

PROGRESS in action:

The EU programme for employment and social solidarity 2007-2013

Social Europe



European Commission

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This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and precandidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

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**The EU programme for
employment and social solidarity
2007-2013**

European Commission

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Unit 01

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Foreword

by the Director-General

Over the last few decades, European countries have taken great strides in modernising their economies and improving the standard of living of their people. Huge challenges remain to continue to grow economically, while ensuring social cohesion and narrowing inequalities that persist in our societies.



The Europe 2020 strategy, presented in 2010, shows the way forward for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The collective efforts of all stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, will determine whether this vision becomes reality.

Whether it is technology or demography, our economy and society is evolving and new challenges are emerging. It is therefore essential to reappraise established practice and forge fresh, innovative approaches in response. This is where the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS) comes in. As a policy development tool, it facilitates innovation and cooperation, and promotes strengthened partnerships between countries and stakeholders.

More than ever before, we need to achieve maximum results from our investment in employment and social inclusion. For its part, the European Commission is committed to accountability, while integrating the lessons learnt into policy and decision making processes. PROGRESS is results-driven and aims to transmit this focus to the policies and decision-making processes it influences.

We certainly have a long way to go to achieve the objectives we have set together for 2020. However, I welcome this publication, which highlights some of the ways PROGRESS and its broad base of stakeholders are helping to guide our policies and action in the right direction.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Koos Richelle' with a horizontal line underneath.

Koos Richelle
European Commission
Director-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

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Introduction

The European Union Programme for employment and social solidarity, **PROGRESS** (2007-2013), is an instrument to support the development of innovative and effective employment and social policies around Europe. It replaced four previous action programmes to streamline EU funding, with the aim of increasing coherence in the five policy areas it supports.

Policy areas supported by PROGRESS

- Employment
- Social inclusion and social protection
- Working conditions
- Non-discrimination
- Gender equality

PROGRESS' mission is to financially support EU Member States' efforts to build a more cohesive society. It promotes the involvement of the relevant stakeholders (including social partners and civil society organisations) in the policy-making process.

PROGRESS works at EU level and complementarily with the European Social Fund, which invests in the implementation of employment and social policies in individual Member States, particularly in regions where economic development is lagging behind. As such, while the European Social Fund supports concrete projects at local and national level in the employment and social, PROGRESS is more specifically targeted to **policy level** projects on an **EU-wide** scale.



PROGRESS in numbers

7 year programme 2007-2013.
€ 683.25 million budget¹.

In 2010 alone, PROGRESS supported:

- 252 information and communication events.
- 427 training sessions, peer reviews and mutual learning events.
- 161 reports identifying good practices.
- 78 monitoring and assessment reports on the implementation of EU law and policy.

Results-oriented, strategic approach

The Commission is accountable to demonstrate the achievements of PROGRESS to its European and national stakeholders. PROGRESS is implemented through a results-based management approach. This approach means regular monitoring of progress made and drawing lessons for future decision making.

The goals of the PROGRESS programme are structured in a logical progression of **short-term**, **medium-term** and **long-term** outcomes. The examples expanded on in this publication focus on the **short-term** goals and how they are being achieved in the five policy areas that PROGRESS supports.

1. The original budget was set at €743.25 million. In response to the financial crisis, €60 million was subsequently reallocated to a European microfinance facility to increase the availability and accessibility of microfinance for vulnerable groups, micro-enterprises and the social economy.



The objectives of PROGRESS

1. In the long term: the Europe 2020 vision

Europe 2020 headline goals for employment and social inclusion

- 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
- The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
- 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

Ultimately, PROGRESS contributes to delivering the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The priority for the Europe 2020 Strategy is social and economic growth which is **smart, sustainable and inclusive**. The dimension of “inclusive growth”, and its focus on women, young people and older workers in terms of increasing employment and training opportunities, is especially relevant to PROGRESS. Three Europe 2020 flagship initiatives in particular support this focus: the **Agenda for new skills and jobs**, **Youth on the Move** and the **European platform against poverty**.

In 2010, PROGRESS funded a variety of studies and reports, conferences and seminars, statistics and other similar deliverables which directly fed into the formulation of the “Inclusive Growth” objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the three flagship initiatives.

2. In the medium term

The PROGRESS programme strategy identifies three **intermediate** goals as stepping stones and preconditions towards the longer term objectives (Europe 2020).

Effective application of EU law in all Member States

Over 98% of legislation in the fields of labour law, health and safety, anti-discrimination and gender equality is transposed in Member States. PROGRESS contributed to improving the quality of the Commission’s policy initiatives by ensuring that they are built on strong evidence as well as making its decision-making processes more accessible and involving a broad range of stakeholders. It helped to ensure correct and effective application of EU law in the Member States by monitoring its implementation and providing guidance and training.



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Shared understanding and ownership of EU goals

PROGRESS assisted development of cooperation among national authorities through the exchange of good practices, improving their knowledge on the most pressing issues through fact finding and evidence gathering as well as providing a common platform to debate the issues.

Strong and effective partnerships with national and pan-European stakeholders

PROGRESS involves non-governmental actors and key stakeholders in the policy-making process, so that they can relay their views to decision-makers through high-quality and participatory policy debate at EU and national levels. The programme also contributed to the capacity building of key non-governmental actors through support to EU-level networks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), so they were in a position to exert influence or change at EU and national levels.

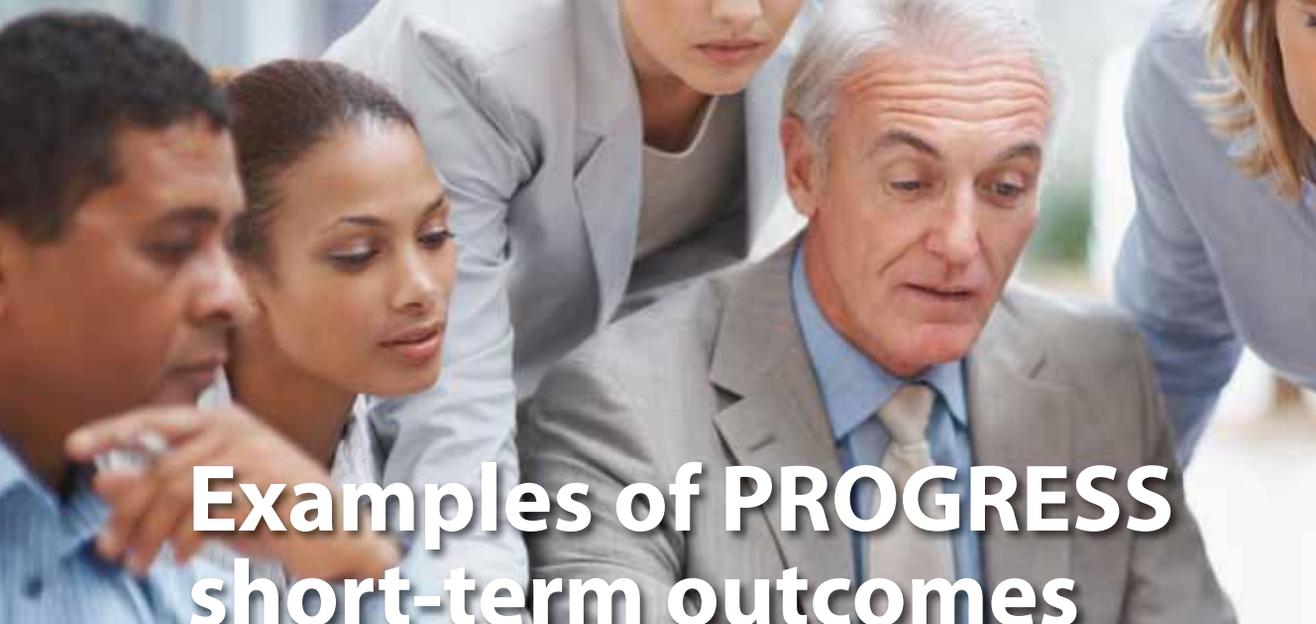
3. In the short term

The PROGRESS programme strategy identifies five immediate goals as stepping stones and preconditions towards medium-term and long-term objectives.

- Information sharing and learning
- Evidence-based policy
- High-quality and participatory debate
- Greater capacity of networks
- Integration of cross-cutting issues

What follows are examples of PROGRESS actions towards these five immediate goals, in the five different supported policy areas.

The examples show how the programme is supporting the development and coordination of European employment and social policy and how different interested parties are involved in policy-making at EU and national levels.



Examples of PROGRESS short-term outcomes

1. Information sharing and learning



Employment

Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment across Europe: This thematic review seminar was held November 2010 in Brussels in the context of overcoming the economic and labour market crisis.



Social inclusion and social protection

Social experimentation: Two calls for proposals on social experimentation were launched. Selected projects contribute to developing and testing socially innovative approaches to social policy priorities agreed under the Social Open Method of Coordination, such as active inclusion of persons excluded from the labour market, prevention and alleviation of child poverty, better accessibility, quality and viability of health care and long-term care, fight against housing exclusion, and social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities, notably the Roma.



Working conditions

Restructuring forums: These are designed as a platform for the exchange of ideas and debate on company restructuring, and the benefits of proactive and positive management of the change processes. Restructuring forums involve both public and private representatives. They play an important role in helping trade unions, businesses and workers to confront the current challenges. In 2010, they were held on **The Impact of Financial Investors on Enterprises, New Partnerships to Preserve Employment** and **Investing in Wellbeing at Work**.



Non-discrimination

Training seminars on EU anti-discrimination law: These have been organised every year since 2003 and are devoted to the implementation of EU directives prohibiting all forms of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, and all forms of discrimination in employment and occupation based on religion or convictions, handicap, age and sexual orientation.

Gender equality

The European Network of Women in Decision-Making in Politics and the Economy: This network was launched in June 2008 to provide an EU level platform for successful strategies to improve gender balance in decision-making positions across Europe. In addition, in order to improve statistics and monitor progress towards gender balance, the Commission built a comprehensive database on Women and Men in Decision-Making covering the political, public, juridical, social and economical domains in Europe.



2. Evidence-based policy

Employment

Labour market policy statistical database: This is maintained and updated on an annual basis and is used to compare Member States' labour market policies and thus to monitor progress towards the objectives of the European Employment Strategy. For example, the database helped look at such issues as costs of active labour market policies and provided evidence that these policies are not the main reason for the explosion of public deficits.

Social inclusion and social protection

Study on Social Impact Assessment as a Tool for Mainstreaming Social Protection and Social Inclusion Concerns in Public Policy in the EU Member States: This study looks at the different ways in which social impact assessment is carried out in the EU Member States, and draws recommendations for the implementation of effective social impact assessment systems and for effective social impact analysis.

Working conditions

Non-binding guide to good practice for the application of Directive 2003/10/EC "Noise at work": This good practice guide explains how workers' exposure to noise at work can be reduced or avoided. Targeted at Member States, industries and other interested bodies, it describes how to follow the directive on the minimum safety and health requirements regarding workers' exposure to the risks arising from noise.



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Non-discrimination

Study on the use of age, disability, sex, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin and sexual orientation in financial services:

This study focused on discrimination in the insurance and banking sectors.

Gender equality

The Gender Pay Gap in Europe from a Legal Perspective: This 2010 report by a network of legal experts in the field revealed that gender equality is not very high on the agenda of many Member States' governments. The evidence produced is primarily used internally by the Commission to adopt, amend and monitor EU legislation, and also for developing national legal acts implementing EU law.



3. High-quality and participatory debate

Employment

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) for the EUROPE 2020 Strategy: ways to move forward: At this conference, delegates from all Member States gathered to explore ways of making current and future ALMPs in the EU more measurable and evidence-based, identify and understand the most effective ALMP measures, and discuss how to implement and design future ALMP measures within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Public Employment Services (PES) - Vision for 2020: This conference aimed at giving visibility and promoting debate on the broader role of PES, focusing on developing a new model for PES and on promoting synergies between education, training and employment.

Social inclusion and social protection

Consensus Conference on Homelessness: The aim of this conference was for a jury of stakeholders along with three experts in the field to reach a consensus with regard to the different issues relating to homelessness in Europe. The consensus will be used to develop a European strategy for tackling homelessness.

European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion: This is an annual event with the presence and active participation of people experiencing poverty. In 2010, the central subject for discussion was the Commission's recommendation on Active Inclusion, with emphasis on the practical implementation of the recommendation, comparing practices from various Member States in order to draw conclusions about which approaches work better.



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Working conditions

Working longer through better working conditions and new modes of work and career organisation: This high-level conference in association with the European Commission and Eurofound looked at new methods for work organisation and changes to working conditions. It looked at the issue of extension of the working career as a response to demographic challenges. The conference also looked at new work organisation methods and changes to working conditions.

Non-discrimination

European Day of People with Disabilities Conference: This policy conference is organised in the first week of December each year, in close cooperation with the European Disability Forum (EDF), to see how EU action and legislation reaches the local level. The 2010 conference provided examples of disability mainstreaming in Europe and highlighted issues related to mutual recognition of disability, mobility of individuals and social security schemes, and leisure and culture.

Gender equality

Combating the pay gap reflecting the professional inequalities between men and women: This was a Belgian Presidency conference held October 2010. Outcomes of the in-depth discussions fed into Council Conclusions on strengthening the commitment and stepping up action to close the gender pay gap.



4. Greater capacity of networks

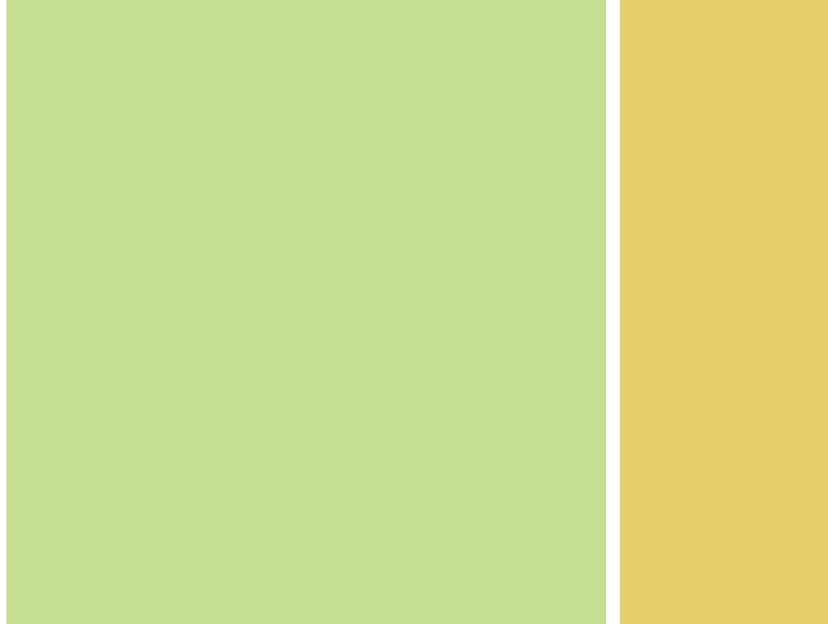
Social inclusion and social protection

Eurocities: This network brings together the local governments of more than 140 large cities in over 30 European countries. Its activities address a wide range of policies concerning economic development and cohesion policy, the provision of public services, climate change, energy and environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, as well as governance and international cooperation.

The European Anti-Poverty Network: This independent network established in 1990 is composed of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union.

Non-discrimination

European Network against Racism (ENAR) and its recent Shadow reports on racism in Europe: These highlighted that racism is still a deep-rooted problem in the EU. The ENAR produced a 9-point call for action to the Belgian Presidency to contribute to building an equal Europe for all and a 3-point call for action to the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Trio of Presidencies.



European Older People's Platform: This focuses on a wide range of policy areas that impact on older and retired people, including issues of discrimination, employment of older workers and active ageing, social protection, pension reforms, social inclusion, health, research, accessibility of public transport and of the build environment, and ICT.

Equinet: This network, which brings together 33 organisations from 28 European countries, aims to counteract discrimination as a national equality body across the range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Equinet works to enable equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential at Member State level by sustaining and developing a networking between and a platform for equality bodies at European level.

5. Integration of cross-cutting issues

Gender equality

European Women's Lobby: This group has been advocating a strong gender dimension in Europe 2020, proposing that a commitment be made to close the gender pay gap by 2020 and that target be set for 40% women on the boards of enterprises. It called for a better monitoring system and systematic gender impact assessment in all policies, targets, benchmarks and measures of the future Europe 2020 Strategy.



Participating in PROGRESS

1. Who can apply for funding?

Funding from PROGRESS is open to **EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries, and EU candidate and potential candidate countries**, provided that a Memorandum of Understanding for participation in the programme has been signed.

The kinds of organisations that can apply for funding are:

- National, regional and local authorities
- Public employment services
- National statistics offices
- Specialised bodies, universities, research institutions
- Social and economic partners
- NGOs
- Media



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2. How does funding work?

The different activities that PROGRESS will fund are listed in the Annual Work Plan, the link to which can be found on <http://www.ec.europa.eu/progress>

Funding is awarded either for **procurement** (by way of **calls for tenders**) or in the form of **grants** (by way of **calls for proposals**).

PROGRESS does **not** finance individual projects on request or on a case-by-case basis – any organisation looking for funding will have to consult the Annual Work Plan's list of activities, checking the type of activity, the method of funding and the target audience in order to then put forward an appropriate application for funding.

In the case of grants, the principle of the programme is **co-financing**. This means that the Commission contributes to a certain percentage of the overall costs of a project; the maximum reimbursement that can be awarded is normally 80%.



The way forward

1. The future of PROGRESS

PROGRESS will need to evolve beyond its current programming period in order to allow the EU to effectively and efficiently supporting the Member States in delivering on the Europe 2020 objectives.

The exact path to follow will be defined based on the continued process of learning lessons that is at the heart of PROGRESS' results-based management approach. It is clear, however, that a focus will need to be maintained on continuing to strengthen partnerships at European, national, regional and local levels and between all actors involved in pursuing common goals for employment and social inclusion. Further and continued research and analysis will be essential to develop, assess and monitor European employment and social policies and progress made towards agreed targets.



2. Further reading

To find out more about how PROGRESS works, visit the **European Commission website** www.ec.europa.eu/progress, where you can also find other publications on the programme:

- Brochure and more in-depth publication on the PROGRESS strategy framework ('Ensuring Progress delivers results').
- Annual performance monitoring reports.

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PROGRESS (2007-2013) is the EU programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, set up to provide financial support for contributing to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This publication outlines the programme's long-term and short-term objectives and gives several examples of how the programme is supporting the development and coordination of European employment and social policy and how different interested parties are involved in policy-making at EU and national levels.

This publication is available in printed format in all EU official languages.

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