

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2009

A CALL TO ALL CANDIDATES



The need to reassert, without any ambiguity, that our common future depends on the eradication of chronic poverty and all forms of social exclusion

Everyone will be able to progress in Europe when people living in poverty and the victims of social exclusion are able to participate and benefit from that progress.

Faced with the current crisis and the anxiety provoked by it, ATD Fourth World is calling on the candidates for the European Elections to commit themselves on the basis of programmes which are ambitious and daring enough to encompass those populations that are living in extreme poverty, within a spirit of equity, so as to bring to an end the waste of human potential implied by abandoning the most vulnerable among us.

If the current crisis does not involve any radical changes leading to a « new world order », this inequality will persist and will be the cause of further violence and suffering for those who are subjected to it.

One of the European Union's priorities should be the eradication of extreme poverty and social exclusion to which it committed itself in 2000. This impels us to unite in order to strive together to base our policies and our actions on non-discrimination and on the participation of the poorest people among us; on the indivisibility and effectiveness of human rights.

Given this reality, as a candidate in the European Elections, you have a very particular responsibility:

- **Not to accept**, in the 27 member states of the European Union, **that children, young people and adults should continue to live in unacceptable conditions** with inadequate income, with no housing, with no education which could lead to authentic training, and so many similar situations that could lead to families becoming separated.
- **Not to accept that young people and adults should be made to feel useless** and to count for nothing, incapable of contributing to the common good through their work or their social involvement, and all too often made to feel guilty about their situation.
- **To refuse any discrimination** which excludes anyone from taking part in communal life and the progress that has been achieved.
- **To refuse any attempt at protectionism** which risks creating further poverty traps in those countries that are the worst hit by the crisis when they are going through an important phase of development.
- **Not to accept that the effects of the crisis should be shifted onto the most vulnerable**, among others, to immigrants whose human rights are too often ignored and ridiculed.
- **To demand that Europe be an area where the dignity of all should be respected**, a Europe where each person can flourish and contribute to the development of those close to them and also to the entire European society, a Europe which judges its progress according to the quality of life of its most destitute and most socially excluded members, a Europe which contributes to greater world justice and peace.

This Europe assumes that fundamental rights should be effectively ensured for all, especially work and income, housing, education, training and culture, health, justice, the protection of family and of childhood.

The fight against great poverty requires explicit, strong and permanent involvement from all European, national, and local Institutions; we appeal for such involvement among others.

We ask you to:

•**Join the European Parliamentary group « Fourth World Committee – on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights »**, which seeks to contribute to this Parliament's work through relying on the experience, the thoughts and the aspirations of people and families of those who are the most socially excluded because of poverty.

•**Reaffirm, without ambiguity, that there is no future for anyone unless extreme poverty is eradicated and that the refusal to accept social exclusion are the prime aims** for our public policies and our citizens' involvement.

•**Develop an approach for fighting against extreme poverty, that is not based on aid and assistance but on human rights**, ensuring that the European Union's Charter on Fundamental Rights and the founding texts proposed by the Council of Europe should be applied.

•**Promote the European Parliament's role in the European Year for the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010**, through making decisions and significant events.

•**Integrate the aim of fighting against extreme poverty into the economic reflation plans which respect the environment, through initiatives that show solidarity with those countries that are worst hit by the current crisis.**

•**Continue with, and intensify, the participative contribution from those people suffering from extreme poverty by working** with institutional and civil society partners, both in Europe and at a local level. Their life experience and being confronted with their view will all partners to find together the means of attaining a society where each person, whomsoever he or she may be, holds a recognised place.

The **International Movement ATD Fourth World** is a non-governmental organization with no religious or political affiliation which engages with individuals and institutions to find solutions to eradicate extreme poverty. Working in partnership with people in poverty, ATD Fourth World's human rights-based approach focuses on supporting families and individuals through its grass-roots presence and involvement in disadvantaged communities, in both urban and rural areas, creating public awareness of extreme poverty and influencing policies to address it www.atd-quartmonde.org

ATD Fourth World would like to collect your responses and requests:
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