

## **Working group on Demographic and Social Challenges**

### **Context**

There are a number of social and demographic challenges facing the member states of the European Union and all of them are the concerns and priorities of the member networks of Civil Society Europe. The continuing climate of austerity has highlighted the problems associated with continuing youth unemployment, as well as poverty and inequality through precarious and low-income work. Welfare reform continues to hit the most vulnerable in our countries and regions. This summer has highlighted the crisis in terms of those seeking asylum or refugee status in our member states and a response by governments often characterised by xenophobia and populist right-wing approaches to a humanitarian problem. At both ends of the scale there are issues for young people and for older people. An ageing demographic is too often seen as a drain on society and a crisis of care waiting to happen. While we need to be realistic about the pressures on the health and care systems, people are living longer and healthier lives and older and retired people should be seen as an asset and net contributors to society. Social exclusion and inequality are concerns for all our networks. We need to keep these issues at the heart of the European social agenda and work to make sure that the European Institutions and our member state governments are clear on CSE's position in regard to them.

### **Objectives**

- To raise awareness of the social and demographic challenges throughout the CSE network;
- To offer CSE member organisations the opportunity to contribute to the debate on

these issues;

- To gather appropriate case studies and examples of particular problems and solutions in this area;
- With the help of the secretariat to prepare appropriate background papers on these issues;
- To prepare recommendations and resolutions for the European institutions on these issues and their impact on civil society.

### **Aims**

- To contribute generally to the work of CSE
- To contribute to the implementation of article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty
- To keep the social and demographic challenges facing the EU at the forefront of the agenda of the European Institutions
- To focus specifically on:
  - the European social model;
  - migration, refugee and asylum seeker issues;
  - an ageing population;
  - youth unemployment;
  - citizens' mobility;
  - inequality and social exclusion.
- Working methodology
  - Frequency of meetings to be confirmed;
  - The working group will require a chair and (at the very least) a note taker;
  - Agendas will be prepared in advance and can reflect both the concerns of

CSE and the individual member networks as well as topics of current interest;

- The working group can use its first meeting to develop outputs and outcomes it wishes to see in the first year of existence;
- The working group should ensure that its activities are in line with the other working groups and the direction of CSE in general.

**Coordination of working group:**

Volonteuropa (Oonagh Aitken)

Solidar (Conny Reuter)

Culture Action Europe (Luca Bergamo)

Notes and References

TIPSE Final Report - poverty, social exclusion, deprivation in Europe

Free Movement Final Report – statistics on migration

Dauria – EU Migration since 2004

Fabian publication ‘ A Convenient Truth’ comparisons between countries on life expectancy, inequality and environmental trends

Caritas – The Impact of Welfare Changes

IPPR – Many to Many – changes in needs and welfare reform