Hungary and Poland) at the Child Poverty Conference in September 2010, and the Employment Council’s conclusions of 6 December 2010, which call for combating Child Poverty to be a priority;
24. Notes also the actions being taken at regional level to address child poverty in a more comprehensive way, further encourages best practises to achieve the best possible outcome in this regard;

Social, financial and economic crisis

25. Welcomes the references to the economic and financial crisis, however, is disappointed that the Communication does not go further; calls for more recognition to be given to the significant social costs that have resulted already, and calls for the Commission to undertake an in depth analysis of the impact the austerity measures being taken by national governments

across Europe are having and will have in the coming years on poverty and social exclusion, including the effect at local and regional level on provision of core services of general economic interest;

26. Reiterates the potential risk of a lost generation of young people as a result of the impact of the crisis, evidenced by the increase in youth unemployment to around 21% in the first quarter of 2010; however, reiterates that youth unemployment is a continuous problem fluctuating between 14.5%-18% during 2000-2008; notes that these figures disguise significant variations across the EU, between Member States and within Member States, and down to the level of small communities;
27. Calls for urgent action to address the consequences of high personal indebtedness; welcomes in this context the reiterated commitment to the Progress Microfinance Facility for microloans but urges caution in pursuing measures aimed at stimulating new forms of commercial micro-financing, driven by the pursuit of profit for the lenders rather than the pursuit of financially and socially sustainable economic activity;

Governance and partnership

28. Welcomes the references to engaging local and regional authorities through the Committee of the Regions as a way to increase focus on the territorial dimension of poverty and strengthen synergies in the delivery of EU funds; questions lack of reference to local and regional authorities in section 3.5 on stepping up policy co-ordination between Member States, given that in many Member States they have direct competence for social policy;
29. Calls for the Commission to give unequivocal backing to maintaining and building on the work of the Social Open Method for Coordination (OMC), exploring how regional and local stakeholders can be more effectively engaged in this process; highlights the value of its work in raising the profile of issues such as active inclusion and child poverty;
30. Seeks clarification on the status of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion, and whether these will be integrated into the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) for Europe 2020; seeks reassurance that if this is the intention, this approach will not lead to a narrow focus on “macro-economic” targets, and that the Commission will reconsider reinstating NAPs for Social Inclusion should the mainstreaming approach not work effectively;
31. Suggests to the Commission to prepare EU level Guidelines for Member States to ensure effective participation of local and regional authorities and other stakeholders in the preparation of the NRPs; notes that “territorial pacts” are potentially the most comprehensive and coherent mechanism for involving local and regional authorities in this process, as envisaged in the Fifth Cohesion Report;

32. Expresses its concern at the postponement of the Communication on Active Inclusion to 2012, and asks the Commission to advance the publication of the Communication to 2011, including an assessment of implementation of active inclusion, including the adequacy and coverage and take-up of minimum income, the inequality in access to services of general interest as well as concrete proposals on how Community funds can be used to support integrated approaches to active inclusion;
33. Welcomes reference to participation of people experiencing poverty as a key objective of inclusion policies, and would welcome more explicit commitment in the flagship initiative about how the Commission proposes to do this, including the key target groups identified in the Communication. For example, is this envisaged as part of the high level steering committee that will be set up to drive forward the social innovation actions?

Territorial Cohesion and future EU funding

34. Welcomes reference to territorial cohesion in the title of the Communication and underlines the proposed Platform and the EU structural funds are not just delivery vehicles of Europe 2020 but perform broader roles in addressing the social and territorial cohesion objective that is part of EU treaties;
35. Agrees that paths should be explored to ensure a better use of these structural funds in support of the Europe 2020 objectives and supports the broadening of the European Social Fund focus from employability and quantity of jobs to combating poverty and social exclusion; notes that achieving a 75% employment target is not in itself sufficient to reducing poverty and social exclusion, and that more emphasis should be placed on addressing the working poor, and raising the quality and sustainability of jobs across Europe, including measures aimed at ensuring adequate incomes;
36. Advocates the earmarking at national level of specific funding for actions targeting the groups that are most at risk of poverty;
37. Supports efforts to enhance coordination/synergies between the different EU structural funds to ensure a joined up approaches to tackling the multidimensional dimension of poverty and social exclusion, including the territorial dimension to poverty;
38. Stresses the reality of the austerity measures taken in most Member States and underlines their immediate impact on people living in poverty and exclusion, and calls for flexible use of Structural Funds and other EU programmes to support actions that alleviate this;
39. Stands ready to assist the European Commission in monitoring the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy by local and regional authorities through its Europe 2020 monitoring platform;

Social Economy, Social Innovation and Experimentation

40. Welcomes the contribution that the social economy, volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility can bring in terms of providing added value to existing universal public service provision;
41. Agrees with the guiding principles adopted by the European Centre for Volunteers (CEV) on the European Year of Volunteering 2011, underlining in particular that volunteering, as an unpaid activity carried out of free will, must not be a substitute for paid work and should not be used as a cheap alternative to replace workforce, or government/public services as a cost-cutting exercise;
42. Welcomes initiatives aiming at encouraging companies to employ people from disadvantaged groups and taking better account of social considerations in public procurement;
43. Reiterates the importance of measures that simplify access of NGOs and small partnerships to EU funding, including facilitating access to global grants for small organisations;
44. And agrees that evidence-based social innovation can be crucial to developing new solutions or responding to new challenges, but emphasises that such an approach should recognise existing good practice across Europe, and seek to support and encourage transfer of best-practice, mutual-learning and peer-review by NGOs/community organisations, with a particular emphasis on small-scale actions and grassroots work of such organisations on the ground. Such actions should be introduced in a sensitive way to avoid any risks of stigmatisation of poor people, and we caution use of the phrase “social experimentation” for this reason.

Brussels,

II. PROCEDURE

Title	The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion
Reference	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions <i>The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion</i> (COM(2010) 758 final)
Legal basis	Art. 307 §1, TFEU
Procedural basis	Optional referral
Date of Commission letter	16.12.2010
Date of Bureau/President's decision	-
Commission responsible	Commission for economic and social policy (ECOS)
Rapporteur	Ms Christine Chapman (UK/PES), member of the National Assembly of Wales
Analysis	16 December 2010
Discussed in commission	-
Date adopted by commission	-
Result of the vote in commission	-
Date adopted in plenary	-
Previous Committee opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe (ECOS-V-006, December 2010) - Combating homelessness (ECOS-V-001, October 2010) - The European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion (2010) (ECOS-IV-021, June 2008) - The future of the Lisbon strategy post-2010 (ECOS-IV-032, December 2009) - Active inclusion (ECOS-IV-019, June 2008) - Women and poverty in the EU (ECOS-051, October 2005) - Partnerships between local and regional authorities and social economy organisations: contribution to employment, local development and social cohesion (ECOS-003, March 2002)