

European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)

GA Declarations and Resolution Book

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2011 – FINAL DECLARATION

Europe needs a New Heart

The General Assembly took place amidst growing anger at the failure of the EU and Member State Governments to adopt solidarity measures to protect people rather than markets in response to the current crisis. The delegates warned that Europe will not have the support of its citizens, if it is seen to be undermining the foundations of the 'Welfare States'.

EAPN sees that across the European Union the 'rescue' and bail out plans, are putting people deeper into poverty and threatening social cohesion while reinforcing the dominance of the financial markets and speculating agencies. In particular, in those countries which are subject to compliance with EU/IMF financial agreements, with loan facilities at punitive rates of interest, the response to the crisis has been driven by austerity programmes which are disproportionately impacting on the most vulnerable in society.

While enforcing unsustainable austerity programmes, the EU and Member States have persistently refused to impose economic discipline or financial accountability on the rapacious speculative trading systems that caused the crisis both internationally and across the EU. In addition the European Central Bank seems to be putting the interest of Banks above the well-being of Europe's citizens.

With these approaches Europe will never succeed in driving down rates of poverty, and its response to the crisis undermines both the immediate and long term perspective for securing more equal and just societies. In this context it is not surprising, but deeply worrying, that support for the European integration project is at an all time low.

EAPN does not accept the claim that there are no alternatives to these draconian austerity measures. The delegates to the General Assembly called on European leaders to give the European project a new heart by:

1. Putting social and sustainable development and solidarity at the heart of the EU's priorities and putting human rights at the centre of its efforts to fight against poverty and social exclusion.
2. Setting ambitious and coherent poverty reduction targets, reflecting all three indicators agreed by the European Council (June 2010) and ensuring a rigorous monitoring of progress achieved for all people experiencing poverty including the most disadvantaged. Failure to reach year on year ambitions to reduce poverty must be exposed as unacceptable through this monitoring.
3. Defending and promoting the 'welfare state' and social rights as a necessary prerequisite for economic recovery. Including follow up of the Active Inclusion Recommendation through the adoption of a European Framework Directive on the adequacy of Minimum Income Schemes, measures to support access for all to quality and affordable services of general interest and positive employment activation measures.
4. Defending public common goods (e.g. Water, health, transport, social services) as a fundamental right.
5. Strengthening the real economy, including support for social economy, and comprehensive investment in labour market strategies to create and support quality employment and opportunities for all.

6. Curbing the destructive system of speculative trading, forcing the banking sector to carry its share of the burden and introducing financial transaction taxes to fund social investment as well as to guarantee a high level of transparency in order to counteract corruption.
7. Fighting tax evasion and avoidance including through abolishing tax havens, particularly those established in the European Union territory and pursuing the fight against organized crime more vigorously on a Pan-European level, in order to stamp out these key mechanisms which contribute to the causes of poverty and social exclusion.
8. Creating the conditions which will allow Member States to borrow at reasonable interest rates and promote solidarity throughout the EU.
9. The development of monitoring mechanisms to track trends in wealth and inequality across all Member States in order to promote and implement measures to reduce inequality in incomes and wealth.

Note: The 22nd General Assembly of EAPN took place in Lisbon, Portugal from the 16th to the 18th of June 2011. Delegations from 27 countries and 11 European Organisations took part in the debates and activities. At this General Assembly, the Network welcomed EAPN Networks from: Iceland, Serbia and FYRO Macedonia into its membership.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2010 – FINAL DECLARATION

EU Year 2010: Building a Europe for All

On 10-12 June, EAPN held its 21st General Assembly in Limassol, Cyprus. At this General Assembly, the Network welcomed into its membership **EAPN Estonia**.

This General Assembly took place at **the mid point of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion** and a week before the crucial European Council to decide on the poverty reduction target in the **Europe 2020 Strategy**.

At this General Assembly, EAPN held a conference on **the situation of poverty and exclusion amongst migrants in the European Union**. Cyprus as one of the frontline EU Member States receiving migrants who take huge personal risks to try to seek out a better life was considered as a very suitable place to inspire EAPN's discussions on this theme.

The General Assembly was also the occasion to mark the **20th anniversary of EAPN**. This provided the opportunity to reflect on the contribution EAPN has made to defend the rights of people to live free of poverty and social exclusion and to reflect on how EAPN should develop to ensure it continues to play an effective role in combating poverty and social exclusion.

The current decision in relation to **exit strategies from the crisis** which involves enormous cuts in public expenditures is impacting on every aspect of the efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion. This reality was prevalent throughout all our discussions at the General Assembly.

In the light of the above the 140+ delegates to the General Assembly coming from 26 National Networks and 13 European Organizations declared the following:

- **Poverty is a denial of fundamental rights** and the ultimate objective in any decent society must be the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.
- **More equal societies are better for everyone** so the fight against poverty must also include actions to reduce inequalities in our societies.
- That the European Union project will be judged by its ability to promote social cohesion and to contribute to the **achievement of high level social standards for all**.
- That we need to promote a **positive discourse on migration** and to recognize that migration can serve as an engine of growth and development for all parties involved: host and source countries and the migrant workers themselves.
- That despite the positive benefits of migration we must also recognise the reality that **all over Europe migrants are at a high risk of poverty and social exclusion**.
- That the work of EAPN and other actors concerned with achieving a more social Europe has produced positive results but that in this period of history **the key messages of anti poverty NGOs run contrary to the dominate culture** which is been shaped by a neo liberal paradigm.
- That we acknowledge **the tremendous courage of those people living in poverty and those who act with them in solidarity** and their commitment to continue the fight against poverty and social exclusion until no one has to live in poverty any more.
- That it has **not been the 'poor' who caused the current crisis** and that it is intolerable that they should be the ones who have to pay the price for sorting out the crisis.

- That **the long-term cost associated with not addressing poverty** or pressing for a fairer and more effective distribution of the wealth in our societies will mean that our exit from the current crisis will inevitably lead to social tensions and a next round of crisis with perhaps even more devastating effects.

The delegates to the General Assembly called for:

1) An ambitious Europe 2020 Strategy

- Decide on a clear concrete target for the reduction of poverty capable of making progress on combating poverty, social exclusion and inequality.
- Put the fight against poverty, social exclusion and inequality in the heart of the economic, financial and fiscal policy of the EU and the member states.
- Take the financial, economic and social crisis as an opportunity to work on a redistribution of wealth, and let those who have build up huge economic profits pay the largest part of the crisis instead of cuts in social expenditures and lowering salaries.

2) The establishment of effective European and National Platforms against Poverty

- Transform the Social OMC into dynamic EU and national platforms against poverty, involving all key actors, to ensure visibility and ownership, promote mutual learning and ensure delivery on common objectives and the poverty targets, through a country and thematic focus.
- Develop mechanisms to assess current instruments and move forward on establishing European frameworks to guarantee EU social standards.
- Mobilize EU financial instruments to support the development of social and sustainable service infrastructure, demonstration projects and better participation and governance.
- Ensure that Social Inclusion objectives are mainstreamed across Europe 2020 linked to effective Social Impact assessment.

3) Implement commitments already made in the EU Inclusion Strategy of the Active Inclusion Recommendation

- Implement the Principles on Active Inclusion by:
 - Agreeing an EU frame work directive on adequate minimum income sufficient to live a life in dignity and to participate fully in society.
 - Develop inclusive labor markets that focus on quality jobs with sufficient pay so that no one who is working still lives in poverty.
 - Guarantee access to quality services, and forbid all cuts of services connected with basic needs like electricity, heating and water, because daily life without them becomes inhumane.
- Ensure progress on developing and implementing National Strategies to combat homelessness
- Develop an EU Recommendation on addressing Child Poverty

4) A more human migration policy

- Start the debate for a common migration policy in view of a better welcome for migrants that arrive in the EU so that they can live in a humane and decent way.
- Ensure that addressing the needs of migrant becomes a priority concern of the future EU Inclusion strategy.
- The current approach of ignoring the reality of undocumented migrants in the European Union must stop and real efforts must be made to ensure that they have access to fundamental rights such as access to education and health care.
- Increase the support for projects in developing countries that create a better future for the population living in poverty instead of investing in all kinds of safety systems to keep migrants out of Europe and put pressure on the wealthy elites in these countries to do the same.

5) Secure an ambitious legacy from the 2010 Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

- Building on the proposals made above secure at the end of the European Year the commitment of Heads of State and Governments to put the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the heart of social, economic, financial and fiscal policies of the Member States and of the EU.
- Recognise that the task to develop a greater awareness of the causes and consequences of poverty is a long term project which requires a major investment in awareness rising and participation process that engages the society in the goal to achieve the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.
- Involve all actors of civil society and all levels of public administration in the implementation and follow up of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2009 – FINAL DECLARATION

Social Progress in a time of Crisis - Building the EU WE Want

On 11-13 June, EAPN held its twentieth General Assembly in Vienna, Austria. At this General Assembly, the Network welcomed into its membership **EAPN Slovenia and the European Consumer Debt Network (ECDN)**.

The discussions at the General Assembly took place against the **backdrop of the current financial, economic and social crisis** and the delegates asserted that it is time to recognise that the current EU strategy of “growth and jobs” and “market liberalisation” is failing to protect and develop a social Europe, where everyone has access to fundamental rights. The record low turns out in the recent European Parliament elections demonstrates a long term trend of decreasing engagement and participation of citizens in the European Project. The advancement of extremist/racist and anti-European parties is a deeply worrying development. Now more than ever, Europe must prove its relevance, which is intrinsically linked to its capacity to contribute to the realisation of a fairer, more inclusive, anti-racist society.

This moment in time must be seen as an opportunity to make transformative policy changes that will have a real impact on combating growing inequalities and create a Europe where the aspirations in article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty, *“The Union shall (...) combat social exclusion and discrimination and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States”* are a reality.

Eradicating poverty in Europe is about a new vision for Europe – a vision that requires political willingness and action.

THE EU WE WANT

1) Effective access to Rights and Dignity for all

There are no “deserving” and “undeserving” poor and it is time to once and for all break the stereotypes in relation to people experiencing poverty. Social rights are fundamental rights – health care, housing, education, adequate income – which must be available to all. The conditions must be created so that everyone can exercise their rights and break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty. Fundamental rights, solidarity, equality between women and men and equality for all, non-discrimination and democracy, must be the principles shaping policies aimed at ending poverty and social exclusion.

2) An economy at the service of people and public interest

Europe's economic systems must be capable of safeguarding people from poverty and social exclusion and must respect the primacy of social rights over market freedoms. Increased public investment and a fairer redistribution of resources and wealth must (re)gain a central place in designing both economic and social policies.

3) That all policies are mobilised to end poverty in Europe // Rethinking the system

Poverty is structural, generated and perpetuated every day through inadequate or badly targeted policies and the lack of political commitment. It is time to rethink the system, to imagine and put into reality policies where solidarity, social rights and the public good come first. Building a poverty-free Europe requires that all policies – social, economic, employment, education, housing – are mobilised in order to end poverty and that the policies at the different levels, European, national and local, are mutually reinforcing.

4) Mobilisation and participation of everyone

Mobilisation and action, of everyone, is central to change and in building inclusive societies. Strong and well functioning representative democratic institutions are essential to ensure the defence of the public interest. More participatory forms of democracy are necessary, at all levels and in all policies, where decisions affecting our lives are taken. The participatory structures must ensure that the voices of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are included. Transparency and accountability in policy-making process are essential to develop trust in our democratic processes.

5) Solidarity between the struggles against poverty and social exclusion in the world and in Europe

The European dimension of the fight against poverty and social exclusion cannot be dissociated from global challenges linked to demographic change, migration, climate change and decent work. The structural causes generating poverty are linked and increased solidarity between the struggles to end poverty is needed. The EU needs to become a global actor for trade justice, debt cancellation, poverty eradication and the application of decent work standards for everyone.

POLITICAL ACTION IS NEEDED TO BUILD AN EU WE CAN TRUST

- To put people and planet before profit.
- To put the economy at the service of social and sustainable development.
- To recognize the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion and the defence of fundamental rights as a priority challenge and pre-requisite for progress at EU and global.

WE CALL FOR

1) A new social and sustainable post 2010 EU strategy, which makes progress on combating poverty and inequality a pre-requisite.

- Make the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Millennium Development Goals and the reduction of the poverty and inequality (in the EU and globally), a pre-requisite for progress post 2010.
- Establish new overarching objectives, prioritizing social cohesion and the defence of fundamental rights, delivered through a balanced architecture (economic, employment, environmental and social), which strengthens and reinforces the role of the EU Social Protection (pensions, and healthcare and long-term care) and Social Inclusion Strategies.
- Develop more effective tools to ensure implementation, including EU and national targets on poverty and exclusion, homelessness, etc, new multiple indicators to measure progress beyond GDP and effective use of EU budgets, including Structural Funds, to deliver social inclusion.
- Make a commitment to avoid social dumping, in order to gain competitiveness in the global economy. Labour rights, social welfare standards and progressive taxation systems should be protected and extended.

2) A Social Pact – Delivering on Rights and Solidarity, which:

- Challenges the causes of poverty by reducing inequality and achieving a fairer sharing of wealth.
- Transforms social protection into a springboard: guaranteeing adequate income, universal social security systems and access to quality social services.
- Creates pathways to inclusion: making an integrated Active Inclusion approach a reality.
- Guarantees access for all, to high quality training and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Extends labour laws and social protection systems to the new forms of employment aiming at the integration of disadvantaged people into the labour market.
- Creates new jobs for new needs: investing in quality social/green jobs and social economy.
- Challenges discrimination and promotes diversity.
- Promotes global social justice and equity.

3) The building of a dynamic partnership for change

- Implementing participative and effective governance involving people experiencing poverty and NGOs at all levels and stages of the policy cycle, through an effective civil dialogue.
- Ensure financial and other support to NGOs as agents facilitating the empowerment of people experiencing poverty and as service providers.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008 – FINAL DECLARATION

Ensuring a lasting legacy from 2010 - the EU Year for combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

On 25-27 September 2008, EAPN held its nineteenth General Assembly in Albena, Bulgaria. At this General Assembly the Network welcomed into its membership EAPN Romania.

Early preparation is essential for a successful EU year and under the banner “Ensuring a lasting legacy from 2010” the delegates to the General Assembly adopted the following declaration.

The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)

- Having regard to the **Social Package** presented by the European Commission on 2 July 2008;
- Having regard to the implementation of the revised **Lisbon Agenda and the EU Inclusion Strategy (Social OMC)**;
- Having regard to **recent judgements of the Court of Justice** of the European communities, in relation to the rights of posted workers
- Having regard to the lack of progress on developing an effective EU Framework capable of guaranteeing access to affordable services:
- Aware that the **numbers of people living in poverty** in the EU is remaining constant, and in some countries is growing;
- Aware of the **increasing threat to hard won social rights** and the increasing precarity faced by many EU citizens and residents;
- Aware that the **fall out from the current financial crisis** is disproportionately carried by people living in poverty, particularly in terms of increased housing, energy and food prices;
- Aware that we are coming to the **end of the current 5 year term** for the EU Institutions.

states that

- The EU which was once seen, as the promoter of the European Social Model is in **danger of being seen as the defender of market freedoms to the detriment of social rights**;
- That the commitment to achieving **economic growth has been no guarantor of reducing poverty and achieving greater social cohesion**;
- Despite political declarations in relation to the strengthening of the fight against poverty and social exclusion that in this period, in many Member States and at EU level, it has been **more difficult to get serious political commitment and attention to the fight against poverty and social exclusion**;
- Increasingly people experiencing poverty are held responsible for their own poverty and are being pushed into low quality, low paid employment;
- The growing **attacks on human rights**, in particular in relation to ethnic minorities (particularly Roma) and migrants (including undocumented migrants) and the lack of a strong defence for EU equality and anti discrimination legislation, should be a cause for growing alarm.
- Governments must play a more active role to address the shortcomings of the free market by regulating the economic system.

In the light of the above the delegates stressed their belief that **2010 as the EU Year for combating poverty and social exclusion** takes on even greater significance. We the

representatives of NGOs working with and for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion across the European Union call on the EU and member states to ensure a lasting legacy from the 2010 year capable of **delivering a decent life for all**. To achieve these credible messages must emerge clearly from the year, including the following:

- **Social Progress is possible** and all policies must contribute to the fight against poverty and the achievement of social inclusion;
- **Stereotypes in relation to 'people experiencing poverty' must be broken** and respect for human rights, including social and economic rights, must be defended as the basis for a decent society;
- **More and better democracy is needed**, including properly resourced participatory democracy infrastructure;
- Achieving a **fairer redistribution of wealth** is possible and a re-found awareness of the importance of public wealth.
- The fight against poverty in the world and the fight against poverty in Europe is part of **one and the same struggle**.

Concrete actions at EU level which should support these messages include:

- The establishment of a **Social Progress Pact** to direct political attention to the need to put social cohesion and the fight against poverty at the top of the EU agenda and at the centre of the post Lisbon strategy;
- Ensuring the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights is respected in all its dimensions and enforced through judicable rights;
- The establishment of **ambitious targets** at EU and Member State levels to eradicate poverty in the EU by 2020, to be monitored through a high visibility **annual scoreboard**;
- Establishing an **indicator of societal progress** which goes beyond that measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and takes better account of the quality of life of the citizens;
- Ensuring that all Member States make progress so that their **Minimum income schemes are adequate for a dignified life**. As a first step, this should seek to ensure that such schemes are at least at the risk of poverty level, with a commitment to develop accurate adequacy levels through a participative mechanism;
- Ensuring the implementation of existing **EU anti discrimination legislation** and bring forward enhanced legislation to strengthen the EU equality and anti discrimination framework;
- The establishment at EU level of an independent body with the capacity to verify if human rights standards are met in the EU detention centres for asylum seekers and migrants;
- Developing specific guidelines, principles and benchmarks on **good governance in social inclusion policies**;
- Developing a new EU Community **Poverty and Social Inclusion programme** capable of supporting the EU Inclusion Strategy, while at the same time ensuring that EU Structural Funds deliver on poverty and social inclusion objectives.
- The development of an EU tax on financial transactions, as part of the reform of the EU budget.

The delegates to the General Assembly expressed **their commitment to work in solidarity with other actors**, to identify what could be the **legacy from the 2010 year at local, regional and national level** and to contribute to the achievement of a **legacy at EU level in line with this declaration**.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007 – FINAL DECLARATION

Fighting Poverty in the EU -Which way forward for the 50 year old?

On 8-10 November 2007, EAPN held its eighteenth General Assembly in Budapest, Hungary. This was the first General Assembly of EAPN to be held in one of the Member States that joined the EU in its historic enlargement in 2004.

The General Assembly marked EAPN's contribution to the EU 50th anniversary celebrations with the key note theme: **"Fighting Poverty in the EU: Which way forward for the 50 year old?"** At this General Assembly the Network welcomed into its membership **EAPN Poland and the Slovak Anti Poverty Network**. At the end of the General Assembly, the delegates adopted the following **declaration**.

In this 50th anniversary year of the EU, the delegates to the General Assembly stated that,

- Despite the declared objective of making a decisive impact on eradicating poverty by 2010, the gap between rich and poor is widening, inequalities and discrimination persist, and poverty remains on an unacceptable high level.
- Member States are increasingly interdependent, in a globalised world, economic and governance system, resulting in the reality that **social concerns cannot be solved at national level alone** but require inter governmental cooperation.
- Social and employment policies alone are insufficient to challenge current trends and policies that result in poverty and social exclusion, but major structural changes are required so that **all policies are directed towards the fight against poverty and social exclusion**.
- The political leaders of the EU and the member states have been failing to achieve social progress and the strengthening of social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the delegates acknowledged that in the social field, achievements can undoubtedly be noted, including:

1) In relation to Principles

- The commitment to human and social rights as reflected in the objectives of the EU, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the references to the European Social Charter.

2) In relation to process and legislation:

- Development of EU social dialogue
- Development of civil dialogue and support for the engagement of Networks defending the interests of people experiencing poverty, exclusion and inequality, support for the direct participation of people experiencing poverty, including the yearly European meeting of people experiencing poverty.
- The requirement for social impact assessment for major policy proposals.
- The possibility of agreeing common minimum requirements in the social policy field.
- Health and safety at work legislation.

3) In relation to putting poverty and equality on the agenda

- Putting poverty on the agenda through the Lisbon Agenda and the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion
- Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination legislation protecting against discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

4) In terms of solidarity

- The positive role played by the structural funds and in particular the European Social Fund and other European financial instruments and programmes promoting social inclusion.

To move forward and build an ambitious societal project for the EU, capable of **delivering a decent life for all**, we the representatives of NGOs working with people experiencing poverty and social exclusion across the European Union call on the EU and member states to accelerate their efforts to eradicate poverty by,

- Committing to an **ambitious 2010 EU Year against poverty** that leaves a lasting legacy at EU, national, regional and local level.
- Ensuring a real **integration of the social dimension into all EU policies** and to ensure that the “horizontal social clause” within the new EU Reform Treaty becomes the basis for the establishment of an EU **‘Social Progress Pact’** with the same level of ambition as the ‘Stability and Growth Pact’.
- Committing to a **social and sustainable development model** consistent with a social rights approach and with a clear central objective to deliver social cohesion. The economic guidelines that would underpin such a model should reflect the ambition to attain a socially just redistribution of wealth.
- Ensuring the **comprehensive and ambitious nature of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)** on Social Protection and Social Inclusion by ensuring that the future guidelines and the requirements for the National Action Plans on inclusion are sufficient to have real impact on EU, national, regional and local policy making and delivery to ensure a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty. The revised guidelines should also commit to the development of more comprehensive knowledge about trends in relation to wealth. A new EU poverty programme should be developed as a complement to the OMC.
- Committing to the development of strong tools at EU level capable of delivering **high level social standards** in all the EU Member States. Such a tool should guarantee access for all to decent levels of income and high quality services of general interest. The ‘Active Inclusion’ approach should be focused on making steps in this direction.
- Agreeing strategies aimed at **quality employment** accessible to people furthest from the Labour Market and which address the reality of ‘in work poverty’. The ambition of developing quality employment should address the need for fair wages, good work-life balance, decent working condition and security and sustainability should be given renewed priority. The role of Social economy as a key tool for implementing an inclusive labour market should be promoted more specifically.
- Committing to strengthening EU **equality and anti discrimination legislation and policies** and to ensure the necessary institutional arrangements to ensure the enforcement of the legislation.

- Ensuring that **structural funds are given their rightful place in the fight against exclusion** and ensure a better coherence between structural funds, the OMC on social inclusion, the Employment and overall Lisbon strategy.
- Developing and ensuring the culture, principles and methods necessary to support an effective implementation of **participatory democracy**. Special attention has to be paid to the participation of people experiencing poverty, exclusion, discriminations and inequalities.
- Reinforcing the role of the EU in **the fight against poverty in a global context**.

The delegates to the General Assembly expressed **their commitment to contribute to the development and follow up of this agenda**.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006 – FINAL DECLARATION

The EU We Want

On 5-7 October 2006, EAPN held its seventeenth General Assembly in Toledo, Spain. This year the key note theme was: “The EU We Want”. This theme reflects the view of EAPN members that the European Union needs to fundamentally re-think its economic and social policy if it is to achieve its stated objective ‘*to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010*’

At this General Assembly the Network welcomed into its membership the **Lithuania Anti Poverty Network, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the European Foundation for Street Children and SMES Europa.**

At the end of the General Assembly, the delegates adopted the following declaration:

We the representatives of NGOs working with people experiencing poverty and social exclusion across the European Union, demand that the leaders of the EU balance the progress made in market and economic integration with **cooperation to guarantee access for all to high levels of social standards and fundamental rights.** In spite of the aspirations expressed in Lisbon (2000) and elsewhere, the EU is still far from reaching the vision of a social Europe. Delegates noted:

1. Official EU figures show that **72 million people live their daily lives in or at risk of poverty** in the EU Member States. As well as the risks associated to this reality for the people directly concerned; poor health, homelessness or inadequate housing, lack of access to education, precarious and often dangerous employment, limited recreational or holiday opportunities etc, this reality also represents a threat to the cohesiveness of European society. Despite the seriousness of the threat involved the strategy proposed by the Heads of States and Governments to address this reality and to “make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by the year 2010” receives little high level political attention. **We demand that the Heads of States and Governments actively promote social cohesion and the eradication of poverty.** We expect that the fight against poverty will be mainstreamed into the activities carried out during the European Year of Equal Opportunities for all (2007).
2. Already this year over **3000 people have died trying to reach the territory of the EU.** Those, adults and children who do survive and reach the territory of the EU, are faced with detention, inadequate supports and high levels of stress, both mental and physical. We demand a European Union where the Member States cooperate to ensure that all **asylum and immigration policies fully respect fundamental rights.** We are particularly concerned at the increasing 'externalisation' of migration policies which has the potential to undermine asylum and humanitarian protection. Member States must fully realise their responsibility under the Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees to ensure that returned migrants are not subject to death, torture or other threats in the "re-admitting" country. At the same time as concern is raised about this 'illegal immigration' European economies are exhibiting increasing levels of **demand for labour.** The migration policies adopted by the EU and the Member States in this regard must provide for the proper integration of migrant workers, respond to the reality of the 6-8 million undocumented migrants already living in Europe, and comply with the ILO

objectives of **'decent work'**. In addition the EU must ensure a **broader reflection on the causes of migration** including; the impact of the failure of wealthy countries to meet their development aid target of 0.7% of GDP, the failure to address the trafficking of immigrants, in particular women immigrants, for exploitation in domestic care and in the sex industry, and the failure to develop socially responsible globalisation.

3. EAPN welcomes the debate at EU level about what has become known as **'flexicurity'** but is concerned that it is unbalanced due to an over emphasis on 'flexibility' and by the failure to adequately recognise that to date such policies have failed to reach those far from the labour market. In addition the evidence is that despite the change of rhetoric, the political goal is still very much determined by the needs of employers and the perceived need to flexibilise labour law, accompanied by 'make work pay' and 'activation' policies aimed at putting pressure on the unemployed to take jobs which are characterised by low paid, precariousness and often unhealthy working conditions, with little chances for further training or personal development. We want to see a commitment to the balanced development of this concept including sufficiently extensive welfare systems to support the security aspect of the model. We want to see an EU where having a **high level of social protection is seen as a value in its own right** and not just a tool for labour market integration and where **well-designed activation programmes, which do not involve compulsion**, assist people in the transition from social assistance to decent work, while responding to their real aspirations and the need to lift people out of poverty.
4. The trend towards wholesale **deregulation of services of general interest** with scant regard for the social consequences continues within the EU. In Member States where the electricity and gas markets have been "liberalised", people experiencing poverty and those on low incomes are prey to serious difficulties. Yet this trend continues and is likely to continue in areas as diverse as water, health and social services. We want to see an EU where the **protection, regulation and distribution of "basic" goods and services that are essential to live a decent life** are not only subject to 'market freedoms' but **are seen and respected as social rights and a rich part of our cultural heritage** and of the European Social Model.
5. The annual **European meetings of people experiencing poverty**, organised by successive EU Presidencies, while being important in their own right, are not sufficient. They have to be reinforced by genuine participatory approaches adopted at all levels and by all actors, including a strong engagement in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the National Action Plans for Inclusion.

2010, which has been designated as the **EU Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion**, will also mark the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of EAPN. The delegates to the General Assembly called on all those responsible for the planning of the year to ensure that it is built on lessons learned from the Open Method of Cooperation on social inclusion and on a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the Lisbon Agenda on the fight against poverty. This year should contribute to an EU where **the voice of people experiencing poverty is heard** and should mark a turning point towards the development of the "EU We Want". An EU that in the words of article 3 of the proposed Constitutional Treaty "shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child" The **delegates to the General Assembly expressed their commitment to continue to contribute to the development of this Social Europe.**

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005 – FINAL DECLARATION

Delivering the Social Inclusion Agenda - From Promise to Reality

On 24-26 November 2005, EAPN held its sixteenth General Assembly in Liverpool, England. This General Assembly welcomed the Norwegian and Cypriot Networks into membership of EAPN. This year the key note theme was: "Delivering the Social Inclusion Agenda". At the end of the General Assembly, the EAPN delegates adopted the following declaration.

The delegates to the EAPN General Assembly are very concerned about the growing inequalities, increasing levels of discrimination and the alienation of disadvantaged communities within many of the Member States of the European Union. These developments, which result from the lack of investment in social policies and programmes can not be ignored. Responding to these developments must lead to a stronger focus on the European Union social inclusion strategy, increasing its effectiveness and aiming at greater social cohesion.

The political priorities established at EU level are contributing to these increasing inequalities. In this regard the delegates to the General Assembly expressed their anger regarding the following:

- The lack of any reflection on social inclusion and social cohesion in the National Reform Programmes, which are a central component of the revised Lisbon strategy. This lack of focus on social cohesion is a direct result of the decision made by the EU leaders to focus the revised Lisbon Strategy primarily on jobs and growth.
- The proposal to weaken the comprehensive and common objectives for the EU social inclusion strategy agreed by the Heads of State and Governments at the Nice Council in 2000. This proposal has the threat of decreasing the political commitment to the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion. We will not accept a reduction in the strategic importance of these Plans and a weakening of their ability to be an instrument to drive forward policies to fight poverty and social exclusion.
- The failure to make the social inclusion dimension a central focus in the current negotiations on the new Structural Funds legislative framework and the failure to acknowledge NGOs as full partners in the Structural Funds management and delivery.

Political priorities at EU and National level have to be reconsidered in light of this reality. The General Assembly thus called on all relevant actors and in particular on the political leaders at EU and National level:

1. To affirm a vision of a Social Europe where all citizens and residents have effective access to all fundamental rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. The debate on the future of the European Social Model must aim at contributing to such a vision and must seek to involve citizens and residents in this debate in order to bring the EU project closer to the people.
2. To ensure a strong focus on social inclusion and social cohesion in the National Reform Programmes which are a central component of the revised Lisbon strategy.
3. To increase their commitment to the EU social inclusion strategy and the National Action Plans on social inclusion. This will involve, improving policy coordination at both EU and National levels, a better involvement of National Parliaments and the different levels of

government and greater cooperation with NGOs fighting poverty and social exclusion. This will also involve a closer scrutiny of economic and financial policy decisions with regards to their impact on social cohesion. These National Action Plans need to be backed up by adequate financial investment to ensure their effectiveness and they should remain a central instrument to drive forward policies to fight poverty and social exclusion.

4. To ensure that the comprehensive and common objectives agreed by the heads of State and Governments at the Nice Council in 2000 remain at the heart of the proposal from the Commission to streamline the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.
5. To ensure a complementarity between anti-discrimination policies and policies to promote social cohesion; in particular to ensure that the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion adequately address the needs of individuals and communities experiencing discrimination, notably racism.
6. To recognise the historical roots of immigration into the EU and to address the reality of migrants already living in the EU. This must commence with the development of comprehensive and coherent integration policies at Member State and EU levels aimed at increasing the economic, civil and political participation of migrants. The EU must not close its borders to economic migration. At the same time, it must realise existing international commitments to support and invest in development policies and measures aimed at reducing economic and social inequalities generated by globalisation trends.
7. To ensure that the current political focus on employment will result in the development of an inclusive labour market which gives access to quality employment for all who are able to work while significantly reducing the numbers of working poor. Employment policies should offer equal opportunities and equal pay for men and women and should provide adequate support for caring responsibilities and support for the reconciliation of work, family and community life. The importance of the social economy should be reflected in employment policies.
8. To acknowledge NGOs as full partners in the Structural Funds management and delivery, which is essential to unleash the great potential of the Structural Funds to promote social inclusion and social cohesion within the EU. Access of NGOs fighting poverty and social exclusion to Structural Funds enables these funds to be used to better respond to the needs of people and communities experiencing disadvantage and to develop and implement programmes and actions with the individuals and communities concerned. The direct involvement of the people and communities concerned is essential to ensure that the Funds respond to their needs and develop appropriate opportunities. Access of NGOs to structural funds should not be blocked by bureaucratic processes or requirements of National Authorities which can not be met by grass-root NGOs. This has particular relevance, in this period, for the new Member States.
9. To strengthen participatory democracy and civil dialogue approaches and in particular to ensure that people experiencing poverty, exclusion and inequalities and the organisations in which they participate, have the necessary organisational capacity, participative frameworks and financial support to ensure their participation. The European Meetings of People experiencing poverty and
10. social exclusion and the follow up of these meetings in many Member States is a good positive example that must be further developed

11. To guarantee rights for all to quality social services, such as health and employment services, and public utilities, such as fuel and water and to ensure adequate control and regulation of such services by appropriate public authorities.

The continuing scandal of widespread poverty in a rich society, such as the EU, is intolerable. The next round of National Action Plans for Inclusion must move Europe substantially towards the agreed EU goal 'to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010'. As the participants to the fourth European Meeting of People experiencing poverty and social exclusion said, 'The Poor cannot wait'.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2004 – FINAL DECLARATION

The EU we want – Strengthening the EU Social Model

On 18-20 November 2004, EAPN held its fifteenth General Assembly in Groningen, Netherlands.

This year the key note theme was: “The EU we want – tackling poverty and social exclusion in an enlarged EU”. Within this context, EAPN pursued its own enlargement process by integrating new networks. At the end of the General Assembly, the EAPN delegates adopted the following declaration.

The enlargement of the EU creates new opportunities in a very challenging context for the future development of the EU. Diversity in social models in the enlarged EU might be used as an excuse to seek less social Europe and to view enlargement primarily as an economic and internal market project. Such an approach would be devastating in terms of the possibility for the EU to contribute to promoting and developing a European Social Model that is built on high levels of social protection, of quality employment and solidarity. Such an approach would inevitably lead to competition between EU Member States that would put increasing pressure on social protection systems and consequently on people experiencing, or at risk of, poverty and social exclusion.

EAPN through its membership and its work on the ground in the fight against poverty and social exclusion sees that inequalities in terms of access to income, access to rights and access to goods and services, are growing. EAPN is also concerned about the growing levels of prejudice, racism and xenophobia. At the same time we can observe the emergence of growing numbers of ‘super rich’ persons in our European societies. These developments are reducing cohesion in European societies, putting at risk the very notion of a European Social Model and if not countered will inevitably lead to increased tensions between different sections of European society.

EAPN believes that such developments are not inevitable but reflect the failure of our political systems to ensure the primacy of human values over market values. In the context of globalisation they reflect the failure to define systems of regulation at local, national, European and world levels that restores the capacity of all societies to determine their future in a democratic, participatory and sustainable way. In order to reverse this trend and to develop the EU we want, EAPN calls on decision makers in Europe to:

1. Promote a European Union based on effective access for all to fundamental rights within a sustainable development model aimed at social solidarity, that guarantees a balance between social, environmental, employment and economic objectives. This model should seek to have this balance reflected in its institutional arrangements, in the policy priorities, annual Spring Summit and in the Structural Funds framework, as reflected in the Constitutional Treaty.
2. Restate the role of fiscal policy, so as to allow the wide disparities created by the market to be reduced and high quality collective goods and services (i.e., education, health, housing etc.) to be financed.
3. Rehabilitate the role of public expenditure which should be regarded as an investment and not as charges to be reduced to the minimum possible, as long as they are based on the principles of sustainable development;

4. Ensure that the approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion addresses the multi dimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion – poverty is a violation of fundamental rights and is not just a monetary issue. It also implies issues such as access to decent housing, quality health care, access to child and elder care, employment and lifelong learning opportunities, and access to culture... This approach must provide an adequate response to the demands of people experiencing poverty and exclusion.
5. Ensure that social protection systems, including individualized minimum income schemes, are implemented and adequate in all Member States, for all to have a sufficient income to live life with dignity. Progress must be made in adopting minimum standards for social protection, and for the combating of poverty and social exclusion at EU level. The ageing of population should not be systematically used as a pretext for reducing social protection.
6. Ensure that the European Union effectively tackles discrimination and gender inequality which are causal factors of exclusion.
7. Develop a coherent EU immigration policy that is based on the respect of individuals and their fundamental rights, that is open to immigrants fleeing poverty and people seeking asylum, that is non discriminatory and addresses the reality of undocumented persons already present in the European Union territory.
8. Defend the existence of quality services of general interest which allow fundamental rights to be accessed by all, for which a specific legitimacy should be defined.
9. Develop and disseminate regular, systematic research on the distribution of income and wealth within the EU and within the Member States as well as research on effective access to fundamental rights.
10. Strengthen participatory democracy approaches and in particular to ensure that those experiencing poverty, exclusion and inequalities have the necessary organizational capacity, participative frameworks and financial support to ensure that their voice can be heard in the development, implementation and evaluation of all relevant policies.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2003 – FINAL DECLARATION

Local Actions in the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion

On 20-22 November 2003, EAPN held its fourteenth General Assembly in Lille, France. This year the key note theme was: “Local Actions in the fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion”. This General Assembly welcomed the Bulgarian Anti Poverty Network as the first member from a candidate/acceding country to join EAPN. At the end of the General Assembly, the EAPN delegates adopted the following declaration.

EAPN in its assessment of the second round of National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2003-2005) noted that the EU Inclusion strategy had in just three years of existence developed as a very important tool for mobilisation, information and the sharing of experiences in the combat of poverty and social exclusion across the EU Member States. EAPN noted that the implementation of the strategy is not ambitious enough, and still falls a long way short of the strategies and resources needed to make “*a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and exclusion by the year 2010*” as promised by Heads of State and Government at the Lisbon Council in 2000. Failure to reflect this reality in the Joint Inclusion Report would be to fail the 60 million plus women, men and children in the EU who daily face the harsh realities of poverty and exclusion.

EAPN’s assessment of the plans noted, in some Member States, some improvement in relation to participation, and engagement of local and regional levels in the preparation of the second round of Plans. The lack of this engagement was one of the reasons for the lack of impact of many of the first Plans. Although this process is still at an early stage and even if it is still too much a top down process, EAPN welcomes this involvement of the local level as a step forward, but it is not enough. EAPN is keen to work with other relevant actors to ensure that the local and regional dimension is further developed in the coming period.

EAPN calls for better balance between the social inclusion, employment and economic dimensions of EU policies and practices. This is crucial for the future of social cohesion in an enlarged European Union. Regional, National, EU and International policies must respond to this challenge and create favourable conditions for eradicating poverty and social exclusion. This is essential if local actions are to be successful in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. To achieve this:

1) Governments and Public Authorities must ensure:

- That the Inter-Governmental Conference safeguards the progress made in the draft Constitution produced by the work of the Convention and that the horizontal clauses in part three of the draft constitution are amended to include the ‘combat of social exclusion’.
- National Government policies must ensure that strong universal social protection frameworks ensure the realization to economic, social and cultural rights for all and the access for all to social services of quality, including a decent income for all. Decentralisation of powers must be used to extend not weaken universal social protection systems.
- Social inclusion must be mainstreamed across all policy areas at local, national and European level in order to effectively address the multidimensional nature of poverty

and social exclusion including the preparation and implementation of the National Action Plans for Employment

- Empowerment and Capacity Building are needed to ensure the mobilization of all relevant actors, including NGOs, is effectively translated into practice at all levels, in the development, implementation and assessment of policies and actions to fight poverty and social exclusion.
- Politicians must ensure adequate resources are collected, to avoid social protection systems being at risk, and to enable actions to be taken to improve these systems where their level is below or inferior to EU Member State best practices.

2) Participation must be recognised as a Right:

- Participative planning processes are needed and there should be a right to participation.
- The roles of NGOs, including as service providers, as innovators, as a voice in decision making, in citizens' mobilization, in strengthening civil society, in creating a social identity, and in mobilizing people experiencing poverty and social exclusion for participation must be recognized. Clear consultative status is needed.
- Clear principles, frameworks and resources must be put in place to enable NGOs to play these roles in such a way as not to undermine the integrity of public services by encouraging privatisation.
- Local actions in the fight against poverty and social exclusion should be better funded.
- There is need for better structures allowing people experiencing poverty and their organisations to play a central role in the framing, implementing and evaluating of actions to combat poverty and social exclusion.
- These processes of participation have to be inclusive themselves and provide equal opportunity to ensure that the voice of the most vulnerable groups, are heard.

3) Tools and resources for the Sharing of Experiences must be developed:

- There is a need for greater awareness of the diverse experiences and causes of poverty and exclusion. The specific characteristics faced by those living in rural areas (including issues to do with agriculture and fisheries) requires specific responses. The problems in urban areas and in neighbourhoods with special needs also requires specific responses to be implemented to address this reality. New challenges that will emerge in the light of enlargement will need specific responses.
- There is a need for improved tools and resources to enable actors at the local level to share experiences of successful practices of addressing poverty and social exclusion at the local level. The Peer Review component of the EU Inclusion strategy should provide opportunities to meet this objective.
- There is a need for qualitative targets and indicators alongside quantitative targets and indicators to ensure that all aspects of poverty and social exclusion are addressed. People experiencing poverty and social exclusion through their organisations need to be involved in the definition and assessment of these targets and indicators. EAPN should play a particular role in this regard-. National governments need to set up clear structures, with dedicated resources, to enable this approach to targets and indicators to be achieved.

4) Discrimination as a cause of poverty and social exclusion must be addressed:

- There is a need for a greater awareness of the specific aspects of poverty and social exclusion experienced by women, who are still to a large extent excluded from decision making processes, are at higher risks of income poverty and are carrying the biggest part of unpaid work, most of it related to care activities
- There is also a need for a greater awareness of the specific aspects of poverty and social exclusion experienced by ethnic minorities, third country nationals, asylum seekers and refugees. These groups often have difficulties to access essential services, are unemployed or are in low paid and precarious work situations.
- The EU attitude towards migration is security and police driven. Immigration is perceived as a problem. On the contrary a European policy likely to put the individual at the centre of society and likely to positively manage the flows of people is needed. Human beings should be considered as a richness. Fundamental rights must be respected by immigration policy (refugees, workers). Migration policies should be integrated in the whole framework of economic, education and cultural policies.
- Positive actions need to be funded in order to address the legacy of discrimination.

5) The EU Structural Funds:

- Poverty proofing and the gathering of data in relation to the impact of structural funds spending on poverty and social exclusion must be highlighted as a priority in the mid term review of Structural Funds.
- The potential of Technical Assistance within EU Structural Funds must be utilised to strengthen the capacity of NGOs representing the interest of those experiencing poverty, exclusion and inequalities to engage with the Structural Funds process at local, regional and national levels. Structural Funds should be more open to basic (local) action groups to enable them to develop new possibilities to (re-)create the human capital.
- The EU initiatives URBAN and Equal must be assessed for their real ability to contribute to meeting the EU objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and also be embedded in the mainstream Structural Funds.
- Local Social Capital and Capacity Building funding in the EU Structural Funds should be increased and used to empower communities experiencing poverty and exclusion to provide local actions that address locally-defined needs
- The Performance Reserve allocations resulting from the Mid Term Review of Structural Funds should prioritise initiatives to combat social exclusion in recognition of the commitment by Member States under the 1st and 2nd NAPs Inclusion.

EAPN through its members will continue to play an active part in contributing to the fight against poverty and social exclusion and to supporting the EU Inclusion strategy. The assessment of the EU Inclusion strategy (planned in the framework of streamlining) must focus on the potential of the strategy to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010 and propose ways to strengthen the strategy to ensure that it can meet this target.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2002 – FINAL DECLARATION

Putting Rights at the Centre of the EU Strategy against Social Exclusion

On September 19-21 2002, EAPN held its thirteenth General Assembly in Berlin. This year the key note theme was: "Putting Rights at the Centre of the EU Strategy against Social Exclusion". At the end of the General Assembly, the EAPN delegates coming from the 15 member states of the European Union adopted the following declaration.

EAPN welcomed the initiative taken at the European Council of Lisbon (2000), when the heads of States agreed to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010 through adopting policies based on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) which included combining common objectives, National Action Plans and a European programme to encourage cooperation in this field.

EAPN also welcomed the objectives set for this strategic approach at the subsequent Nice Council and the work on indicators agreed at the Laeken Council.

EAPN through its national networks and at the European level has sought to be actively engaged in all aspects of this strategy and has paid particular attention to the process of developing, adopting and implementing the National Action Plans in this field.

EAPN through its efforts to engage with the first round of National Action Plans has expressed the view that, to date, the National Action Plans have been by and large a reporting exercise to the EU institutions and not an impetus for the real change needed to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010. EAPN has also expressed its disappointment at the lack of visibility for this important EU strategy even among those in public administration, who are involved in implementing policies related to combating poverty and social exclusion.

In the context of the debate on the future of Europe, the future enlargement of the EU, and the preparation of the second round of National Action Plans, EAPN calls on decision-makers in Europe to take actions that would ensure the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion for all who reside in the European Union member states. To achieve this, actions must include:

1) At the next Inter Governmental Conference (IGC)

- Making the eradication and the prevention of poverty and social exclusion an objective of the European Union and not just of the Union's social policy.
- Including a social inclusion chapter in the new Treaty.
- Strengthening and including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Treaty.
- Recognising the key role of NGOs, through the creation of a Treaty Article on the consultation of civil society.

2) In the preparation and implementation of the next round of National Action Plans (NAPsincl)

- Promoting universal access to rights, including the right to sufficient resources to live a dignified life, the right to decent housing, the right of access to health care, the right to education and training and the right to good quality employment.
- Improving the knowledge of the potential beneficiaries of rights, inform them about their rights and support their exercise of those rights.
- Developing a clearer articulation of policy formation and delivery between the national and the sub national level.
- Indicating clear budget commitments for the measures described in the National Action Plans including the contribution of structural funds and in particular the European Social Fund while ensuring that the strategy is fully integrated into the domestic policy agendas of each member state.
- Involving people affected by poverty in framing, implementing and evaluating the actions under the strategy including policies promoting access to rights.
- Giving adequate attention and resources to the fourth objective, mobilizing all the actors, agreed at Nice.

In undertaking these actions the gender mainstreaming directive must be taken fully into account, as well as addressing the situation of people from ethnic minorities. Attention must also be given to ensure that the policies and actions reach those who are most likely to experience poverty and exclusion including, people with disabilities, children, older people, offenders and ex offenders as well as people who experience disadvantages based on their geographical location, be it isolated rural areas or deprived urban areas.

EAPN will contribute to achieving these outcomes through continuing to be actively engaged with all the aspects of the strategy, through the sharing of the experiences gained through our member organisations, through engagement with other relevant actors, through the promotion of awareness of the strategy and the National Action Plans that are a key part of the strategy, and through building contacts with relevant NGOs in the candidate countries.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2000 – FINAL DECLARATION

Participation: an essential part of fighting social exclusion

(BARCELONA, 23-25/11/2000)

People have the right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their views and experiences listened to and acted on.

The concept of 'active citizenship' is a way to exercise this right. 'Active citizenship' must be open to all people residing in the territory and refers to the active role of people, communities and their organisations in decision-making that directly affects them.

The structures to engage in this 'active citizenship' need to be put in place thus creating participatory democratic institutions that enhance our representative democratic institutions. Political will is needed to achieve this outcome.

People living in poverty are often confronted with barriers when trying to participate in society, to exercise initiative or choice, or to be 'active citizens'.

These Barriers include: lack of access to fundamental rights and services including lack of money and debt problems, all forms of discrimination; language barriers and cultural differences; poor access to training; lack of decent jobs; lack of decent and affordable housing; and poor access to information about rights and entitlements. Further more the unequal burden of caring responsibilities borne by women is a significant barrier to participation. These barriers are linked to the way society is organised.

To overcome these barriers structural reforms are necessary; people need practical support and resources. Without this support 'active citizenship' and 'participatory democracy' will become a further source of marginalisation and exclusion.

The most recent figures from the European Union Statistical Office (Eurostat) shows that in 1995 almost 62 million people were living below the poverty line in fourteen member states of the EU (excluding Sweden). Within all age groups, women were always at a greater risk of being in income poverty than men within the European Union.

If we are serious about the 'participation of all' the political will to create the frameworks, and to make the level of resources available, to ensure the voice of these people are heard in policy making, policy implementation and policy evaluation in all spheres and at all levels in the European Union is essential.

EAPN calls on decision-makers in Europe to build such participation through:

1) The following principles:

1. Assessment of all political decisions at all levels as to their impact on people in situation of poverty and social exclusion with the participation of those concerned
2. the recognition of the need for the social responsibility of the different actors (political, economic, social partners, NGOs)
3. Involving representatives of organisations, which represent those who are experiencing exclusion in consultation and decision-making for across social and economic policy making arenas and at all levels.

2) The above general principles should be the source of the following measures:

1. Involving those in receipt of all social services in the decision-making about the delivery and shape of the services.
2. Investing and resourcing in the capacity of people experiencing poverty and exclusion to actively participate in organizations through which they can contribute to tackling exclusion, inequality and discrimination, drawing on their own experiences and demands.
3. Investing in the networking of such organisations at local, regional, national and European level.
4. Respecting the autonomy of such organisations and networks and their right to choose their own representative spokespersons.
5. Promoting and supporting the development of partnerships between public sector bodies, trade unions, employers and enterprises and NGO's at all levels with the aim of ensuring the greatest possible mobilisation of human, financial and other resources in the fight against social exclusion while taking account of the voice of people experiencing exclusion.
6. Ensuring the active involvement of organisations representing the interests of those experiencing poverty and exclusion, including women and ethnic minority organizations in all aspects, and at all levels, of the strategic approach to tackling poverty and exclusion across the European Union and in particular in the design, implementation and evaluation of the forthcoming national action plans to combat poverty and social exclusion.
7. Raising public awareness about the importance of social participation, overcoming discrimination and empowering people affected by poverty and social exclusion. Particular attention should be given to the training of all those involved in the development and delivery of the full range of public and social services (including education, healthcare, police etc.)
8. Raising awareness among the traditional actors of social action to take account of the voice of those experiencing exclusion.

EAPN will contribute to the achievement of these outcomes through continuing to build the active involvement of people who experience poverty and exclusion in the network and by making the network structures increasingly accountable to the organisations in which they participate.

EAPN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1999 – FINAL DECLARATION

Sharing the wealth: fighting the root causes of poverty and social exclusion

(HELSINKI, 25-27 November 1999)

Material wealth in Europe, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP) has continuously increased since the end of World War II. However, poverty is still widespread, the gap between the richest and the poorest is widening and the number of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion is growing. In Europe, high levels of inequality go hand in hand with high levels of poverty.

Inequality - in income, access to rights, access to goods and services, participation in society - is growing and has particular negative effects as regards gender, age, ethnicity, social origin, sexual orientation and disability.

The European Anti Poverty Network is convinced that these trends are not the result of the work of “natural forces” but the effect of unregulated market forces. EAPN is convinced that they can be halted and reversed. EAPN is committed to contribute actively to this process.

EAPN calls for a fairer sharing of wealth based on the principle of equal and effective access to fundamental rights for all and the primacy of human over market values.

EAPN calls on decision makers in Europe to implement a new sharing of wealth through:

1. a better distribution of work (paid and unpaid), primary income (from work and from capital) and of time;
2. a more equal access to the process of the creation of wealth: wealth primarily stems from the activities of people themselves when they are enabled to fully develop their potential and contribute to society;
3. a reaffirmation of the role of fiscal policy: it allows the wide disparities created by the market to be reduced and high quality collective goods and services (i.e: education, health, housing etc.) to be financed;
4. a progressive fiscal policy which also taxes the use of natural resources, capital and international financial speculation;
5. the (at least partial) unlinking of social security from the labour market in order to guarantee social rights and security for those who cannot fully participate in the labour market;
6. a rehabilitation of the role of public expenditure which should be regarded as an investment and not charges to be reduced to the minimum possible, as long as they are based on the principles of sustainable development;
7. a concerted strategy to strengthen social protection systems in the European Union and in the future member states in order to raise social standards and provide effective protection against poverty and social exclusion for all citizens and residents. In this respect, it is particularly important to put in place adequate services addressed to children and parents;
8. a redistribution in access to power and decision making between economic, political and civil society actors;

9. development and dissemination of regular, systematic research on the distribution of income and wealth within the E.U and within the member states as well as research on effective access to fundamental rights.

To achieve these aims, EAPN calls for a new system of regulation at local, national, European and world level, in order to restore the capacity of all societies to determine their future in a democratic, participatory and sustainable way, for the common good and the development of all.

EAPN is an independent coalition of non governmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union.

EAPN is supported by the European Commission

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EAPN General Assembly 1998

Final Declaration available to be added

EAPN General Assembly 1996

Declaration on Rights, Citizenship and Exclusion

Final Declaration available to be added

EAPN General Assembly 1994

Children hardest hit by increase in Poverty

Final Declaration available to be added

EAPN General Assembly 1993

Final Declaration – available to be added

Resolutions Adopted in 2011

Resolution 1: Strengthening the positioning as a Anti Poverty Network through solidarity.

EAPN Netherlands feels that EAPN should act more accurate on events within Europe, and sometimes even outside of Europe. As examples we would like to mention the fight for democracy of the people of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya etc.

EAPN should at least had a reaction, by a press release or by a statement in which EAPN shows solidarity with those fighting against poverty and exclusion and for democracy.

As we also feel that EAPN should have a press release, in accordance with EAPN Spain, in which EAPN calls for solidarity with the young Spanish people fighting unemployment and poverty and for a future.

The new social media as well as our own website(s) should also be used for this.

Resolution 2: EAPN position on social issues.

EAPN Netherlands urges EAPN to release statements on issues that hold millions of people in its grip. For this reason EAPN Netherlands proposes to the General Assembly, gathering in Lisbon from 16 to 18 June 2011 in Lisbon, Portugal, to start a new process of press releases on social issues as there are unemployment, the aging of the populations, migration, the increasing numbers of working poor, domestic violence, gender issues, child abuse and other social issues.

The new social media as well as our own website(s) should also be used for this.

Resolution 3: Showing our work and involvements.

EAPN Netherlands calls for more own, EAPN, press releases concerning conferences as the PEP and Round Table, next to what the European Commission is doing, and other events in which EAPN is participating. Making visible which activities EAPN is involved in.

In general EAPN Netherlands feels the need to create a broader EAPN profile that will offer more publicity about the network, its goal, its activities and its members.

The new social media as well as our own website(s) should also be used for this.

No Resolutions Adopted in 2010

Resolutions Adopted in 2009

Resolution 1: the social and financial crisis

The financial crisis has expanded to an economic crisis and has now furthered deepened the social crisis in Europe. Every day an increasing number of persons and families are more and more threatened by poverty and some have already fallen into poverty. All this worsens the situation of those that have been living in poverty for a long time now, some already for generations.

The Member States are trying to find solutions through economic recovery plans. This is being done primarily through stricter controls of the financial sector – which is obviously necessary – and through supports to the economic sectors that are the most affected by the crisis, without sufficient regard to the protection and financing of social protection systems.

The members of EAPN are worried about the way cures are applied without any deep or important evaluation of the causes of the crisis and where all the active parties – not only social partners but also civil society – can participate. Europe must seize the opportunity to move towards a sustainable model of economic development, which leaves behind the damaging preoccupation with excessive levels of growth.

The General Assembly of EAPN appeals to the new European Commission, the new European Parliament, **and the member states** to look into the causes of the crisis we are going through, engaging with all actors concerned, so as to reshape European strategy for the period from 2010-2020.

Resolution 2: Migrants – Undocumented

The members of EAPN are worried about the politics in several member states concerning the migrants and especially the undocumented migrants. The increasing flow of persons that flee from the threat of poverty in their own country must not be considered as criminals but as victims of world economy politics that has enabled the western world to become rich and that has established an economic system of morbid competition in which the countries from which these persons come are not capable of participating.

The members of EAPN during the General Assembly appeal to:

- The member states to adopt more human politics more in line with the historical responsibility of having built the present prosperity in their country due to the profits obtained from certain of these countries.
- The new European Commission to take initiative towards more coordinated politics which will lead to a more human, more general welcome, more shared out between the different member states.
- The member states to agree to the proposal of the European Commission in this respect and in a constructive climate which corresponds to the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that they signed.

Resolution 3: the liberalization of the energy market

For years now the members of EAPN have followed closely the effects of the liberalization of the energy market (gas and electricity). Throughout these years they have noticed numerous

problems, several of which were caused by the fact that the governments of the member states do not use the means that are at their disposal to guarantee this fundamental right which is access to energy, a necessary right in order to live decently in a good quality home.

The members of EAPN, assembled at the General Assembly, appeal to the governments of the Member States to take action in line with the recent report of the European Parliament on this topic. Particularly to use the obligations linked to the public services to guarantee access for the persons and families to an adequate package which will allow them to live in dignity.

Resolution 4: Protecting social welfare: When Less = Not Enough

This General Assembly calls on all the Governments of the European Union not to reduce current minimum income levels for social welfare recipients. In the context of measures to tackle the economic crisis in Europe social welfare entitlements and access to basic social services should not be 'on the table' when it comes to proposed expenditure cuts. A guaranteed minimum income is not solely a cost, but an investment that promotes economy development and social cohesion.

EAPN wishes to express its considerable concern that the current economic environment will result in more people living below the poverty line and increased hardship for those already living in poverty. As such, this General Assembly asks that all governments to respect the right to a dignified life and an adequate minimum income. Those who are most marginalised in society did not share the wealth during the economic good times, and cannot be asked to share the pain of the recession.

This General Assembly emphasizes the importance of the EAPN (Europe) campaign to defend adequate minimum income and proposes that EU member states respond constructively to this campaign, in the context of the national and European policy agendas.

Resolution 5: Community Health Services

The provision of health services in disadvantaged areas are more effective when communities are involved in their design and delivery. Community-led health initiatives can play a key role in ensuring that the needs of individuals are met. If people living within a community can access a range of community based services within their own locality, this can result in early diagnosis and interventions and ultimately means that less pressure is placed on tertiary health services, resulting in better health outcomes and more efficient health spending.

This General Assembly calls on the European Anti Poverty Network (Europe) to call for the advancement and maintenance of community health initiatives by the European Union and its member states, and to protect these services in the context of the economic crisis.

Resolutions Adopted in 2008

Emergency Resolution: Active Inclusion

The delegates to the 19th EAPN General Assembly are dismayed that less than 3 months after the Commission made the commitment in the revised social agenda (presented on 2 July), to produce **a balanced set of Recommendations on Active Inclusion** covering the pillars of; adequacy of incomes, access to services and access to employment, that they now appear to be ready to abandon this commitment. This is the more surprising given that this commitment received the support of the Member States (via the Social Protection Committee) and of the European Parliament.

The EAPN members are very concerned because if the Commission reneges on this commitment and just produces another Communication, it will have the impact to further undermine the EU Inclusion strategy (the Social OMC), as this was one of the most important commitments made in the revised social agenda to strengthen this strategy.

The delegates to the General Assembly asked that their grave concern about this development be communicated immediately to the college of European Commissioners. They further requested that their concern should be communicated to the Prime Ministers and Social Affairs Ministers of the Member States and to the President of the European Parliament and the members of the Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs committee with the request that they call on the Commission to fulfill their original commitment.

If the final position of the Commission is known before the Round Table on Active Inclusion (to be held under the French Presidency of the EU, in Marseilles on 15-16 October) and if the final position is not in line with the original commitment, then EAPN should work with others attending the Round Table to make our outrage clear and visible to the representatives of the European Commission.

Resolution 1: Minimum Social Standards

In 2007 EAPN Ireland published the report of a transnational project 'Towards an EU initiative on social standards'. The report outlined how the European Union could develop a comprehensive legal framework and promote harmonisation on minimum income and social services.

Social standards vary dramatically across the European Union, and the experience of EU action to date in the context of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) tells us that soft policy action is not enough to ensure adequate progress. It is unacceptable that tens of millions of Europeans still experience poverty and social exclusion. Europe needs hard law mandating minimum social standards, to ensure that everyone in the EU enjoys at least the same basic conditions for an adequate standard of living. Such an initiative should not limit member states action but provide a lowest common denominator from which member states can develop more progressive initiatives.

In the context of the EAPN campaign on minimum income and the forthcoming 2010 Year, this General Assembly proposes that EAPN should advocate for the development of a legal instrument or instruments on minimum social standards in Europe. This campaign should include, calling on:

- Member States, through the OMC, to develop a definition of the income levels required for an adequate standard of living, which can account for rising costs such as energy and food prices.
- The European Commission to monitor closely the adequacy of income levels in the context of the OMC
- The European Parliament to pass a resolution calling for an initiative to secure the harmonisation of minimum social standards in Europe.
- The European Commission to establish the existing legal competences of the European Union to take action to ensure minimum social standards, and to propose actions in the areas of minimum income and access to essential social services.

Resolution 2: Participation of civil society in the preparation and implementation of the 2010 Year

The designation of 2010 as the European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion represents a key moment in the development of national and European anti-poverty strategies. It is an opportunity to ensure that the issues facing people experiencing poverty are placed front and centre of the policy agenda, and to promote awareness of the need for continued vigilance in the fight against social exclusion at the European, national, regional and local levels.

Progress cannot be achieved without the full and effective participation of people who experience poverty in the design, implementation and monitoring of anti-poverty strategies. If the 2010 Year is to contribute to the ongoing struggle to end poverty, its potential can only be realised through equal partnership between civil society, government and other stakeholders.

The 2008 EAPN General Assembly calls on:

- Member States to comprehensively include civil society organisations and people who experience poverty in the administrative structures of the Year as equal partners.
- Member States to go beyond the 50% match funding requirement of the European Commission, and ensure adequate resource levels, which can cover the full cost civil society initiatives at the local and national level (without any co-funding requirement).
- The European Commission to continuously monitor and evaluate the participation of civil society organizations in the administrative structures of the Year at the European and national level, and where gaps in participation are identified take immediate action to rectify this situation.

Resolution 3: Destitution of Asylum Seekers

This General Assembly notes that the denial of basic support to refused asylum seekers is both inhumane and ineffective. Furthermore, this General Assembly condemns the use of deliberate destitution as a method for forcing refused asylum seekers to leave the EU.

This General Assembly calls for:

- End the threat and use of destitution as a tool of Government policy against refused asylum seekers
- EAPN to support campaigns against the denial of any means of subsistence to refused asylum seekers in EU Member States.

- EAPN National Networks to lobby their Governments to provide financial support and accommodation to refused asylum seekers as provided during the asylum process and to grant permission to work until such time as they have left the European Union or have been granted leave to remain
- EAPN National Networks to Lobby their Governments to continue to provide full access to health care and education throughout the same period

Resolution 4: Credit Crunch

This General Assembly notes with concern the impact of the ‘credit crunch’ on people living on low incomes across the European Union. This has increased the threat of repossession for low income home owners, pushed people into even higher levels of debt and increased the threat of unemployment for millions across Europe.

This General Assembly calls for:

- EAPN to lobby the European Commission to carry out research into the impact of the credit crunch on people living on low incomes
- EAPN to lobby for the European Commission for improved regulation of banks and other financial institutions to prevent a repeat of the current economic instability caused by ‘irresponsible lending’
- EAPN National Networks to lobby National Government to improve mechanisms to protect people on low incomes from predatory lending, over-indebtedness and the threat of repossession.

Resolution 5: Energy Poverty

This General Assembly is appalled by the continued increase in energy prices across Europe over the last year. We note with grave concern the difficulty that many people living on low incomes in Europe will now face during the coming winter. Too many people are now faced with the impossible choice to ‘heat or eat’.

We welcome the recent initiative of the European Parliament to address the problem of Energy Poverty as part of the Energy Package and commend all MEPs that have signed the Energy Poverty Declaration.

This General Assembly calls for:

- EAPN to lobby the President of the European Union to support the measures included in the Energy Declaration.
- EAPN to build links with other European organizations in order to lobby energy companies directly to ensure that best practice is observed by companies in each MS they operate in.
- EAPN National Networks to build links with relevant NGOs and others to lobby directly Energy companies to take more effective action to address energy poverty.

Resolutions Adopted in 2007

Resolution 1: Migration

The EAPN General Assembly expresses its concern at the levels of poverty and social exclusion experienced by migrants within the EU and in particular third country (Non-EU) nationals.

EAPN calls on the EU and its Member States to develop their migration policy in a positive and comprehensive manner with respect for universal human rights and with the participation of groups representing migrants. Migration policy should respect the rights of all migrants including the most vulnerable such as those who have become undocumented or who are seeking refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention, relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

Migration policy should ensure that all migrants have access to adequate health, housing, education and employment services and to a level of income which allows them to live life with dignity and to participate fully in the society in which they live.

EAPN calls on member states to develop legal mechanism for migrants who become undocumented to allow them the time and opportunity to redress and rectify their situation.

EAPN calls on policy-makers at all levels to find ways of ensuring that migrants, and particularly those in vulnerable situations such as undocumented migrants, are well represented in the making of policies that affect them. This should be structured in a way so as to avoid the negative repercussions of policies on migrant workers that policy-makers are often not aware of.

EAPN calls on member states to ensure that the educational qualifications of migrants are fully recognised. Studies which they have already completed in their home country must be taken into consideration in relation to taking up employment. The non - recognition of these qualifications is discrimination and gives rise to migrants having to take work at a lower rate of pay, this gives rise to poverty which is forced upon them as they are capable of taking up better jobs. Such circumstances hinders integration into society for many migrants. European Funds should be devoted as a priority to the social protection of migrants, including undocumented migrants, and asylum seekers, rather than to the externalization of migration policies.

Resolution 2: Social and Health Care

EAPN believes that access to affordable, accessible and quality social (childcare, eldercare and care for other dependent adults) and health care is essential for enabling people to participate fully in society, to achieve social inclusion and to have greater choices in escaping poverty.

The EAPN General Assembly therefore calls on EU Member States with the support of the EU to establish and secure the implementation of a right to affordable and appropriate social and health care supports which meets the needs of all those residents irrespective of income or employment status.

Resolution 3, EAPN Ireland: Housing

EAPN believes that access to affordable, accessible and quality housing and other forms of appropriate accommodation is essential for people to live in dignity.

The EAPN General Assembly therefore calls on EU Member States with the support of the EU to establish and secure the implementation of a right to affordable, appropriate and quality housing and accommodation which meets the needs of all residents.

Resolution 4, EAPN Ireland: Child and Youth Labour

EAPN General Assembly proposes that the European Union strengthens its approach to child and youth labour. Although legislation is in force, child and youth labour is an issue of concern due to a lack of implementation and control.

1. EAPN calls for a thorough and ongoing investigation of this issue which has to be demanded as matter of European policy making.
2. EAPN calls for systematically mobilising resources to ensure appropriate measures to implement and control the existing regulations.
3. EAPN calls for strengthening the legal provisions where relevant

Resolution 5, EAPN Ireland: Traveller Accommodation and the use of the Trespass legislation

The Irish Government has introduced new powers that allow the police to move on or arrest people who do not have permission to be on public land. This law has become known as the trespass legislation and has been used primarily against Travellers.

This legislation has been used on families awaiting permanent accommodation and criminalises those who do not move.

EAPN calls on its members to write to the Irish government expressing concern about the use of such legislation and request that it is not used until the accommodation programme for Travellers is fully delivered including the delivery of transient sites.

Resolution not related to the Work Programme

General Assembly EAPN 2006

Resolution of the Belgian Network

EAPN is concerned at the trend to wholesale deregulation of all kinds of goods and services with scant regard for the social consequences.

In Member States where the electricity and gas markets have been “liberalised”, people experiencing poverty and those on low incomes are prey to serious difficulties. The European agenda includes yet more goods and services to be handed over lock, stock and barrel to the laws of the free market. Water will undoubtedly be among them.

EAPN believes that “basic” goods and services that are essential to survival - like water, electricity, energy, housing, health care, etc. - cannot be left to market forces to buy and sell. EAPN calls on the European institutions and national governments to take practical steps to ensure proper access to the goods, resources and basic services that are essential to live a decent life, especially for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Resolutions not linked to the Work Programme

General Assembly EAPN 2004

EAPN Ireland

This General Assembly calls on the Executive Committee to draw up a plan to enhance this capacity of EAPN, including the National Networks, European Organisations and Secretariat, to campaign and lobby to forward the priorities identified by members and the vision of a Europe without poverty.

At National Network level, this should involve a greater commitment to briefing and lobbying national members of European Institutions, where possible, especially:

- The Council of Ministers and its working groups
- The European Parliament and its Committees
- The European Economic and Social Committee
- The Committee of the Regions
- National Parliaments in scrutiny of European decisions

National Networks should also promote public awareness of EAPN positions and raising public debate on poverty and EAPN identified issues.

At European level this should involve:

1. Increased training and follow-up on skills such as:
 - Lobbying at EU level

- Media and public relations
 - Campaigning
2. A more systematic approach to monitoring the decision-making process at EU level, with 'lobbying briefs' on key lobbying 'moments'
 3. Campaigning and lobbying plans drawn up and implemented by all Task Forces, under the co-ordination of the ExCo and as part of the overall task force planning process
 4. Identification of key themes for campaigns

EAPN Belgium as amended by the German network

1. Concerning the proposed new refugee camps

The plan to set up refugee camps outside the borders of the EU can be seen to involve the denial of fundamental rights. In fact, it entails a blatant curtailment of the legal protection enjoyed by migrants, particularly under the Geneva Convention.

Whatever name may be given to such a scheme, the very principle on which it is based – unjustified detention – is a major threat to civil liberties.

As part of their efforts to uphold and promote full respect for all human rights, the members of EAPN denounce and reject such plans, which cannot be considered a mere "adjustment of the co-operation programmes that have already been drawn up" with the third countries concerned.

2. Concerning services of general interest

Since the signing of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in April 1994, public services, which play an instrumental role in promoting social cohesion, have become the target of systematic, devastating attacks. With almost complete lack of transparency, European policymakers have decided to speed up deregulation aiming at "a high level of liberalisation". In spite of some temporary exceptions, no sector will be spared in the longer term.

In such a context, can we uphold a European social model which is moving away from its founding principles and is being deprived of the instruments necessary to strengthen solidarity and unity among the peoples of Europe? Can we convince disadvantaged people (and European citizens at large) that a Europe bent on undermining hard-won social gains is working in their interests?

The members of EAPN refuse to endorse a logic which aims to privatise and commercialise even the most essential collective goods and services necessary to satisfy basic needs.

We therefore call on national and European policymakers to follow a more reasonable course, and remind them of the primacy of human beings over money, as well as reminding them of their mandate, which requires them to work for the welfare of all.

Resolutions not linked to the Work Programme

General Assembly EAPN 2000

Resolution no 1 tabled by the UK network

Whereas over US\$1.5 trillion is exchanged daily in currency markets around the world and 95% of those exchanges are speculative transactions, conducted for short term profit at the expense of long term investment in economic and social development,

Whereas international currency speculation prevents governments within the European Union from establishing just and equitable national economic policies,

Whereas currency speculation serves no useful economic purpose, causes instability in financial markets, creates an environment where genuine trade and investment suffers, and undermines the economies of most countries,

Whereas excessive speculative transactions can be curbed by the application of a modest tax of between 0.1% and 0.25% on each transaction as proposed by Nobel Peace Prize winning economist James Tobin.

Whereas the revenues from a Tobin Tax could be worth US\$150 billion per annum which revenue could be used to help eliminate extreme poverty.

EAPN asks the European Parliament to work globally with other governments towards the imposition of a small tax on currency speculation which shall be called the Tobin Tax. Such a tax would calm markets, protect vulnerable economies and generate revenue for international development.

Resolution no 2 tabled by the UK network

On Executive Committee membership: That each national network should elect a named substitute for their Executive Committee member to attend Executive Committee meetings if and when necessary.

Resolution no 3 tabled by the Dutch network

Several self-organisations of the poor/unemployed/women/marginalized put a lot of effort in the work done by EAPN and the national EAPN networks. Time and again they invest their personal money in EAPN activities, as there are the GA, Round tables, etc. The costs are reimbursed by EAPN, but only after an extremely long time (at the moment over a year). EAPN Netherlands would appreciate if this length of time could be shortened.

Therefore we propose to the General Assembly in Barcelona in November 2000, the following:

1. Travel costs and other costs generated to attend an EAPN activity will be reimbursed within 3 months;
2. Should EAPN have a problem in reimbursing, e.g. not having received EU subvention in time, a message will be sent to all, explaining the cause of the problem and giving a time scale within which the reimbursement will take place. In this case the reimbursement will not take longer than an extra 6 weeks.

3. EAPN will ask the NGOs who are in a financial better position to accept that they will be paid later and to accept that the smaller NGOs will be paid first;
4. No one will have to wait more than 6 months before reimbursement;
5. At the General Assembly the treasurer will include in the financial report how this resolution has been executed within the previous year.

Resolution no 4 tabled by the Greek network

Participation and developing policies

Background:

For the past 10 years NGOs and particularly EAPN have been discussing the participation element and the notion of partnership within social policies in the EU and the third sector. Over this period of time very few things in this direction have taken place in relation to the participation element at national and European levels. It is time to define exactly how we understand participation and partnerships. The Commission understands the participation of NGOs differently from the national structures and the NGOs define this participation on a completely different basis. What is at stake on our side is to define in a clear way how we, as NGOs, understand, define and wish to implement this participation element at national and European level.

National practices, up to present day, exclude the NGO participation in designing social policies and strategies. At European level participation is a key issue in all discussions and conferences where the context behind the word is very limited.

Participation cannot have a real meaning if the frame and the preconditions that allow such a relationship to grow and to mature do not exist. Participation and partnership should not be limited to co-financing issues. Neither is a pre-fixed dialogue on set issues and on set deadlines through an e-mail discussion. Participation and partnership are beyond that. That means the right to represent views and values of the community, and a democratic procedure where rules and roles are set together. Adequate time is needed in order to select these views and proposals. Participation and partnership are a right and an obligation of civil society.

Proposal:

There is a need to organise more lobbying work of EAPN at European level, targeting European institutions, in order to secure the participation of NGOs in developing national and European policies. It will not be possible for national representatives of the review group on social inclusion to be in contact and to follow the National Action Plans. The national working groups on social inclusion could not have access to information, to planned national policies and to the decision-making process, without an institutional framework that foresees this participation.

Therefore all necessary alliances and capacities should be developed within EAPN in order to promote the institutional framework that enables, secures, and obtain the participation of NGOs at European and national level on developing policies.

Resolution not linked to the Work Programme General Assembly EAPN 1999

Resolution:

That a voluntary membership fee be introduced for the budgetary period 2000 to 2001. The level of fee payable should be in proportion to the number of delegates the national network or European Organisation is entitled to send to the General Assembly. The initial fee is suggested at the rate of 150 Euros per delegate. A more formal arrangement for membership fees should be made by way of a proposed amendment to the Statutes at the General Assembly in the year 2000.

Resolutions adopted at the 1995 GA available to be added

Resolutions adopted at the 1993 GA available to be added