



Poverty is not a situation, it is a denial of rights!

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Statistics prove it: there are still as many poor in the European Union as there have always been. In one of its latest press releases, Eurostat stated that 120 million people in 2014 were **living in poverty** and / or social exclusion. This means: a quarter of the population! One has to recognise the importance of this number that should have enjoyed the widest possible publicity.

Not only this was not the case, but the official communication of the EU on the matter is that things get better and that we are on the right path. The European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AEDH), which organised a study seminar on poverty in November, its reality and the words that are being used to express it¹, is astonished to see the extent to which it is possible to deny this reality. While there are some internal variations, the essential observation is that the percentage of people concerned has been the same for almost 8 years now.

It was at that time that the "Europe 2020" strategy was put in place that aims at reducing the number of poor people by 20% by the year 2020. In the opinion of AEDH this objective is incorrect, as it comes down to saying that a certain poverty rate is acceptable. But AEDH also argues that poverty is not primarily an individual state, but above all the result of the orientation of economic policies.

The Europe 2020 strategy has failed and although one might wish that the institutions, Commission and Council, fiercely attached to the evaluation of results, draw the consequences and put an end to austerity policies, to the draconian control of States under the memorandum, to budget control and the weakening of social protection and public services. Alas, this is not the case! According to Eurostat, among the objectives of the 2020 strategy, not only two of them see no improvement, but are also in decline: the employment rate and the risk of social exclusion.

Today, on the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, AEDH recalls that rights are universal and indivisible. Economic and social rights have the same value as civic and political rights. Not accepting this means once again taking them as secondary.

AEDH calls on the EU to change a losing policy that leads to serious violations of human rights.

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The European Association for the Defence of Human Rights (Association Européenne pour la défense des Droits de l'Homme -AEDH) consists of associations and leagues defending human rights in the countries of the European Union. For more information, visit <http://www.aedh.eu/?lang=en>.

¹ For a report of the seminar, see <http://www.aedh.eu/Report-Seminar-AEDH-on-poverty-16.html>