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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

**Statement submitted by EIVHGI — Europäischer
Interessenverband-Handel-Gewerbe-Industrie, a
non-governmental organization in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Eradication of poverty in European Countries — Initiatives by entrepreneurs

Introduction, objective and purpose of statement

Despite the overall wealth of the European Union (EU), poverty in the EU and in East European non-EU Countries is still at a relatively high level. Nearly 1 in 7 people are at risk of poverty. The figures are even higher for some groups such as children and older people, but also micro-entrepreneurs.

According to EUROSTAT (data extracted in December 2016), one of the Europe 2020 headline indicators is to reduce poverty by lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion by 2020. While eradication of poverty is usually associated with the poorest countries in the world, we are here focusing on member countries of the European Union and East European economies.

The purpose of our statement is to contribute to a better awareness that poverty alleviation is still a global issue, and that entrepreneurship, particularly the majority of Small and Medium Enterprises, including crafts and smaller farms are the engines of economic growth, employment, social development, wellbeing and eradication of poverty.

Being aware that as well Governments as Banks and EU Programs cannot stand alone guarantees financial crises prevention and economic development, our Association's activities and recommendations concentrate on reasonable incentives ("applied Nudge Theory") and new models of cooperation to help SMEs to prevailingly help themselves.

Overview of the issue as it relates to the work of EIVHGI

EIVHGI aims to promote mutual support and assistance to the members and the perception of occupational and professional interests of its members. Other main task is to protect the rights, interests and competitiveness of small and medium-sized companies in the areas of trade, crafts and industry, on the Austrian and European level and in less developed economies. Of particular importance is the promotion of women entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs.

Services for this purpose are: The advice and support of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) at information management, project financing, provision of equity and borrowing at the stage of internationalization and globalization.

Specific examples of accomplishments by EIVHGI and remaining challenges

EIVHGI assists members to easier access to promotion programs of national and international institution, including the European Union programs, e.g. HORIZON, COSME, LIFE and other SME oriented support.

We offer advisory assistance of members requesting promotions of SMEs by the European Union Programs.

EIVHGI conducts market investigations, and organization of trade fairs and exhibitions, product and service presentations, courses and workshops.

How Can Entrepreneurs Help Alleviate Poverty? — Entrepreneurship and Poverty

EIVHGI is since 2014 a partner Organization of the United Nations Global Compact, and hence supports the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, including eradication of poverty. Subsequently we encourage our Member Entrepreneurs as follows:

Charity work — Business people shall be sharing their prosperity through charity. Business houses shall set up schools for the children of the poor. Such children shall be provided with an opportunity to better themselves. Scholarships shall be given for higher education. More houses shall be built for the poor and the sanitary conditions of the slums shall be improved upon. Programs should be sponsored whereby health and social workers shall go to various unhealthy habitats to educate the poor about hygiene.

A way forward: expectations, specific recommendations

EIVHGI recommends employers of a business try to provide an opportunity to one member of the poor family so that he or she can support the family.

Setting up of Foundation — Business establishments set up foundations to divert their profits towards community development. It could be perhaps for tax relief, but the money diverted are used to eradicate poverty. These foundations focus on social work.

In the forthcoming months EIVHGI will liaise with partner Organizations in the less privileged Countries of Eastern Europe to establish Foundations for Crises Prevention and Development of smaller enterprises and the eradication of poverty, to be funded by the European Union, and possibly by a Currency Transaction Levy (“Tobin Tax”).
