

# SOCIEUX LAUNCH

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## **Speaking Points for the introduction**

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- I am honoured to welcome you at the Berlaymont, this symbolic and prestigious building of the European Commission, for the official launch of SOCIEUX, the unique acronym selected for this facility: the Social Protection European Union Expertise in Development Cooperation.
- I am particular pleased to present SOCIEUX to you today because it is the result of the Commission's first ever communication developing a policy framework for future support for Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation, which was adopted in August 2012 with Council conclusions on 15 October 2012, almost exactly a year ago. Together with the EU Member States we are therefore proud to celebrate today, one year after the Council's conclusions, the effective implementation of the communication.
- In setting out EU policy on future development cooperation, the 2011 Communication 'an Agenda for Change' called for a more comprehensive approach to human development with increased support for access to quality health and education services and enhanced social protection in support of inclusive growth

characterised by "people's ability to participate in and benefit from wealth and job creation" and a commitment to at least 20% of EU aid going to support for social inclusion and human development.

- This matches the very real needs in the developing world. In recent years the world economy has seen impressive growth in some developing countries, notably in Asia. Five large-population countries have reached middle income country (MIC) status. Yet two thirds of the world's 1.5 billion poorest people now live in middle-income countries. Furthermore, globalization has more widely been associated with increased vulnerability, disruption of traditional solidarity systems and, in some cases, increased social polarisation. Large numbers of casual, informal and migrant workers have no access to employment-related social insurance or any real form of social protection.
- Social protection can play a key role in reducing persistent poverty and vulnerability. By increasing equity – e.g. through social transfers and increased access to basic social services – and providing protection against risk, social protection can support poverty reduction and inclusive growth, as well as supporting social cohesion and stability. However, the very different profiles of developing economies and the high levels of informality in their labour markets present a very different setting from that in which most of the existing social protection systems in the developed world were established, calling for innovative and tailor-made solutions based on country-specific needs and priorities.
- As our Communication clearly states, the goal of EU development cooperation in supporting social protection is to improve equity and efficiency in provision, while supporting

social inclusion and cohesion, as the essential underpinnings of inclusive, sustainable growth and poverty reduction. These goals spring naturally from the fundamental values of the European Union

- The EU remains committed to doing its utmost to help achieve the MDGs by 2015 and beyond that we are fully engaged in the development of the post-MDG framework. In the Communication: *A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future* the EU proposals made in the run-up to Rio+20, indicated that they should also focus on resources which represent public goods and basic "pillars of life," such as energy, water, food security, oceans, sustainable consumption and production, as well as social inclusion and decent work. At the same time, goals should also be coherent with existing international agreements, such as goals and targets on climate change and biodiversity, as well as social protection floors.
- With SOCIEUX we propose to support the efforts of partner countries to better design and manage their social protection systems.
- The support will be provided through short-term experts drawn primarily from the EU Member States. I would like to remind that from the time of their introduction in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, social protection and welfare systems have played a vital role in in reducing poverty, protecting vulnerable groups.
- The facility will permit rapid mobilisation of social protection experts from the European Union to easily share knowledge and experience. Practitioners from partner countries' administrations

and non-governmental groups can also be mobilised as experts to bring added value in a South-South and triangular cooperation (EU, South-South).

- Dans ce domaine, je crois que la coopération de pair à pair apporte beaucoup plus de légitimité et de crédibilité que l'assistance technique classique – qui reste pertinente dans certains cas - tout en créant des liens entre pays partenaires qui vont perdurer au-delà des actions dans le cadre de SOCIEUX qui reste une facilité fournissant des appuis ad-hoc et de courte durée. A noter que SOCIEUX offre une flexibilité et une rapidité en termes de procédures tout à fait innovantes dans la coopération européenne au développement.
- Le succès de SOCIEUX dépendra cependant de la volonté des EM de l'UE et des pays partenaires innovants en Protection sociale à mobiliser l'expertise appropriée ainsi qu'à l'introduction de requêtes pertinentes par nos pays partenaires.
- If yesterday was the anniversary of the Council's Conclusions, tomorrow will be the International Day of the Eradication of Poverty. We hope that SOCIEUX will contribute to the eradication of poverty.