CEV Symposium:

"Volunteering as a means of empowerment and social inclusion - A bridge between the European Years 2010 and 2011"
6th - 8th December 2010 in Brussels, Belgium

While Europe is a prospering continent and while the Europe 2020 Strategy aims to turn the EU into an “inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion”, poverty and social exclusion remain an undeniable reality in most European countries: 80 million Europeans live below the poverty line, and many face serious obstacles in accessing employment, education, housing, social and financial services *. 73% of Europeans feel that poverty in their country is widespread *; and 15% of Europeans feel excluded of society *. The reality of poverty and social exclusion as well as their impact on individuals are multifaceted and go far beyond a lack of financial resources: The inability to secure adequate education and training; an impact on physical and mental health; a reduced ability to get access to community networks and activities; the loss of social contacts; the exclusion from decision-making processes; a loss of self-confidence and a feeling of powerlessness and distress are some of the effects we need to fight against in order to allow all members of our societies a dignified lives.

What is the role volunteering plays in the fight against poverty and social exclusion? Is volunteering inclusive itself and is its empowering potential used to the full? What recommendations can we formulate for more and better voluntary action in combating poverty and social exclusion, as well as for a better recognition of the role of volunteers in this area?

This second CEV Symposium 2010 will be organised in Brussels in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, and will bring together over 200 professionals from the volunteering sector as well as decision-makers, experts in the field of the fight against poverty and social exclusion, volunteers and people experiencing poverty, to showcase the empowering potential of volunteering in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. We will present good practice examples from all over Europe and debate a common conference statement, our ‘Brussels Declaration’, to develop and agree on steps we can take to better harness the voluntary sector in the common effort towards the eradication of poverty and social inclusion in our societies. The event will be CEV’s contribution to ensuring a legacy for the European Year of the fight against poverty and social exclusion 2010 – and to the kick-off for the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

Among the delegates we will welcome:

John Mc Donald – Head of the Task Force for the European Year of Volunteering 2011 at the European Commission; Kris Peeters – Minister President of the Flanders Region in Belgium; Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network; Karima Delli, Member of the European Parliament.

Please find the NEW programme, as well as the registration form, tourist and hotel information on our website: http://www.cev.be/132-2010_december_%28brussels%29_volunteering_as_a_mea...-EN.html. Registration is open until 12th November.

Should you need any further detail or clarification, do not hesitate to contact the CEV Secretariat at aurelie.storme@cev.be.

Best wishes
The CEV Team.