



Ministry of Employment, Health and Social Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

The Ministry of Employment, Health and Social Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (MAIS) is responsible for regional employment and labour market policies, integration of migrants and social affairs including the fight against poverty and prevent exclusion focusing different target groups.

The Ministry has to guide and control the given legal regulations but also to develop new strategies to tackle the actual political and socially based demands.

Also in respect of the financial and banking crisis the strengthening of the social dimension of Europe is becoming a more and more fundamental issue. Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy targeting on making the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The commitment of the European Union Heads of States and Government to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy is a significant sign stressing the importance of the social dimension for the future of Europe. In regard to this aim MAIS has just published its own local action plan to fight poverty and prevent social exclusion. The idea is to minimize the more and more widening gap between poor and rich. To handle this action plan all ministries in North Rhine-Westphalia are involved in the process, as well as the non-government stakeholders working in that field.

As a consequence of these consultations two major activities have been developed:

- The personal living conditions of the poorer people have to be improved through combining all existing measures e. g. financial resources, support activities in the disadvantaged regions and parts of cities being in crisis (one major target group in this field are families facing poverty because of different reasons like unemployment or non-existing minimum income, health situation, lack of personal skills)
- The main action field will be the living quarter in the cities in crisis; local government will specially help these cities by combined government authority activities

One impact of this local action plan is also to double check new laws and regulations regarding their social impact (meaning to check ex-ante if they result in a situation worse than before for the critical groups). Thus, all government activities shall be done within a participation process of the people for whom it will be designed.

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