**EXCO DOC N 8**

**Background note to the EAPN Evaluation and Strategic Planning Process**

*TB 05/06/2014*

So many things have happened under the current Strategic Plan. EAPN has had to face big challenges of resources, difficult policy-making context, austerity-driven impact on people experiencing poverty across Europe. Despite this, EAPN can also highlight some significant achievements, among which are:

* Securing the continuity of the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion
* Engaging with Europe 2020 Strategy and continuing to make a significant contribution by engaging members and coordinating a European Alliance on CSRs
* Implementing a tender on European Minimum Income Network
* Securing a funding base for EAPN’s secretariat and activities
* Running a successful campaign on benchmarking Structural Funds money for poverty
* Improving contacts and engagement with European Parliament
* Developing a Membership Assessment and Support System for National Networks
* Developing many useful publications, explainers, positions and other communication tools
* Strengthening member capacity on using ICTs and social media.

Under the current Strategic Plan 2012-2014, EAPN has been working towards achieving a more social and sustainable Europe free of poverty and social exclusion. The Strategic Plan was decided together with changes in working methods, to allow for more flexibility in the way EAPN develops its positions, to ensure participation of more representatives from networks and to create more space for member learning. Thus, the Executive Committee has the primary responsibility for management and strategic development of the Network; EU Inclusion Strategies Group is mandated by the Executive to ensure EAPN’s engagement with Europe 2020 and each of them can manage up to three Task Forces per year to help advance specific work (3 Task Forces in policy work, 2 in development work and 1 on communication).

As part of the funding that EAPN receives from Progress Programme (and EaSI), EAPN needs to put in place performance management monitoring and conduct an external evaluation. Combining this objective with the objective of drawing lessons from the current Strategic Plan and identifying future priorities for the 2015-2018 period, EAPN has begun an evaluation process led by the Executive.

So far, the Executive Committee has had the following rounds of discussion on evaluation:

1. Orientation debate/responding to future challenges (November 2013)

- Governance – Questions for Discussion

- Member Development and Capacity Building – Questions for Discussion

- Strategic Planning – Evaluation and Planning – a short introduction

1. Discussion paper on challenges (March 2014)

The Executive also oversees concretely the membership development, communication and funding, fundraising and projects work of EAPN. These are part of the usual agenda and Executive members have an overview of where we stand on each of these areas.

Furthermore, in December 2013, the Executive appointed an external evaluator to carry out 2 tasks:

1. Interview external stakeholders to understand the context and the perception of EAPN
2. Meeting staff, conducting desk research and sending out a questionnaire to get member input on evaluating the current Strategic Plan and the working methods.

**What is expected to happen at the June Executive Committee?**

The next meeting of the Executive will continue to focus a big part to the Evaluation process, moving into the Strategic Planning phase.

The Executive will:

* Hear and discuss the outcomes of the external evaluation;
* Work in a world-café setting in two rounds. The first round will look at validating the changes EAPN has had to make, in light of the reduction of funding from EaSI. The second round will begin identifying the priorities for the future Strategic Plan and have an initial round of proposals.

**Timeline for finalizing the Strategic Plan 2015-2018**

The next Strategic Plan 2016-2018 should be approved at the 2015 General Assembly. The General Assembly will be held together with the 2015 Strategic Congress, the moment where EAPN members will finalise the goals and working methods of the next Strategic Plan 2016-2019. Between the current and next General Assembly, the Bureau will coordinate the involvement and input of all the relevant statutory and working structures of EAPN.

The following is a timeline for the next steps:

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| **Timeline** | **Action** |
| **September 2015** | Final report of the External Evaluator |
| **November 2015** | Executive Committee discusses draft Strategic Plan |
| November-Spring 2015 | EUISG and other EAPN working bodies contribute to the future Strategic Plan |
| Spring 2015 | Executive Committee finalizes draft and submits it to the Strategic Congress and General Assembly |
| Summer 2015 | Strategic Congress finalizes Strategic Plan. General Assembly adopts the Strategic Plan |