

Report to the EAPN Denmark General Assembly in April 2013

Chairman Ole Melgaard opened his report by stating that poverty, inequality, and social exclusion remain serious problems for many citizens in Denmark. The economic crisis hits especially hard on young people. The reduced social benefit scheme for selected groups of citizens – nicknamed “poverty rates” – introduced by the former liberal government was repealed by the present centre-left government but it had no immediate effect on poverty. And now the government has launched a social benefit reform which may well result in more young people experiencing poverty. The intention is to motivate citizens under 30 on social benefit to go into education or training and EAPN Denmark welcomes these good intentions because we know education and training reduce the risk of poverty. But it worries us that the incentive is mainly financial because that incentive does not reach out to the most excluded young people. Fighting poverty is uphill because globalisation puts a pressure on wages and particularly unskilled workers are coerced to accept lower wages putting them at risk of poverty even though they have a job – many are at risk of becoming working poor.

Mr. Meldgaard took stock of our activities since the 2012 GA and focused on these items:

- a) We have pointed out at conferences and in the media that an effect of growing poverty is a measurable increase in inequality in the Danish society. It is well documented by The Economic Council of the Labour Movement for instance in the publication: http://www.fepe-europe.eu/uploads/documents/1109_ECLM_HighInequalityLowersWealth.pdf. Inequality strikes not only financially but also in health and education.
- b) We are members of the Ministerial Contact Group which comments on and gives recommendations to the Danish National Reform Programme.
- c) The End-Poverty-Now Network which was formed during the Poverty Year 2010 is still going strong as shown here:
 - We ran a tent in common at the Citizens’ Convention on the island of Bornholm last summer.
 - Conference on inequality in Koføeds Skole and on the premises of the newspaper Politiken.
 - Conference in Copenhagen discussing guidelines to a Danish Poverty Line.
- d) During 2012 EAPN called three roundtables across Denmark about the realities of poverty; and in the autumn it resulted in an impressive report describing by way of concrete examples how poverty is actually experienced.
- e) EAPN Denmark is partner in the EMIN project on minimum income coordinated by EAPN Brussels. In the project we refer to all the Nordic EAPN networks because our welfare traditions have very much in common.
- f) Just recently EAPN Denmark was admitted to the Danish Council for Human Rights.

For the coming year the GA picked these items for special attention:

- Our membership of the Danish Council for Human Rights.
- The EMIN project and the Nordic network.
- Review of our national statutes to accommodate the changes in the governance of the European Network.
- Inequality.
- The particular conditions of young people – including students - in Denmark.