

## Press Release by EAPN Ireland, supporting the Europe-wide appeal by the Social Platform

For immediate Release - 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006

### Commissioner Charlie McCreevy must respect European Parliament's demand to exclude social services from the EU 'Services Directive'

The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland welcomed today's vote by MEPs to exclude social services from the controversial Services Directive. EAPN Ireland Coordinator Robin Hanan called on Commissioner Charlie McCreevy (who will be in Dublin next week to discuss the proposal at the National Forum on Europe) to respect the Parliament's wish as he prepares a revised proposal.

This statement was made in support of a statement by the Europe-wide Platform of European Social NGOs ('Social Platform')

*"The Commission has a responsibility to respect the wish of the European Parliament, the EU's only directly-elected institution" said Anne-Sophie Parent, President of the Europe-wide Social Platform. "Social NGOs around Europe now expect the Commission's revised proposal to exclude social services, in line with the MEPs' vote."*

The Social Platform, representing both users of social services and non-profit social service providers, underlines that the original Commission proposal completely failed to take into account the specific nature of social services and their users. *"Social services such as social housing, and homes for disabled or elderly people cannot be treated in the same way as purely commercial services", said Claire Roumet, Chair of the Social Platform's Social Services Working Group. "MEPs have understood that the services directive would undermine the ability of social services to provide high quality services to their users".*

*"The Commission should also publish as soon as possible its announced Communication on social and health services of general interest - there is no excuse for any more delays" continued Ms Roumet. "This Communication will advance the EU's understanding of the social services sector in Europe and help clarify how social services should be dealt with in EU internal market and competition rules".*

*"Social services are an essential part of every country's efforts to protect the fundamental rights of its citizens and ensure that all may live in dignity" finished Ms Roumet.*

**Robin Hanan, Coordinator of EAPN Ireland, added:**

*"The Directive, as originally proposed by Commissioner McCreevy, would have threatened a wide range of social services. It is dangerous to subject care services, health services, homeless shelters etc. to the same competition rules as mobile phone or banking services. The 'country of origin principle', whereby services could be provided under the rules and conditions of the country where the service company is established, would have threatened standards and access to services for those who cannot afford to 'go private' and the wages and conditions of the employees. We congratulate the European Parliament on exempting social services and we particularly thank the many Irish MEPs who worked to achieve this."*

Commissioner McCreevy's visit to Dublin next week will provide a really important opportunity to see how he will translate the European Parliament's views into reality".

(Robin Hanan is also a member of the special Observer Pillar of the National Forum on Europe - see [www.forumoneurope.ie](http://www.forumoneurope.ie) for announcement of the discussion with Commissioner McCreevy)

- ENDS -

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.