



DIARY NOTE

## **Paco Peña supports the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

**Performance at the Edinburgh International Festival dedicated to the  
eradication of poverty**

**Brussels, 1 September 2010 – The Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company will dedicate part of its performance at the Edinburgh International Festival to the 2010 European Year for combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.**

In his performance “Quimeras” (Chimeras), Paco Peña brings to life the journey of migrants and refugees, reflecting both positive and negative aspects of their dreams, the reality of their lives, and their connection with the people on the other side of the frontiers that they cross. He uses the powerful storytelling of flamenco music and dance in an innovative, yet authentic, way. Flamenco is associated with the Romani people of Spain (Gitanos) since a number of famous flamenco artists are of this ethnicity. Four members of the Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company are of Roma origin.

The European Year 2010 partners with the Edinburgh International Festival as the festival is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity. The partnership with the Edinburgh International Festival is one of the more than 100 event partnerships the European Year 2010 is undertaking in its fight against poverty and social exclusion. A variety of events across Europe have been selected in order to help promote the main messages of the European Year 2010 and to raise public awareness about the issues of poverty and social exclusion.

The Edinburgh International Festival’s mission is to be the most exciting, innovative and accessible Festival of the performing arts in the world, and thus promote the cultural, educational and economic well-being of the people of Edinburgh and Scotland. It has been connecting audiences and artists for over sixty years.

“We are very pleased to be involved with the Edinburgh International Festival and with Paco Peña, as the arts are an excellent way to alert people to issues of poverty and social exclusion” says Neil Mitchison, Head of the European Commission Office in Scotland.

“The power of art to engage with a range of issues that present an everyday challenge to migrants and refugees is an important reason for the intrinsic necessity of culture to our lives and the health of our community.

Paco Peña believes passionately in telling stories of social inclusion through the quintessentially Spanish genre of flamenco. I am delighted that the premiere of Quimeras is part of the Edinburgh International Festival in 2010.

An association through Quimeras with the European Union’s Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion I hope will further highlight the profoundly important ideas behind Paco’s work and their relevance to both local audiences and our international visitors.” Jonathan Mills, Festival Director.



## Programme overview

<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September</b>	
10h - 10h30	Press Conference in the presence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Jonathan Mills, Director of the Edinburgh International Festival</li><li>- Paco Peña</li><li>- Neil Mitchison, Head of the EC office in Edinburgh</li><li>- June Burrough, national campaign ambassador of the European Year 2010</li></ul> <p><i>Venue: The Edinburgh Playhouse 18-22 Greenside Place Edinburgh EH1 3AA UK</i></p>
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Friday 3<sup>d</sup>, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September</b>	
20h - 22h	"Quimeras" performance by Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company <p><i>Venue: The Edinburgh Playhouse 18-22 Greenside Place Edinburgh EH1 3AA UK</i></p>

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## **Background: the need for combating poverty and social exclusion**

Each year, the European Union selects a theme of general interest aimed at raising public awareness and drawing national governments' attention to the related issues. Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion was chosen as the focus of the 2010 European Year to mark the 10-year Anniversary of the Lisbon Council when Heads of State and government committed to taking steps to make a decisive impact on the levels of poverty.

The social protection systems in the European Union are amongst the most highly-developed in the world and yet too many Europeans still live in poverty. The many forms this takes are complex, but figures speak for themselves:

- More than 84 million people live below the poverty line (set at 60% of their country's median income). This figure represents 17% of Europe's population.
- One European in ten lives in a household where nobody works.
- For 8% of Europeans, having a job is not enough to avoid poverty.
- Some 19 million children live under the threat of poverty and are disproportionately affected.

### **Objectives of the European Year:**

- To recognise the fundamental right of people affected by poverty and social exclusion and to allow them to live in dignity and to take an active part in society;
- To promote public support for social inclusion policies and foster commitment by all public and private actors;
- To promote a more cohesive society, where it is recognised that society as a whole benefits from combating poverty;
- To renew the pledge of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to involve all stakeholders in the pursuit of that aim.

### **Actions:**

Throughout 2010, several hundred activities are being organised, including awareness campaigns, innovative actions, creative solidarity schemes, discussions, conferences, and competitions, which highlight achievements and promote stories related to poverty and social exclusion. In addition, partnerships have been concluded with major event organisers in Europe, such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the Frankfurt Book Fair and the Perugia International Journalism Festival, to highlight just a few.

These European events involve a wide range of actors, including civil society organisations and those defending the interests of persons living in poverty, as well as social partners, and local and regional authorities.

At national level, programmes have been developed for adapting the policy guidelines defined at European level to the issues and specific characteristics of each country and carried out locally. These national programmes are published on the EY2010 website.

For further information please visit [www.2010againstopoverty.eu](http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu)