Can the Semester deliver on poverty and participation?

EAPN Assessment of the National Reform Programmes 2015

KEY MESSAGES

September 2015
CANTHESEMESTERDELIVERONPOVERTYANDPARTICIPATION
EAPNASSESSMENTOFTHEREFORMPROGRAMMES2015

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1. **Ensure macroeconomic policies deliver on social objectives**

Macroeconomicpoliciesneedtobeputonaparwithsocialobjectives, andattheservicesofsocial
inclusion and cohesion. Europe 2020 goals and targets must be restored to the heart of the Semester.
Transparent social impact assessment must be carried out on all policies, including austerity measures,
to ensure a coherent approach that invests in inclusive and sustainable growth. Social policy must be seen
as an investment not a cost, and as a pre-requisite for high quality growth and social inclusion, combined
with equitable tax/benefit systems that can redistribute wealth more fairly and reduce inequality.

2. **Demonstrate a strong social dimension: an integrated anti-poverty strategy and investment in social standards**

The Semester must demonstrate an explicit social dimension, with specific sections in the NRP linked to
delivery on the Europe 2020 poverty and other social targets, with CSRs on poverty for all countries. An
integrated anti-poverty strategy must be developed to tackle the multidimensionality of poverty for all
groups, based on personalized, integrated Active Inclusion (inclusive labour markets, adequate minimum
income and access to quality services) underpinned by quality social protection and linked to thematic
strategies for at-risk groups; EU social standards must be progressed to ensure an *adequate income throughout the life cycle:* with priority given to EU frameworks for adequate minimum income and social
protection, living minimum wages and quality jobs.

3. **Get serious about participation and NGO involvement**

Effective civil society involvement at all stages of the Semester process (design, delivery and evaluation)
is crucial and must demonstrate policy impact. A process must be launched to develop common guidelines
and indicators to measure the effectiveness of stakeholder dialogue, monitored/reviewed annually
through the Semester. Transform Semester Officers into ‘participation officers’ with resources to support
NGO involvement, including people with direct experience of poverty while promoting exchange of
inspiring practices.

For more information on this publication, Contact Sian Jones – EAPN Policy Coordinator
sian.jones@eapn.eu | 0032 (2) 226 58 59
See EAPN publications and activities on www.eapn.eu

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is an independent network of non-governmental
organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in
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