

EAPN's Response: Stakeholders' contribution to the 2012 report on the follow-up of the 2008 Recommendation on Active inclusion

KEY MESSAGES

- 1. Establish a clear EU and national road-map for implementation ensuring an integrated strategy tackling obstacles of different disadvantaged groups with specific guidelines.**
- 2. Pilot integrated approaches and encourage mutual learning and mainstreaming** through pilot or social policy experimentation projects linked to transnational exchange and Peer Review, ensuring NGO engagement.
- 3. Produce a Commission Working Paper to explore the scope and impact of a framework directive on adequate minimum income**, as part of an integrated active inclusion approach, establishing common criteria for adequacy and a monitoring framework.
- 4. Mainstream integrated Active Inclusion approaches into the European Employment Strategy**, as part of Europe 2020, and make sure it underpins delivery on all social targets.
- 5. Ensure that Active Inclusion is a thematic priority in the ESF Regulations**, to deliver on the poverty target, and back the 20% ring-fencing on poverty.
- 6. Ensure policy coherence across the life cycle recognizing the limitations of the Active Inclusion approach to people outside working age. Provide guidelines to ensure that AI implementation does not undermine EPAP commitments to reduce child poverty and promote well-being.**

APRIL 2012

Introduction

This document reproduces the full EAPN response to the questionnaire prepared by the European Commission, according to the “Guidelines to the stakeholders contribution to the 2012 Report on the follow-up on the 2008 Recommendation on Active Inclusion” (1 March 2012).

The response was prepared together with the EAPN EU Inclusion Strategies group through e-mail contributions, drawing on EAPN recent surveys assessing the implementation of Active Inclusion (See references below).

Guidelines for the Stakeholder Consultation

On¹ 3 October 2008, the European Commission adopted a Recommendation on the active inclusion of people most excluded from the labour market, promoting a comprehensive strategy based on the integration of three social policy pillars, namely: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services².

The European Commission plans to produce a report on the assessment of the implementation of the 2008 Recommendation by Member States in the second semester of 2012. The follow-up on the recommendation will also serve as guidance towards future directions in the field of active inclusion. The present survey aims at collecting relevant information from key stakeholders (including your organisation) that would contribute to the assessment of the recommendation's implementation at Member State level.

The main focus of stakeholders' assessment should be threefold:

- First, to assess the extent to which Member States have developed integrated comprehensive active inclusion strategies in line with the 2008 Recommendation.*
- Secondly, to document the extent to which new or expanded measures have been introduced under each of the three strands since 2008.*
- Thirdly, to assess the impact and the cost effectiveness of the overall strategy and the individual strands in facilitating the integration into sustainable, quality employment of those who can work and providing resources which are sufficient to live in dignity, together with support for social participation, for those who cannot.*

*It will be particularly helpful to identify concrete evidence of **integrated approaches** that result in reinforcing synergies between measures under the three strands. In making their assessments, social partners should take into account the impact of the economic and financial crisis and the austerity measures on Member States' implementation of the Recommendation.*

¹ The sections in italics are taken from the questionnaire prepared by the European Commission Guidelines AI report 2012.

² See Commission Recommendation of 3.10.2008 *on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market* (2008/867/EC published in the OJ L 307/11 of 18.11.2008).

Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:307:0011:0014:EN:PDF>.

Timetable

The individual contributions (one per organisation) should be sent to the Commission (addressed to Istvan Vanyolos at istvan.vanyolos@ec.europa.eu) by **April 13, 2012**.

Structure of the contribution

3.0 Overview of activities

Briefly describe **your organisation's main activities** in the field of active inclusion since the adoption of the recommendation. This section should focus on **specific activities** your organisation has carried out in the field of active inclusion (and NOT on the assessment of MS performance).

EAPN has been actively engaged in promoting an integrated Active Inclusion strategy since before 2004: providing input to the Commission, lobbying to achieve support for the Recommendation, raising awareness of the concept and supporting implementation, including through direct delivery at project level, as well as monitoring impact. *Key recent outputs* include:

- [Response to the Commission Consultation on Active Inclusion](#) (2008).
- May 2008, EAPN International Seminar on Active Inclusion, Paris, agreeing EAPN shadow principles. [See report and shadow principles](#).
- October 2008, EAPN briefing and [Key Messages on Active Inclusion to the Round Table](#), lobbying to ensure the Recommendation was not downgraded.
- September 2008, EAPN worked closely with Jean Lambert MEP (Greens/EFA) on the [European Parliament Active Inclusion report](#).
- In 2009, EAPN launched a **campaign and website** for an **Adequate Minimum Income**, to build support for a framework directive on Minimum Income (see www.adequateincome.eu and [key support documents](#)).
- 2010-11, EAPN pressed for progress specifically on the minimum income pillar, including scoping for an EU Framework Directive:
 - [Adequacy explainer](#): analysing the notion of “adequacy”, current state of play and recommendations.
 - [Adequate minimum income in brief](#): EAPN's 4-page leaflet summarises EAPN demands.
 - [Proposal for an EU Framework Directive on Minimum Income](#), drafted by Anne Van Lancker, consultant for EAPN.
 - [An EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Income](#): A legal assessment written for EAPN by law firm *Sérvulo Associados*.
- September 2010, [BAPN/EAPN Joint Conference on Adequate Minimum Income](#), exploring current state of play and solutions, including a framework directive.
- EAPN worked with the Green/EFA Group on an EP Hearing on Adequate Minimum Income, in October 2010, and with GUE/NGL MEP Ilda Figueiredo, on the [EP Report](#) on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe.
- In 2010-2011, EAPN developed, with its national and EU members, [Active Inclusion: Making it Happen](#): a handbook to support implementation, reviewing progress, highlighting good practices and providing advice for progress.
- Examples of **national EAPN action** on Active Inclusion include:
 - EAPN IE: Active Inclusion was a key policy theme in the EU Awareness project led by EAPN Ireland from 2009-2011. The project was entitled ‘Ireland in Social Europe’. The project

included three streams looking at the each element of Active Inclusion and outputs included a [Burning Issues Paper](#).

- EAPN DK: in 2010, pressed for Active Inclusion, including a specific campaign for an official Danish poverty threshold and against minimum income below the threshold. In 2012, EAPN DK campaigned on holistic approaches, to help the most poor and excluded and against growing in-work poverty trends.

3.1 Integrated comprehensive strategies

In your view and that of your membership, have Member States developed an integrated comprehensive strategy that combines in a balanced way, adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services. Please provide concrete country examples where it is possible.

In EAPN's view, it is hard to cite any example of a fully integrated, comprehensive approach. Fledgling steps towards implementation have been severely undermined by austerity measures. EAPN's most recent full assessment of national implementation of AI took place in [EAPN's Assessment of the NRPs \(2011\)](#)³, using a survey questionnaire and a scoreboard mechanism⁴. The overall average score evaluation from the 22 national responses of delivery on integrated Active Inclusion was only **2.72 out of 10**, highlighting the low level of visibility and implementation of integrated strategies, as viewed by national networks. The assessment score ranged from 1 out of 10 in BG, DK, IT, NL, PL and PT, to 6 in Slovenia and 7 in Spain. The majority of networks highlighted that no reference was made to the strategy in the NRP (AT, BG, CZ, DK, EE, FR, DE, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK, SI, SE, UK). 5 National Networks highlighted examples where Active Inclusion was cited (AT, BE, IE, ES, PT), but commented that the detail was insufficient to assess whether a fully integrated approach was proposed, nor the effectiveness (see 3.1.1 below).

3.1.1 Comprehensive policy design

Describe and assess to what extent there has been a comprehensive policy design defining the right mix of the three strands of the active inclusion strategy, taking account of their joint impact on the social and economic integration of disadvantaged people and their possible interrelationships, including synergies and trade-offs. Please provide concrete country examples where it is possible.

Where explicit Active Inclusion Strategies are mentioned, there are few examples of equal weight given to the three pillars, nor an effective plan for implementation⁵:

In Austria, although there is an explicit Active Inclusion reference, EAPN highlighted the lack of a clear strategy, with few pilot projects. Adequacy of income support needed to be more clearly guaranteed, together with access to social services. **In Portugal**, although Active Inclusion was quoted, it was not backed by clear measures, targets, monitoring actions. **In Spain**, explicit mention was made of Active Inclusion, however the policies were primarily to "promote and improve employment opportunities, rather than an integrated approach".

³ [National Reform Programmes \(2008-11\): Deliver Inclusive Growth – Put the heart back in Europe \(Oct 2011\)](#).

⁴ Question 12: How far are integrated active inclusion approaches promoted (in the NRP) i.e. integrated strategies that ensure adequate minimum income, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services?

⁵ EAPN (Oct 2011): EAPN Analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes, Europe 2020 p. 27.

The major weakness highlighted in several countries (e.g. MT, IE) was the tendency to **reduce integrated strategies to employment**, mainly through hardening activation, without ensuring access to quality jobs, adequate income support and access to services, particularly for those furthest from the labour market.⁶

Moreover, in the context of austerity measures, most initial steps towards Active Inclusion are strongly undermined, both through undercutting the adequate income strand (cuts and restrictions in benefit levels and access), the access to services (cuts in services and access, coverage), and even the activation services, for example in Poland (see [EAPN Crisis Reports 2011](#)- p. 20 – 25).

3.1.2 Integrated implementation

Describe and assess to what extent there has been an integrated implementation across the three strands of the active inclusion strategy to effectively address the multifaceted causes of poverty and social exclusion and to enhance coordination between public agencies and services which contribute to delivering active inclusion policies. Please provide concrete country examples where it is possible.

In EAPN members' views, there are few examples of integrated policy implementation driven from the national level. This is due mainly to the lack of knowledge or commitment to an integrated concept, but also difficulties in coordination across different government levels and between different ministries. In **Ireland**, the National Economic and Social Council published a Report entitled the *Developmental Welfare State*, which equates very well with the vision of an integrated approach as outlined in the Active Inclusion strategy. However, it has not resulted in implementation. There are, however, examples of progress towards integrated approaches at local level, developed by NGOs with the backing of local authorities, often with ESF support (see also 3.1.4 on active participation). However, the commitment to long-term funding and roll-out/mainstreaming is not clear. Further development is also threatened by austerity measures.

EAPN core principles to ensure effective integrated Active Inclusion approaches⁷ are: 1) Respect for human dignity; 2) Freedom from discrimination; 3) Personalized and based on need; 4) Holistic, multidimensional and integrated; 5) Participatory and inclusive.⁸ [EAPN's booklet Active Inclusion: Making it happen booklet](#) (p.69 - 71) highlights key **promising examples** of integrated approaches:

Czech Republic: IQ Roma Service⁹: provides integrated, comprehensive services for the whole family, through a long-term personalized case management approach tackling income, child care, housing, education, employment, debt management, addiction etc. (p. 69).

France: Jardins de Cocagne – Julienne Javel: provides integrated employment, housing and social service support for long-term unemployed through the Gardens of Plenty project, producing organic goods sold via a weekly shopping basket in direct sales (p. 70).

Denmark: Overforstergarden Project¹⁰: provides an integrated Active Inclusion approach for homeless people, supported by the local authority and financed by the Social Ministry, through 4 steps: 1) Assessing together with the homeless person the obstacles to inclusion; 2) making

⁶ EAPN Malta highlights that “work on its own does not guarantee a way out of poverty. It is evident that poor people are mostly moving from unemployed poor to employed or working poor. We call for a more integrated active inclusion approach complemented with a rights base, ensuring a stronger social security and protection systems to support people who cannot access the labour market”.

⁷ EAPN Report on Seminar on Active Inclusion 2008 and Shadow Principles.

⁸ EAPN (2008) Shadow Active Inclusion Principles – quoted in Active Inclusion – Making it Happen, p.68.

⁹ EAPN (2011): Active Inclusion – Making it happen p. 69.

¹⁰ Ibid p. 71.

individual action plans in cooperation with relevant local partners; 3) Implementing the plan, providing adjustments and follow up until the person is well established in a sustainable job, home and has a functioning social network; 4) Mainstreaming methods into the organisation and Local Authority (p.71).

3.1.3 Vertical policy coordination

Describe and assess to what extent there has been effective policy coordination among local, regional, national (and EU) authorities in the light of their particular roles, competences and priorities. Please provide concrete country examples where it is possible.

Clear examples of effective vertical policy coordination to implement explicit AI strategies are not common. Member States are more obviously coordinating between minimum income and inclusive labour market strands – involving liaison between different national government departments or national governments and local authorities (e.g. UK and Ireland). However, the objective is to drive harsher activation policies, hardening eligibility criteria and sanctions, rather than to ensure adequacy of minimum income to deliver a dignified life.¹¹ Some more positive examples of vertical integration are seen in the Netherlands promoting social participation, as part of AI:

Netherlands: WMO: Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning – Social Support Act: This new national law implemented through local authorities aims to oblige LAs to socially support disadvantaged groups, by empowering them to become active and involved in city life, bringing a new element to the Dutch integrated approach – promoting participation and empowerment of locally excluded people in providing local services, underpinned by adequate minimum income (p.72).

3.1.4 Active participation of relevant actors

Describe and assess to what extent there has been active participation of all relevant actors (including those affected by poverty and social exclusion, the social partners, non-governmental organisations and service providers) in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies. Your organisation should clearly describe your and the your national partners' role in the respective participation. Please provide concrete country examples wherever it is possible.

Design/Evaluation: Whilst EAPN members can highlight no current examples of participation of stakeholders in the design and delivery of an explicit AI strategy, they highlight active participation in the National Action Plans/Social Reports under the Social OMC (2000-2010) and/or NRPs, often promoting strong proposals on Active Inclusion. However, this participation is currently being undermined. In the first NRPs of Europe 2020, whilst 13 National Networks were invited to participate in the NRP process (AT, BE, BG, DK, EE, FR, DE, IE, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE), the level of meaningful stakeholder participation was scored very low (2.38 of 10), with most scoring very low (AT, BG, CZ, DK, EE, IE, IT, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK, SE, UK), with only Belgium and Spain giving a positive rating (7 and 8). However, even in these countries, it was difficult to get proposals taken on board, and in the case of Spain, to get implementation. See 3.1.2 for positive examples of participation of NGOs in implementation, delivering integrated approaches with Local Authorities.

¹¹ See EAPN (2011): *Is the European project moving backwards? The Social Impact of the Crisis and the Recovery Policies in 2010?* pp. 20 to 25.

3.2 Description and assessment of the impact and cost effectiveness of measures introduced under the three strands¹²

EAPN national networks have not generally had the resources to implement such assessments, but have argued consistently for the need, particularly linked to the assessment of the short/long-term, economic and social **costs and benefits** of introducing an integrated approach, including adequate minimum income. It is equally necessary to assess the impact of **not** introducing AI, i.e. costs of increased poverty and social exclusion, including health costs, as one of the social determinants of inequity in health. “Whereas the empirical evidence of the beneficial effects of social health protection on economic growth is strong, it is also true that the economic costs of inaction are very high. Not investing in social health protection leads to tremendous follow-up costs ranging from deteriorating health conditions and increasing poverty levels to societal instability due to social raptures”. See also WHO.¹³

3.2.1 Adequate income support

Briefly describe and assess steps taken by the Member States since 2008 (when the Recommendation was issued and subsequently endorsed by the Council and the European Parliament), to recognise the individual’s basic right to resources and social assistance sufficient to lead a life that is compatible with human dignity as part of a comprehensive, consistent drive to combat poverty and social exclusion.

In particular, your organisation should briefly describe and assess measures taken at the Member States level to review the social protection system to ensure that:

- *Resources are adequate: i.e., the resources necessary to lead a life of dignity are determined on the basis of living standards and price levels by type and size of household and the amounts are adjusted or supplemented to meet specific needs*
- *Resources are linked to activation: i.e., the right to sufficient resources is combined with active availability for work or for vocational training for those who can work or is subject, where appropriate, to economic and social integration measures in the case of other persons, and is combined with policies at national level, for the economic and social integration of those concerned.*
- *An incentive to work is preserved: i.e. an incentive to seek employment for persons whose condition renders them fit for work has been safeguarded.*

¹² In making their assessments social partners are asked to take into account the four principles outlined in the Recommendation – i.e., the extent to which active inclusion policies/ measures: “(a) support the implementation of fundamental rights; (b) promote gender equality and equal opportunities for all; (c) take careful consideration of the complexities of multiple disadvantages and the specific situations and needs of the various vulnerable groups; (d) take due account of local and regional circumstances and improve territorial cohesion; (e) are consistent with a lifecycle approach to social and employment policies so they can support intergenerational solidarity and break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.”

¹³ WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. “[Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health](#)”: This unequal distribution of health-damaging experiences is not in any sense a ‘natural’ phenomenon but is the result of a toxic combination of poor social policies, unfair economic arrangements [where the already well-off and healthy become even richer and the poor who are already more likely to be ill become even poorer], and bad politics.^[2]

EAPN Approach to Minimum Income

EAPN highlights the need to implement the '92 Council Recommendation, agreed by all Member States, with the commitment to provide adequate resources for a dignified life to all. The link to positive activation is crucial in terms of supporting all those who are capable of working into employment, as long as the jobs themselves provide an effective route out of poverty (quality jobs). EAPN would assert that most people want to work. The incentive to work is primarily reinforced when the job itself is adequately remunerated, is a quality job, where people are supported in the process of access and maintenance, rather than reducing benefit levels as a negative, conditionality mechanism. This is likely to produce hardship to the individuals concerned, particularly where few jobs exist, or to force vulnerable people into "poor and unsustainable" jobs and revolving door outcomes, with long term social, health and economic costs.

Adequacy of Minimum Income

Few countries have clear definitions and criteria for adequacy.¹⁴ There is still little attempt to establish adequacy levels according to needs. Levels are mainly linked to budgetary limits, keeping levels below minimum wage, rather than a rights approach, which establishes levels based on real need. 2 types of benchmarks are useful. Firstly, a relative benchmark, i.e. related to the relative poverty line (60% median disposable income) and secondly related to a specific set of goods and services, based on consensualized budget standards. Although academic institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders have been developing such standards in several countries (See Progress Project on Reference Budgets and Peer Review Belgium 2010), few governments apply them in establishing minimum income levels. **EAPN principles for minimum income** highlight: 1) Adequacy for a dignified life, 2) Irrespective of employment status (i.e. avoidance of negative conditionality) 3) Easily understood, transparent and effective and 4) Continuous and sustainable 5) Positive hierarchy between adequate income and wages.

Trends in Minimum Income

In the EAPN NRP assessment (2011), a large number of national members highlighted the very low or low priority given in the NRP to ensuring adequate minimum income and social protection (BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, IE, IT, NL, PL, PT, SK, SE) giving an average score of 3 out of 10. This reflects the start of the impact of austerity measures, reducing benefit levels, coverage and tightening eligibility, also recognized by the 2012 Annual Growth Survey. 3 countries still have no statutory national minimum income schemes (IT, HU, EL).

Negative developments (examples)

Germany: Cancellation of parental benefit, pension contributions for recipients of unemployment benefits, cancellation of limited bonus for transition from Unemployment Benefit 1 to 2, cut of 19.7% in Unemployment 2.

Estonia: More than half the social benefits miss those who need them most. For example, child benefit is counted as an income and reduces access to subsistence allowances. Single parents have to have a court order to claim child support from the other parent, otherwise they cannot get an allowance. In 2012 the subsistence threshold after housing costs is 76,70 EUR per person per month, when a minimum food basket costs 77,60.

¹⁴ National Experts Synthesis report on Minimum Income schemes: Eric Marlier and Hugh Frazer (2009).

Ireland: Minimum Income has been cut by 10% since 2008 for all payments except old age. Other restrictions on eligibility and reductions in access to and levels of secondary support have impacted on all groups. In 2010 proposals were made to implement a single social welfare payment for all people of working age, seeing all as job seekers, including single parents and disabled, regardless of the lack of support services or jobs. An all-party Parliamentary Committee has recommended that reforms are not implemented in the current context.

Poland: The NRP does not reference income maintenance, and fails to mention a positive new amendment on the Social Assistance Act which permits combining social assistance with income from employment for up to two months. However, a major problem is that income thresholds are not indexed.

Positive examples include

Austria: New means-tested MI to standardize provision, improve levels to cover housing/living and medical costs, and improve take-up (currently only 50%). However the levels are still 200 EUR below the poverty line and do not take account of special needs, with limited labour market inclusion linkage.

Belgium: NRP refers to need to increase MI by 2% along with all social benefits, with a budget impact of 18 million and 66 million in 2012.

Lithuania: NRP includes aim to improve system of monetary social support through local authorities and compensations for heating and hot water costs.

Finland: Finland carried out a comprehensive review of pensions and benefits through the independent SATA committee aiming to make work more attractive, whilst reducing poverty by ensuring adequate minimum income through the life-cycle. However adequacy was not defined. Social benefits are linked to consumer price index, but failed to raise level of benefits.

Basque country/Spain: MI in the Basque country accounts for 38.4% of MI in Spain, despite the fact that only 2.5% of population below poverty threshold. The Basque unemployment rate was 9.1 points lower than the Spanish average (2008). MI has contributed to reducing poverty rates, and shown that adequate MI does not undermine access to employment. See EAPN's [Active Inclusion Report](#) (p.21).

Impact of the crisis

Initial positive steps were taken during the crisis to reinforce benefit levels. But there is increasing evidence that this has been undermined in 2010 and 2011. See [SPC report on the impact of the crisis \(2011\)](#) and [EAPN Report on the Crisis](#) and the new priority 4 in the [AGS](#). This is primarily characterised by:

- Cuts in benefit levels and additional benefits
- Reduced eligibility and coverage (see section above)

This needs to be assessed also against sharply rising costs in essential goods and services (particularly in housing, health, education, energy and food costs).

3.2.2 Inclusive labour markets

Briefly describe and assess steps taken by the Member States since 2008 to ensure that persons whose condition renders them fit for work receive effective help to enter or re-enter and stay in employment that corresponds to their work capacity.

In particular, your organisation should briefly describe and assess the extent to which there has been:

- increased investment in human capital: i.e. an expansion and improved investment through inclusive education and training policies (including effective lifelong strategies), and also an adaptation of education and training systems in response to new competence requirements and to the need for digital skills;*
- development of active and preventive labour market measures: i.e. the development of tailored, personalised, responsive services and support involving early identification of needs, job-search assistance, guidance and training, and motivation to seek a job actively;*
- continual review of incentives and disincentives resulting from tax and benefit systems: i.e. an improved management and conditionality of benefits and a significant reduction in high marginal effective tax rates, in particular for those with low incomes, while ensuring adequate levels of social protection;*
- support for the social economy and sheltered employment;*
- efforts to increase access to employment: e.g. through promoting financial inclusion and microloans, through providing financial incentives for employers to recruit, through the development of new sources of jobs in services, particularly at local level, and through raising awareness of labour market inclusiveness;*
- efforts to tackle labour market segmentation, ensure quality jobs and promote job retention and advancement: e.g. through promoting adaptability and providing in-work support and a supportive environment, including increased attention to health and well-being, non-discrimination and the application of labour law in conjunction with social dialogue.*

Despite employment being a key concern for most governments, [EAPN's analysis of the 2011 NRPs](#)¹⁵ indicates that the concept of “inclusive labour markets” remains elusive and is largely misunderstood by Member States (for instance BE, CZ, BG) as meaning “activation”, in most cases, a negative one. Very few positive examples have been reported by our members (EE, NL, FR, DE), while the majority of members highlighted the absence of a positive approach. The absence of a clear roadmap for implementation, at both EU and national levels, as well as the rather reduced visibility and support that recent EU documents lent to this Strategy have not been helpful.¹⁶ When European documents do mention Active Inclusion, it is not adequately mainstreamed into employment and labour market policies. The recent context of fiscal consolidation and budget cuts has only worsened the situation, undermining implementation in Member States. Some positive examples regarding promoting inclusive labour markets and supported personalised pathways to quality employment are highlighted below. However, they constitute isolated initiatives instead of integrated approaches, and do not illustrate the implementation of Active Inclusion as a holistic strategy, but, rather, punctual elements of employment policy. Overall, harsh activation-only policies do not support inclusive labour markets. **EAPN principles on the inclusive labour market pillar**¹⁷ call for: 1. Positive social activation based on human rights; 2. Individualised, tailored and multidimensional approaches; 3. Supporting lifelong learning for life and not just work; 4. Long term support to sustainable, quality employment; 5. Sustainable and adapted work respectful of people's

¹⁵ See Chapter 3 – Progress Towards Inclusive Labour Markets, p. 33.

¹⁶ For a more detailed analysis of EU documents mentioning Active Inclusion in the period 2008-2011, please see [here](#), p. 43 (subsection *From policy to implementation*).

¹⁷ [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#), p. 44.

needs; 6. Joined-up integrated delivery based on partnership. See a positive approach to youth exclusion trialled through PROGRESS.

Adult Life Entry Network (ALEN) – Empowerment and Activation of Young People in Disadvantaged Situations: Social experimentation project financed by PROGRESS coordinated by EAPN Hungary and implemented in Hungary, Austria, Croatia and Serbia, trialling integrated methods to increase the active inclusion (and thus also employability) of disadvantaged young people, thereby also developing better forms of cooperation of national and regional as well as local authorities, social NGOs and all other relevant stakeholders. Main activities include: empower and support of young people for re-integration into the education system or the labour market; independent living for young people in institutional care; identifying less visible obstacles that hinder the active inclusion of socially disadvantaged young people; facilitating better access to rights and resources; meeting individual needs for support and reducing prejudices and discrimination. Evaluation is carried out in three steps, focussing on the individual level (3 rounds of personalised interviews and progress compared to individual development plans, assessing improvement through milestones), on focus groups at a national level, as well as trans-national evaluation. For more information, please see [here](#), or contact hapn@hapn.hu.

Increased investment in human capital

Training opportunities for better labour market access have been identified by many governments as a priority for the NRPs, as indicated by our members. However, in [EAPN's assessment](#) (p. 38, 46), only few countries (FR, BE, PT, EE, IE, LT) are reported to take into account specific barriers faced by key groups in accessing professional training. Our members underline a pressing need to address issues like discrimination when accessing education, as well as providing comprehensive support, such as flanking services (affordable public transport and quality childcare, etc), investing in non-formal as well as informal education and training methods, guaranteeing the validation of acquired experience and qualifications etc. Moreover, training offered is often of low quality and does not ensure a decent job at the end. Recent budgetary cuts have only undermined both a supportive environment for accessing training, as well as the quality of courses offered. See a positive example of the Vilnius Public Employment Service (LT), on how to support people facing multiple difficulties to access training, in [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#) (p. 48).

Development of active and preventive labour market measures and continual review of incentives and disincentives resulting from tax and benefit systems

[EAPN's analysis](#) (p. 34, 38) reveals that most Member States prioritise negative activation through cuts and sanctions, as well as increased conditionality and restrictions on eligibility for benefits, rather than supporting integrated approaches and personalised pathways to inclusive labour markets (some striking examples include NL, BE, UK). For a concrete story about the compulsory “activation of the sick” in the UK, see [here](#) (p. 8). It is also feared that, in order to comply with both the employment and the poverty-reduction targets of Europe 2020, governments will “cream” those people actually closest to the labour market or to the poverty line, to be able to report quick results, while those most in need will be overlooked. Many people are trapped in a revolving door between temporary, low-quality and low-pay jobs and spells of unemployment, resulting in in-work

poverty, as well as increased precariousness, uncertainty, and hardship. EAPN members highlight increasingly savage cuts in coverage and benefit systems, see [EAPN Crisis Report 2011](#) (p. 21, 25). In EE, although contributions to the unemployment fund are compulsory (4.2% monthly, out of which 2.8% paid by the employee), only those who have been fired (as opposed to leaving the job by mutual consent) are entitled to benefit from it. Only few of our members report more inclusive approaches, including more complex and sustained support for the unemployed in their path towards employment, in PT (job counseling), PL (improved employment services), ES (integrated approaches and holistic support). For examples of positive activation, in the integrated Active Inclusion sense, of the Norwegian and the Austrian governments, see [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#) (p. 44, 45). Flanking services, such as affordable public transport or childcare, play a very important role in supporting people back to the labour market, especially parents with caring responsibilities, or people who are offered jobs far away from their homes etc. A positive example in this sense is the New Futures programme in Ireland, supporting lone parents through reconciliation between professional and family life – see [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#) (p. 47). For a clear illustration of both positive and negative activation practices in 4 Member States (Belgium, UK, Lithuania, Bulgaria), please watch EAPN's short documentary *Pathways to Work. Unlocking a Door to Active Inclusion* [here](#).

Support for the social economy and sheltered employment

In [EAPN's analysis of the 2011 NRPs](#) (p. 36), only PT, LT, SI, IT, BG mentioned social economy in the NRPs, while the latter two do not make the link between social economy and employment. WISEs (work integration social enterprises) have a great potential to make an essential positive contribution, through employment in the protected labour market, which often acts as a stepping stone towards mainstream employment for vulnerable groups. This potential is overlooked by most Member States in our members' opinion, while such initiatives need positive support from public financing and infrastructure. An encouraging example in Austria of supporting social enterprises through public procurement clauses can be read [here](#) (p. 9).

Efforts to increase access to employment

As reflected in the NRPs for 2011 ([as assessed by EAPN members](#), p. 34), job creation is not prioritised in most national employment strategies - only CZ, IE, SE mention the issue, without proposing concrete suggestions. The only country reported to have a more comprehensive approach is LT. Otherwise, job creation strategies focus on marginal, ineffective and potentially dangerous approaches, such as reducing labour cost by lowering social contributions. EAPN members report that labour markets have become increasingly conservative (harsh division between insiders and outsiders), while governments focus mainly on the newly unemployed, rather than those furthest from the labour market, or keeping people in jobs. What is needed instead is a sound public social investment pact, a New Deal to support new quality jobs in emerging sectors, such as the green, white and social economies (see [EAPN Letter to Barroso](#)). EU funds can play a significant role in this. Some encouraging steps in a few Member States are listed in [EAPN Crisis Report 2009](#) (p. 22) and [EAPN Crisis Report 2011](#) (p. 26). Local initiatives for job creation in France are detailed [here](#) (p. 9). Finally, see a positive example of public investment by the Municipality of Paltamo, in Finland, which teamed up with its unemployed residents to create jobs for all – in [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#) (p. 49).

Efforts to tackle labour market segmentation, ensure quality jobs and promote job retention and advancement

EAPN members report that the last round of NRPs paid very little attention to job or employment quality, undermining the potential for sustainable solutions to poverty reduction. Quality should encompass elements such as decent wages, steady duration of contract, employment protection and rights, good working conditions, access to training, getting the balance right between private and professional life, and job satisfaction – amongst others. However, [EAPN members report](#) that this is not a priority for Member States (p. 35). Minimum wages are at critically low levels, below the poverty line, which leads to increasing levels of in-work poverty. Currently, a third of people experiencing poverty are actually employed.¹⁸ Also, precariousness is on the rise, as most countries have opted for an increased flexibilisation of the labour market, leading to a proliferation of insecure jobs on atypical contracts, with reduced or no employment protection. The crisis has had its share of negative impact on the implementation of the quality work concept, as wages have been driven down often under pressure from the economic governance and Euro Plus Pact requisites. The fiscal consolidation and budget austerity, promoted by the European Union at all costs, has not taken into account the dire social consequences on the quality of employment and, subsequently, on people's lives. Equally, EAPN members highlight increased pressure to reduce quality work in the countries receiving assistance from the Troika (ECB, European Commission and IMF). For concrete examples, see [EAPN Crisis Report 2009](#) (p. 29) and [EAPN Crisis Report 2011](#) (p. 27). For a concrete story about how the flexicurity model is deteriorating in Denmark, see [here](#) (p. 7). Reported positive examples include some improvement of social protection and employment rights (PT, BE, RO, ES). In the UK, Scottish Local Authorities (such as the Glasgow City Council and others) have joined or started their own "living wage" campaigns – see description in [EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#) (p. 46).

3.2.3 Access to quality services

Briefly describe and assess steps taken by the Member States since 2008 to provide services which are essential to supporting active social and economic inclusion policies, including social assistance services, employment and training services, housing support and social housing, childcare, long-term care services and health services.

In particular, your organisation should assess the extent to which measures have ensured:

- availability and accessibility of services: i.e., territorial availability, physical accessibility, affordability;*
- inclusive services: i.e., solidarity, equal opportunities for service users and employees, and due account for diversity of users;*
- quality of services: investment in human capital, working conditions;*
- integrated services: i.e., comprehensive and coordinated services, conceived and delivered in an integrated manner;*
- user involvement: i.e., users' involvement and personalised approaches to meet the multiple needs of people as individuals;*
- effective monitoring: i.e., monitoring and performance evaluation and sharing of good practices.*

¹⁸ For more details about in-work poverty in EU Member States and the link with Active Inclusion, see the Independent Experts' Report on In-Work poverty, 2010, available [here](#).

Although this pillar has been a central focus since the setting up of the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC), little progress has been made towards guaranteeing access to quality services. Where progress was made, there was inadequate funding to meet the targets and a lack of coherence towards the development of services, especially social services. Priority has been given to the promotion of liberalisation and privatisation of even basic key services, often to the detriment of the affordability and quality of the services provided. The cuts in public budgets, as part of austerity measures, have often led to severe cuts in public services.

EAPN principles put an emphasis on the following aspects: 1) Respectful of human dignity, security and fundamental rights, 2) Affordable, accessible and reaching the target group, 3) Personalised, holistic and sustainable, 4) Participative and empowering, 5) Accountable, transparent and close to the community, 6) Investing in quality employment conditions for social services.

Availability and accessibility of services: *i.e. territorial availability, physical accessibility, affordability.*

In 2010, many EAPN members insisted that prices of basic services remain high or even continue to increase, especially energy, health and utility prices. This state of play was unfortunately still valid last year. In the EAPN analysis of the 2011 NRPs, EAPN members note that guaranteeing the right to affordable services, as a public service obligation, is on few countries' agenda. For example:

EAPN Luxembourg: "Rather than general declarations, we need precise anti-poverty policies e.g. support services to accompany young people into work and in the area of housing – development of the social real estate agency and support for those who pay high rents."

Good practices

- *National policies*

In **Lithuania**, a national programme for social integration of people with disabilities 2003-2012 has been set up, aiming at developing community services, improving quality of life, assessing special needs, supporting access to employment.

In **Portugal**, a Comfortable Housing for Elderly programme has been set in place, aiming to increase access to affordable housing for older people.

- *Local projects/EAPN/NGO*

A positive example of integrated services to tackle the jobless, homelessness and financial exclusion is provided by the OSW Transitional Spaces Project in UK, in EAPN's Booklet *Active Inclusion – Making it Happen*, p 30.

Inclusive services: *i.e. solidarity, equal opportunities for service users and employees, and due account for diversity of users;*

According to EAPN NRP assessment (p 49) the inclusiveness aspect of services has been clearly neglected in the majority of countries (AT, DK, EE, IE, IT, NL, PL, SI). When discrimination is mentioned, it covers usually one or two discriminated groups, such as Roma and women and very few fields of discrimination, such as only in employment and education, with no references to affordable access to services.

A positive example is the EXIGO Project in **Sweden**, in EAPN's Booklet *Active Inclusion – Making it Happen*, p 32.

Quality of services: *investment in human capital, working conditions;*

Ensuring quality of services still remains a challenge at Member State level. It is even more problematic in times of economic crisis. The majority of EAPN members highlighted a low priority given to ensuring quality services (p 25 - BG, DK, EE, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, ES, SK, SE). Quality services have, indeed, a cost, as well as a clear benefit in reducing poverty and social exclusion (OECD Report 2011¹⁹) and the demand for quality services can seem contradictory when Member States are cutting their public expenditure in social services. The privatisation of those services is watering down the quality aspect through their growing segmentation, contributing to a model promoting “poor services for poor people.” The delivery of social services is often gradually transferred to NGOs and local authorities, often without corresponding means, putting them under additional pressure.

Good practice

In Catalonia (ES), a “Quality Plan for social services in Catalonia 2010-2013” was approved on 23 November 2010. This Quality Plan is the basic instrument to ensure the development and implementation of quality standards and is a part of the “Strategic Plan for Social Services”, which contains the key aspects that must develop the quality plan (quality of service, technical quality, quality management, quality of employment, innovation and continuous improvement).

Integrated services: *i.e. comprehensive and coordinated services, conceived and delivered in an integrated manner;*

In the NRP assessment, many EAPN members really miss a global integrated strategy towards service provision to support Active Inclusion.

EAPN Belgium: “We are missing a more ambitious and redistributive approach, which set clear objectives and measures to take to ensure access to the different rights and services - e.g. housing, health – or at least a reference to a general plan which covers all these areas.”

Members stressed the importance of inter-agency working, including with NGOs, which is crucial to ensure integrated services to tackle the multidimensional service needs of people experiencing poverty. For instance, for parents, particularly lone parents, ensuring access to affordable and high quality childcare, transport, housing, health and education are of vital importance to ensure the conciliation between professional and family life. A good example for ensuring access to quality services for children and their families is the Velux Foundation project in **Hungary**, in EAPN’s Booklet *Active Inclusion – Making it Happen*, p 29.

User involvement: *i.e. users’ involvement and personalised approaches to meet the multiple needs of people as individuals;*

Unfortunately, national structured and coordinated initiatives promoting users’ involvement in the design, delivery and monitoring of the services are a reality in very few Member States. And, when it is the case, the recommendations made by service users are usually not taken into account.

Nevertheless, a positive example is the Working Group on energy and poverty in Flanders, **Belgium**, highlighted in EAPN’s Booklet *Active Inclusion – Making it Happen*, p 38, which has a structured dialogue with energy providers and government authorities on measures to reduce energy poverty.

¹⁹ Divided we stand: why Inequality keeps rising – OECD 2011, p.38.

Effective monitoring: *i.e. monitoring and performance evaluation and sharing of good practices.*

As far as the effectiveness of the monitoring is concerned, it should imply the participation of users themselves in the assessment phase.

In Sweden, a collaboration between local authorities and NGOs is being undertaken to co-build together with users themselves the monitoring, assessment system through a thorough joint work on the definition of indicators.

3.3 Financial Resources

3.3.1 National resources

Describe and assess the extent to which the necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the development of an active inclusion strategy has been underpinned by the provision of the necessary resources from the national budget. In doing so, your organisation should assess how successful the national authorities have been, in a period of economic and budgetary constraints, in striking the right balance between work incentives, poverty alleviation and sustainable budgetary costs. Where possible, your organisation should highlight evidence on the overall cost of implementing active inclusion strategies, the costs of each pillar and any assessments that are available on the cost effectiveness of the measures. It would be helpful to include an assessment of which pillars have been funded most adequately. Please provide country examples where it is possible.

The overall EAPN assessment is that integrated strategies are not being adequately funded, and are further undermined by austerity cuts, particularly to benefits and services, but also to activation support. For example, in Denmark, the government has announced several reforms aiming at better and more inclusive and holistic policies for those furthest from the labour market. Yet, resources for new developments are restricted and the overall economic aim is to lower the expenditures in general.

3.3.2 Use of EU Structural Funds

Highlight and assess the extent to which EU funds (specifically Structural Funds) have been used to support the development and implementation of active inclusion strategies.

According to EAPN's NRP assessment, with an average score of 2.41 out of 10, in the EAPN NRP report (2011), EAPN members highlighted that Structural Funds fall short of their potential to promote Social Inclusion. Despite the commitment to use Structural Funds for social objectives, only 12,4% of ESF expenditure is currently earmarked for social inclusion projects.

EAPN's analysis shows that the concept of Active Inclusion is notably under-used and misunderstood when it comes to the role played by Structural Funds. Many EAPN members highlight that Active Inclusion is simply not mentioned (BG, CZ, EE, IE, LU, PL). For others, when it is mentioned, the measures described have no direct link with Structural Funds (AT). Only very few EAPN networks have underlined some good intentions by their governments to promote Active Inclusion approaches through Structural Funds (PT, SK), but often this is not backed by concrete proposals (DE) nor promote integrated approaches, due to a fragmented collection of measures or a narrow focus on activation measures. For example:

Italy: the measures focus on improving safety, legality and services in the South, but not how to solve the housing problem. No detail is given on how Structural Funds will be devoted to creating access to quality employment.

Belgium: the pillar on a better access to the labour market is the only one considered.

EAPN proposes five **guiding principles** to ensure that Active Inclusion is mainstreamed effectively into Structural Funds: 1) Promoting Integrated pathways and ensuring access to services for those who are the furthest from the labour market, to support them on a pathway to inclusion and quality employment, 2) Using soft indicators to measure progress, 3) Making it happen: a social-inclusion friendly environment in the Structural Funds Regulation is needed (partnership principle, technical assistance and global grants), 4) Mainstreaming of active inclusion throughout Structural Funds (successful innovative integration approaches), 5) Promoting the transnational dimension of active inclusion.

Good practices

- *At National / OP level*

UK: dedicated a transnational programme to Active Inclusion, thanks to the pressure brought by the NGO sector. It has been prioritised in eight of the nine English regions. A good example of a transnational project carried out in the framework of this programme is New Pathways into Work in West London, in EAPN's Booklet *Active Inclusion – Making it Happen*, p 63.

Slovakia: "The concept of a comprehensive (integrated) approach to marginalised Roma communities approved in 2002 has become the starting point for setting up the horizontal priority of Roma Marginalised Communities (RMC) for the programming period 2007-2013. This allows several Structural Funds programmes to be combined to support comprehensive approach dealing with multidimensional aspects of poverty in separated and segregated Roma communities. Since 2011 and with the support of the ESF, a "National Project of Community Centres" in marginalised communities has been operating aiming at developing a network of community centres and creating conditions for improving the quality of their activities Unfortunately, such an initiative is only accessible to big NGOs, due to the conditions fixed by the government. Furthermore, such an integrated Active Inclusion approach is clearly lacking for other vulnerable target groups. ([EAPN's Booklet Active Inclusion – Making it Happen](#), p 57).

- *At project level, involving NGOs and Local Authorities*

A good practice is PARTIS (Parcours Territoriaux d'Inclusion Sociale) in Belgium. The project has developed different and complementary initiatives to promote active inclusion (collective vegetable garden, professional pathway, learning/training, valorization and consolidation of the quality of houses, services and jobs). There is a wide range of entry points, facilitating progressive and tailor-made professional pathways, taking into account the territory, the diversity of the population and their needs (mobility, social links, cultural discovery, housing, self-confidence, etc.). The participative and bottom-up process also gives the beneficiaries space to bring their testimonies, thoughts and analyses to the field of employment and inclusion ([EAPN's Active Inclusion: Making it happen booklet](#) p 57).

In the next programming period, Active Inclusion, listed as investment priority in the Commission's proposal, should be an obligatory and overarching priority theme in all OPs, within the 20% of the ESF dedicated to social inclusion and poverty reduction. EAPN members are engaged in a campaign at national and EU level (Council and European Parliament) to defend the proposed 20% earmarked for social inclusion and poverty reduction (for more information, please click [here](#)).

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Describe what arrangements (if any) are in place at the Member State level to monitor the implementation of the active inclusion Recommendation and the impact of the measures that have been introduced.

In particular, your organisation should describe and assess:

- *any efforts to improve indicators and to upgrade the capacity to produce up-to-date, comparable information across the three active inclusion pillars;*
- *the extent to which all relevant actors are involved in these monitoring and evaluation arrangements (especially **your own involvement**);*
- *evidence of effective active inclusion strategies at national, local, or regional level, with the potential for multiplication.*

Stakeholders are asked to report on any relevant evaluations (official or independent) of active inclusion measures that have taken place during the last 3 years.

Our members are not aware of any specific monitoring of explicit integrated national Active Inclusion strategies, where stakeholders, including NGOs working with people experiencing poverty, are involved. Members of some promising projects are involved in evaluation frameworks (See Structural Fund section).

3.5 Recommendations: National Integrated Strategies

3.5.1 Your organisation is asked to recommend the priority actions (max. 3) that it thinks Member States should take to strengthen (develop) their integrated comprehensive active inclusion strategy

1. Launch an explicit Integrated Active Inclusion Strategy as a key element in a national anti-poverty strategy to deliver on the poverty target, and promote an inclusive recovery, with yearly action plans setting out the key measures targeted at specific groups. Develop integrated indicators and monitor implementation. Evaluate social and economic costs and benefits, as a means to promote an equitable response to the crisis and progress towards inclusive and sustainable growth. Ensure that the interests of those outside working age (including children) are not prejudiced and are equally supported to ensure inclusion through access to rights, adequate income and quality services through integrated approaches.

2. Give visibility, ownership and accountability, by ensuring yearly monitoring through the national parliament and engagement of national stakeholders (including NGOs and people experiencing poverty) in the design, delivery and implementation of the strategy.

3. Insist on Active Inclusion as a core priority for national and EU funding objectives, particularly in ESF Programming priorities, with guidelines on integrated approaches, and agreed indicators.

3.5.2 Your organisation is asked to recommend the priority actions (max. 2 per strand) that Member States should take to strengthen policies/measures under each of the 3 strands

Minimum Income

- Implement an adequate minimum income for all household groups, including children and families, older people, at least above the poverty threshold and linked to a definition of real needs through an independent consensualized budget standard methodology.

- Monitor adequacy of MI for all groups, take up and coverage, and evaluate the social and economic costs of inadequacy of minimum income. Trial and evaluate the social and economic costs and benefits of providing an adequate minimum income, with particular reference to reduction in poverty levels, access to sustainable employment, support to economic growth, including reduction of health costs.

Inclusive Labour Markets

- Ensure that the employment and poverty-reduction targets set at national level mutually reinforce each other, and support quality, sustainable employment, that can really take those who can work out of poverty;
- Establish positive hierarchies between minimum income (set at least at the level of the poverty line) and minimum wage – don't decouple wages from inflation in order to link them to productivity!
- Improve the capacity of Public Employment Services to provide integrated pathways approaches, starting from the individual and ensuring transitions into inclusive labour markets.

Access to quality services

- On the basis of article 14 TFEU and protocol n° 26 on SIGs, safeguard and guarantee the right for all to access affordable, quality key public services as a way of cushioning the social impacts of the economic crisis: health, education and lifelong learning, housing / accommodation, care services, as well as water, gas, electricity.
- Implement the June 2010 Council Conclusions on health inequalities, by ensuring specific targeted policies to improve health outcomes for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.
- Set up National Action Plans to reduce energy poverty, following up the Energy Package requirements on energy poverty, to ensure affordable access to energy for all.

3.5.3 Your organisation is asked to recommend any actions that it thinks could usefully be taken at EU level to reinforce the implementation of the active inclusion Recommendation by Member States

1) Establish a clear EU and national road-map for implementation ensuring an integrated strategy tackling obstacles of different disadvantaged groups with specific guidelines, including:

- A time-line and multi-annual programming, with funding ascribed until 2020, including through Structural Funds.
- Monitoring implementation through the NRPs and National Social Reports, ensuring stakeholder engagement in the monitoring process at the national and EU level, including NGOs and people experiencing poverty.
- Develop indicators for monitoring integrated approaches, as well as individual pillars and ensure mainstreaming within the Europe 2020 Joint Assessment Frame.
- Provide specific Country-Specific Recommendations.

2) Pilot integrated approaches and encourage mutual learning and mainstreaming through pilot or social policy experimentation projects linked to transnational exchange and Peer Review to promote mutual learning/transfer on outcomes, and mainstreaming, ensuring bottom-up participation from NGOs. Establish a visible, accessible electronic database of practices on the Europa website.

3) Produce a Commission Working Paper to explore the scope and impact of a framework directive on adequate minimum income, as part of an integrated active inclusion approach, establishing common criteria for adequacy and a monitoring framework.

4) Mainstream integrated Active Inclusion approaches into the European Employment Strategy, as part of Europe 2020, and make sure it underpins delivery on all social targets.

5) Ensure that Active Inclusion is a thematic priority in the ESF Regulations, to deliver on the poverty target, and back the 20% ring-fencing on poverty.

6) Ensure policy coherence across the life cycle recognizing the limitations of the Active Inclusion approach to people outside working age. Provide guidelines to ensure that AI implementation does not undermine EPAP commitments to reduce child poverty and promote well-being: promoting a positive family environment ensuring adequate income, and that parents, particularly lone parents, are not encouraged to return to the labour market without ensuring access to vital services (e.g. affordable and high quality childcare, transport, housing and education..), work/life balance and support for high quality, accessible early childhood services.

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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 the Member States of the European Union, established in 1990.



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For more information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>

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