



**MALTA EU 2017**  
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

## Background Note Session II

# Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Social Affairs

---

**23 - 24 MARCH 2017**  
**MALTA**

## **Session II: What makes an individual socially excluded? Different perspectives and exchange of best practices**

In order for societies to flourish and continue improving, their members need to have a decent standard of living, while also be able to participate in the community in which they live.

Social exclusion can come about for many reasons: a person may be excluded through some kind of discrimination; there may be issues of unemployment, low income, lack of decent housing, lack of basic skills and medical issues. These, among other issues can be catalysts for people who are poor or at the risk of poverty to also start the road to social exclusion.

Unfortunately, certain groups of people are sometimes denied opportunities simply because of their race, sex, religion, gender, age, disability or other social identity. These people are not just poor – they are also excluded from society based on who they are, how they live and what they believe in. This kind of exclusion denies people the right to make choices and makes them more susceptible to poverty, while making it extremely difficult for those who already poor to improve their life.

In order for countries to reduce poverty (or the risk thereof) and social exclusion effectively, they must have policies that specifically target groups of people that tend to be socially excluded. They must take into account the real challenges that are faced by these people and find ways to tackle them by coming up with effective frameworks that promote social inclusion, improve opportunities and access to services, as well as tackling the prejudice present in society in a way that will produce a real change in the lives of those who are socially excluded.

In its resolution of 4 July 2016, the European Parliament acknowledged the high unemployment rates, socio-economic inequalities and declining social rights present in the European Union and stressed the need for development and defence of public services in the Member States, including access to justice; education and health systems; care for children, elderly and sick people; and an overall high level of social protection.

Besides the work being done by the European Union and by many entities across Europe, each country needs to assess its own situation and come up with policies and practical ideas of how to combat its poverty and social exclusion problems. Co-operation between countries and national parliaments can help by offering insights into how each country tries to deal with these

issues locally and may serve as inspiration for other countries. At EU level, this is already done through peer reviews, where open discussions take place on selected good practices, between experts of the European Commission, peer countries and other stakeholders, with the intention of mutual learning.

The aim of this session is to provide Members of Parliament a similar opportunity to discuss their country's perspectives on the subject and to share best practices that may help other countries who are struggling to combat the same issues.

### **Questions that may guide the discussion:**

- What measures have been used in your country to combat poverty and social exclusion?
- Which practices have proven to be the most effective? Were there any measures that were not as effective as anticipated?
- Has your Parliament/Chamber actively promoted any measures conducive to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion?
- Are there any particular experiences that can be shared with the other Member States that could promote a more just and inclusive society?