*20 June 2014*

**EU INCLUSION STRATEGIES GROUP**

*Prague, Friday, 16 May 2014*

**Attendance:** Katherine Duffy (EAPN UK), Loucas Antoniou (EAPN CY), Thorbera Fjölnisdóttir (EAPN IC), Marjatta Kaurala (EAPN FI), Katarina Klamková (EAPN CZ), Kristijan Nushkov (MK EAPN), Sophie Schwab (EAPN DE), Douhomir Minev (EAPN BG), Elke Vandermeerschen (EAPN BE), Dag Westerheim (EAPN NO), Robert Urbé (EAPN LU), Jeanne Dietrich (EAPN FR), Vito Telesca (EAPN IT), Kärt Mere & Kiira Nauts (EAPN EE), Iris Alexe (EAPN RO), Vincent Magri (EAPN MT), Henrik Nielsen (EAPN DK), Johanna Lászlo (EAPN HU), Catherine Mallet (Eurodiaconia), Maciej Kucharczyk (AGE Platform), Ryszard Szarfenberg (EAPN PL), Slobodan Cvejić (EAPN SR), Sonja Leemkuil (EAPN NL), Paul Ginnell (EAPN IE), Graciela Malgesini (EAPN ES), Milena Černá, Soňa Brišová, Karel Schwarz (EAPN CZ), Barbara Helfferich, Vincent Caron, Sian Jones, Rebecca Lee, Amana Ferro (EAPN Secretariat), Anne Van Lancker (EMIN project coordinator).

**Apologies:** Hélder Ferreira (EAPN PT), Gigi Isacsson (EAPN SE), Réka Tunyogi (Eurochild), Freek Spinnewijn (FEANTSA).

**No answer:** Michaela Moser (EAPN AT), Nikos Ntasios (EAPN EL), Giedrė Kvieskienė (EAPN LI), Artur Benedyktowicz (Caritas Europa).

**Welcome from the Chair, Graciela Malgesini, EAPN Spain**

Agenda is approved.

Minutes are approved.

Matters arising: The CSR work and the report were done, as agreed, and sent to the Commission. The response to the AGS was done and sent to the Spring Council. We are doing preparation work on the Mid-Term Review, and we will discuss in detail more during this meeting. Members were supposed to work on NRPs at the national level, we prepared a Toolkit for that. We have been active on the election campaign, you can see progress on the blog. For Active Inclusion, the template letter was sent out, and the leaflet will be finalized in this meeting. The Roadmap on minimum income will be presented and discussed later today. On quality work: some networks translated the Explainer (PL) or the Summary (BE); the Task Force continues its work, questionnaires were dispatched and filled in; the letter to Commissioner Andor on in-work poverty will come soon. On Structural Funds – all action points were done. On Youth inclusion – the draft paper will be discussed tomorrow. On homelessness, FEANTSA was unable to come to the meeting, and Freek Spinnewijn will be replacing Liz Gosme on this group. For the European PEP Meeting, the agenda was circulated and members were asked for good practices. For the stakeholder engagement handbook, members sent examples of good practices, and there will be a session on this later today.

**Robert / LU** – Better to divide the action points between what the Secretariat has to do and what members have to do, for easier follow-up.

**Welcome from Milena Černá, President of EAPN Czech Republic**

Allow me to give you a warm welcome in Prague.

Your meeting here is a good opportunity to review our own progress in social inclusion and combating poverty. We are very pleased that Director of EAPN Barbara Helfferich came to our circle.

Firstly, a couple of words about our national network. EAPN CR created a forum for sharing ideas, information and experience in this area and is led by willingness to participate in the work of the European Anti-Poverty Network. We appreciate very much its effort. The aim of our national network is general public involvement and public administration in the Czech Republic to the issue of social exclusion, removing social and political barriers to persons at risk of social exclusion and promoting their inclusion.

In accordance with the principles of the European Anti-Poverty Network I would like to reiterate the key points of our program such as the participation of people with experience of poverty in decision-making processes, mainstreaming social inclusion, dignity for all people regardless of age, race, religion and social status.

Last year – European Year of Citizenship – in our area was marked by the renewing work of the Commission for Social Inclusion of MOLSA, which processed the governmental concept. Members of EAPN CR were members of the Committee. The process involved all sectors and therefore it was not easy to come to a reasonable consensus. Also the governmental Agency for Social Inclusion shows a weak progress in its activities.

On the other hand, NGOs working with and for people at risk of social exclusion work well. For instance, they founded Platform for social housing based in Brno. EAPN CR co-operate with it. Together we hope to establish a powerful movement. In fact, there is strongly missing plan of prevention of homelessness, helping people in critical social situations and other issues. Families with children , mothers - single parents, people with disabilities and low-skilled in the Czech Republic belongs among the people most at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Women 50+ in the Czech Republic are becoming also socially vulnerable body. In spite of many projects financed from EU the situation is not much better. Not to forget: our member organization IQ Roma Service which is very active in Roma problems obtained title “The best NGO of 2013”.

In December 2013 a project of unification of minimum income schemes in all Member States was declared under the name Minimum Income European Network (EMIN). This is an ambitious project to which together with other national networks we have connected to.

Now, there is space for your conference. I wish you good results and all the best.

***Europe 2020, Country Specific Recommendations, National Reform Programmes – Our engagement and review***

**Plenary exchange - introduction**

**Sian / Secretariat** – We always focus on Europe 2020 in our first day of each meeting. You can find our Work Programme in your packs, linked to the Strategy Document we have in place till the next Strategic Plan (next year). This means engaging with Europe 2020, including through the NRPs, trying to influence the CSRs, as well as the whole process of the European Semester. Whether we like it or not, this is the overarching strategy we have right now at the EU level, and we are trying to use it to achieve better and more comprehensive anti-poverty strategies, as well as better involvement of people experiencing poverty and their civil society organizations. We are not doing this for the sake of process, but we want better policies, and better participation. The Work Programme highlights our key priorities – social inclusion and poverty, employment, education and training, Structural Funds, participation. The Work Programme can be found on the Members’ Room and is an interactive document, we update it with links to all our documents and activities as we go – so you can easily check the updates. Last meeting we worked on CSRs, we will see how much impact we had when they come out from the Commission on 2 June. We produced a Toolkit on engaging with the European Semester. We also made progress on the Youth Inclusion paper, and produced a first draft which will be discussed this meeting. In the framework of our project, the Semester Alliance, we produced a synthesis report of the CSRs (together with the work of other organisations) and had a launch event, being a hearing in the European Economic and Social Committee, with participation from the European Commission and the European Parliament. Today we will focus on the NRPs, which we hope you had the time to consult prior to the meeting. Graciela will now present the Questionnaire, as she is the one who designed it, and who will write the initial report. The Secretariat will then complement with the details and qualitative analysis, which hopefully we will gather through the exchange today. EAPN’s NRP report is an extremely useful document, it is our reference document, and everybody uses it and quotes it.

**Katherine / UK** – We don’t have any kind of process at the UK level, so it is important for me to receive more feedback about how the document is used at the European level, and how much the report is taken up.

**Graciela / ES** – Figures matter. If you give numbers, people pay attention. When we presented our NRP report in Spain, other speakers at the event were taking constant notes of our findings. The Questionnaire is pretty much the same as last year. It has not yet been launched, because we are still discussing at this meeting whether we want to make changes. Please remember that each country receives one link, which means that you have to prepare your input in advance, so that once you start filling it in, you do it all in one go. The additional Word document allows you to expand and give examples and provide as much additional details as you want. Only Member States in the European Union are invited to fill in the on-line questionnaire, so that the quantitative analysis is relevant to Europe 2020. EAPN Iceland, Norway, Serbia and Macedonia are invited to fill in the Word document, as their input is extremely useful as benchmarking. The same for European Organisations – please fill in the Word document, we appreciate your input.

**Katherine / UK** – It would be very useful to have a Comments box in the quantitative part, though. A question like “Are Structural Funds used for Social Inclusion?” gets a yes answer, because the Government says they do, but I disagree with how the Funds are used and whether it is indeed efficient for inclusion, so we need a space to clarify these things.

**Robert / LU** – The Stability and Convergence Programmes are very important for all countries. Sometimes, good initiatives are presented in the NRP, but there is no budget for them and they won’t be put in practice, that’s why we need to check with the Stability and Convergence Programme.

**Action Points**

***- Deadline to be reconsidered, as some people said it is impossible to do by May 31st;***

***- Graciela to add a box for “Comments”, and a question on the Stability & Convergence Programme (available on the same link as the NRPs, on the Commission’s website).***

**Exchange on participation and engagement**

**Katherine / UK** – There is a high level of devolution on different policy areas in the 4 nations of the UK. We had a consultation process in Scotland and Wales. In Wales, EAPN does not have a presence anymore. In Scotland there is, and our members sent their contribution. I asked to receive a copy of it, but I did not get it yet.

**Robert / LU** – It is written in the NRP that the Government has invited representatives of social partners and NGOs for a consultation in March. This is correct, we were also invited, and we were asked to present our study on long-term homelessness. We had asked the Government to fund the report, but they refused, although now they are relying on the findings. The meeting was not a consultation, it was just a series of presentations. The NRP hasn’t changed much, if at all, since last year. So we don’t understand what are the results, the consequences, of this “consultation”.

**Paul / IE** – We were a Troika country, so we didn’t have to submit an NRP. This is the first year we are doing so, and the Government has gone through a process of inviting submissions from the social partners, and had a consultation meeting with a broad range of NGOs and trade unions. About 50 people attended. No draft was made available, just a presentation of an outline. They agreed to take written submissions, but when the NRP came out, it didn’t reflect the key issues that were raised at the meeting. However, the NRP does mention the meeting, and later on we did receive a draft, inviting us to make comments. This is just going through the motions, without any real impact.

**Henrik / DK** – A group of stakeholders were invited to a presentation of a draft NRP in February. The document was not yet public, but we were allowed to distribute it to our EAPN DK members and make comments by March 15th. We haven’t seen the final NRP yet, so we don’t know what, if anything, will be reflected in it. However, social benefits keep going down. We suggested that the Government produces a more long-term vision, we will see what happens.

**Vincent / MT** – The NRP says it is drafted by the Government, but finalized after including feedback from civil society at large, yet this is not true. We received a draft on a Friday, and we were supposed to give feedback by the Monday. There is some dialogue, for instance there was a Green Paper on Child Poverty, and everybody was allowed to input, even private citizens. However, the Government does not take civil society seriously, as partners. Civil servants write documents behind closed doors.

**Graciela / ES** – Internal devaluation is happening in Spain, which means the average income is going down – as the poverty line is based on this, it looks like poverty is decreasing, but it is an optical illusion, an artificial effect. Also, more than a million people emigrated, which might also alter the statistics. We don’t go to consultations as EAPN, but as the Platform for the Third Sector, representing over 7 million people. In this process, we sent a recommendations paper to the Government, based on the CSRs. We had two meetings about this paper, and we were also allowed to make input on the NRP. I attended one of these meetings. We have mixed feelings about the outcome. The NRP includes the complete list of things we asked for, but they are not mainstreamed and reflected in the actual measures. The good thing is that we have been working on a National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, worth 43 billion euro which has been included in the NRP. So we are happy our claims are there, but the budget and measures don’t take account of them.

**Ryszard / PL** – Three years ago, the Government set up an inter-ministerial body, to discuss issues about implementing Europe 2020. This body includes NGO participation, also EAPN Poland, alongside trade union and employers’ federation, business chambers, universities etc. In the last year, this was very participatory, as the coordinating Ministry accepted that we focus on stakeholder engagement – we proposed topics for discussion, and three sets of specific recommendations, agreed by a very broad partnership. We also focused on consultation – proposals were discussed with us, and then we were sent a draft NRP, and each of us sent our input on this draft. So the process was satisfactory, but the NRP is totally disconnected from national policy. This inter-ministerial body is not focused on policy-making, but rather on EU reporting. The measures proposed were cherry picked from what the Government intended to do already.

**Jeanne / FR** – We have a National Council to fight Poverty, including trade unions, NGOs, MPs, academics etc, and this body was given the draft of the NRP, but we only had three days to react. We scheduled a meeting with the Government, but it was rescheduled for end of May, so it is useless now. Our contribution as EAPN was very well integrated in the overall opinion of the National Council, which will be annexed to the NRP. This is good. However, the little time we had to comment on the draft, and the postponing of the meeting are very bad signs. We had a 5-year plan to fight poverty, including a commitment to raise minimum income by 2% every year. However, reductions in public spending meant that this was abandoned, but NGOs mobilized and obtained the maintenance of this raise. The NRP consultation coincided with the time when we didn’t yet know what would happen with the minimum income, so maybe this is why the meeting was postponed to the end of May.

**Katarina / CZ** – This year, there was no consultation, it was purely a Government document. It is also true that NGOs are not that interested in the NRP, they focus on specific strategies (on homelessness, children etc). There is some consultation, but “lobby” consultation – such as a law on social workers, backed by University lobbies, but social workers themselves are against it. The top officers in the Government only consult whoever they want.

**Loucas / CY** – We were involved as EAPN CY, but different organizations in the network tried to contribute. I wanted to suggest that, instead of collecting experiences of different networks, maybe we can proactively come up with ways in which we can be a part of the process.

**Sonja / NL** – Social partners had a chance to discuss the draft NRP, but EAPN was not invited to this meeting. We were invited to contribute by email to the NSR, but this went to Alida Smeekes, who is in very poor health, and we did not know about it. We even got an email from the Government, saying that they had not received our input.

**Sophie / DE** – We also had only three days to comment on a draft. We made some efforts to get engaged, but the indicators on poverty are fake, and all that matters is the unemployed. There are some good provisions for mothers and people with disabilities, and we will introduce the minimum wage, which is not a bad thing.

**Kiira / EE** – The process is positive now, for the first time in many years, Social Democrats are also in the Government, so we expect greater inclusion of NGOs. The main focus of the Government is reducing the poverty of children and families. On paper, it looks very good. We’ll see what happens.

**Elke / BE** – Everybody here already knows we have a Belgian Europe 2020 Platform, so there was a lot of consultation among us, but there was no linking up to the NRP. We tried to meet with those responsible for writing the NRP, and sent out input to all Ministries and the administrations, but mostly, we didn’t receive any answer. We asked to see a draft, but we were told bluntly “The Commission is the first to read the NRP, not you”.

**Johanna / HU** – We haven’t changed Government, so we don’t expect much. Our NRP was also done by civil servants, and there is no indication of a partnership being put in place. We have a governmental plan, since 2011, focused on employment and solving all social issues through workfare. The NRP is pretty much based on that.

*Who had at least some kind of engagement (show of hands):* Scotland, Germany, Belgium, France, Bulgaria, France, Estonia, Denmark, Poland, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands.

***Group sessions assessing own NRPs – see separate notes***

**Chair, Paul Ginnell, EAPN Ireland**

**Feedback from the groups with key messages**

**Group 1:** ES, IE, SR, PL, EE, HU, DK, RO, EE, SK, AGE, Eurodiaconia, Sian Jones

Maciej:

* Poverty target – concern about how far it’s reflected in the NRP / and misuse of indicators;
* Main findings on social / versus economic - with macroeconomic undermining social;
* Data availability – time lag for social data means we can’t use the evidence;
* Matter of minimum wage/minimum income but no clear recommendation;
* International Trade Agreements with US: TTIP / concern about impact on the social model – through competitiveness which is impacting on minimum wage/minimum income and social standards. Proposal to discuss it at the next meeting;
* Need to raise awareness about the links between poverty and migration& people outside of the main groups;
* Access to utilities – recognition of increasing threat to affordable, accessible services as a fundamental right – all services are affected by conditionality, means tested and taxation. Issue of environmental considerations increasing and need to see how we can build a common front on this.

**Group 2:** MT, FR, NO, IT, BE, NL, EE, VC, Vincent Caron

Elke:

* Some countries are expecting positive evolutions – so political will is crucial;
* Negative measures are cuts in benefits;
* Economic framework – very little space. There was a link to the Stability and Convergence programme so we should take this into account – particularly issue of inequality;
* CSRs – direct ones on poverty are very few, the main goal is balancing the books – happy that CSRs are not being followed;
* General discussion – questioning how we approach the NRP, and focus on the approach before the NRP – working more pro-actively;
* Discussion around our strategy – and other actions;
* Issue about the indicators? Do we use them, do we share them? Other proposals?

**Group 3:** BG, IS, UK, CY, DE, CZ, FI, MK, Amana Ferro

* Indicators in some countries should change;
* More inclusive education/Roma;
* Good examples, but no idea of where the money comes from;
* Personal health guidance could help;
* Investment in new, high quality jobs with focus on youth;
* Just tax systems, change the fiscal compact to more stability and growth;
* Meet the child poverty target;
* Clarify the real cause of the crisis and address them.

**Discussion**

* Paul - how do we engage with the (in)equality debate?
* Katherine: most haven’t mentioned real wages being lower than productivity. Only Germany being asked to raise wages as an alternative to changing policies in other countries. Other countries compete by being poorer and cheaper. We need to work with trade unions to raise minimum wages. Issue of the Europe we want.
* Growth agenda – how can we influence it – need to challenge the dominant mantra that a rising tide will lift all boats – we know this won’t work. How can we engage?
* Graciela – the statistical effect of lowering wages on relative impact on poverty.

***Moving forward to achieve an adequate Minimum Income***

See PowerPoint on EAPN role, EMIN project and road map for EU action.

**3 key elements of the Road Map:**

1. **Awareness-raising and public debate – based on rights, and confronting the cost of non-investment.**

* **Campaign for an EU Directive giving meaning to Charter and social clause.**
* **What content? And what factors to take into account? Getting agreement on common methodology on reference budgets is crucial.**

1. **Integrate follow up on adequate MIS in key EU processes: AGS – Annual Progress Report, NRP identify main instruments to progress on poverty target and through Europe 2020 and Structural Funds.**

**Barbara’s input on informal EPSCO council at the end of April**

Informal Council so state secretaries there to discuss what interests the presidency. Troika countries sent ministers. SP was invited and President Heather Roy (Eurodiaconia), Barbara and Maciej (AGE) spoke so 3 interventions. Chair of the SPC which monitors policies was there. Significant that the presidency was interested and that the Commissioner present. He spoke of SI measures and convergence package and referenced EAPN & EMIN. Adequate MI schemes mentioned as being valued as economic stabilisers and using SIP to establish such new schemes to stabilize Welfare State. He said that Greece needs support to cushion fiscal measures of austerity. Only one who said the word adequate. Belgium only country who backed the call for a framework directive! She will send his speech around. She spoke with Italian minister afterwards about the PEP meeting and minimum income issues. Good as Italy has no minimum income scheme. Spoke to Michel Servoz (DG Employment Director General) who said that any MIS without conditionalities is a waste of money! He argued against the legal base, so she flagged up our working paper from 2010 and article 153 of the treaty. Good to know what we work against. Greek Minister happy to work together. Link to social investment and role of the social investment package – gives policy guidance to Member States – efficient and effective spending. We can use references from the Commissioner. Heather (SP) called for the directive pointing out the economic value of it. Need for adequacy and directive useful for this.

**Discussion**

**Maciej / SP vice president** - Not much to add. Commissioner spoke truthfully and his director was there so will continue – need to go on with new commission. It’s there in the debate now, even if not everyone likes it, so we need to make most of this high profile. 6 November EMIN conference will be important.

**Katherine / UK** - She hears criticism that reports are not the end point. Need to think about campaigning and media work and resources for this. Or choose, and make one place have the limelight.

**Barbara / Secretariat** - Commissioner linked this to SI and SIP in particular as giving guidance to MSs on inclusive labour markets and efficient spending – references to use too. Active inclusion strategy to be used (quote him).

**Robert / LU** - Common understanding slide: bit about people unable to work… also about people who do have work but not enough money (important to add). Antwerp project on reference budgets mentioned sounds interesting.

**Anne Van Lancker** - common understanding from the independent experts report, but there are top up schemes in France for instance. Antwerp project to define the processes to enable a good reference budget to be made – so many variables (paying for schools etc) Chance to show what financial amounts really mean – what does 60% mean really? Is hard to use it as absolute reference of course as don’t start from the real family’s starting point. Should avoid that this completely replaces the median line.

**Graciela / ES** - Wallmart movement in the USA. Wallmart doesn’t pay enough and the rest of us pay for food stamps for them to have enough. Controversial issue – employers must pay. In Spain, the budget needs to be 11x bigger. Worried about directive as a shared competence and MSs can block. UK then CZ would always be against it. Researchers on framework programme say that social assistance has become a long-term way of life as work is not being tackled. Minimum Income needs to include people who are partly working. Unions don’t agree as undermines minimum wages and bargaining – how to get them on board? References seen as benchmark as include poor and non-poor. Want to cap this as seems unbelievable. Breaks link between what you need to live and how the rest of the society lives.

**Sian / Secretariat**- How do you finance it? Under 1% of budgets. EESC proposed eu-funded MIS not mentioned. We don’t make enough of the cost of not doing it (particularly health data).

**Robert / LU** - To answer Graciela – not about bargaining on wages. MI for example about working a bit and because of family situation it’s not enough. In LU, more than half who have MI are working normally.

**Ryszard / PL** - About children, families in Poland get energy supplement and housing allowance (cash benefits) so need to distinguish between these concepts (one cash system and many-cash system). Unconditionality – not clear link between rights and conditions. All have conditions- need to look at which are just and which aren’t and can therefore appeal against – arbitrary use of conditions. Would be a benefit for people in poverty if we go for unconditionality (Milton Keynes concept). National level more important – impossible to have strict law at EU level (in the USA it’s not the case – have both the state and federal levels).

**Paul / IE** - Rights and better outcomes for people are easy to argue. But there’s the argument that it’s a disincentive to work – how to counter this. Myth-busters? Really show the evidence that it’s not true.

**Vince / MT** - Does this concept mean that once leave education and anyone who opts not to work (carers for example) gets this MIS?

**Katherine / UK** - One reason housewives don’t like it as household means tested..

**Loucas / CY** - New scheme in July in Cyprus but all the in-place schemes to supplement it are not functioning, employers may use this scheme for their benefit.

**Anne Van Lancker** - Several of you pointed out that you can’t isolate the discussion on minimum income to social assistance only. Minimum wages are so poor in Luxemburg, that people prefer social assistance schemes. In Belgium, instead of using minimum income schemes as a top-up, social benefits come to help. You always have to see the whole picture. All Member States today, but some more than others, impose conditionality on minimum income schemes – age conditionality (young people excluded), for instance. The labour market related conditionality is a true issue, especially when it comes to pushing people into jobs. However, conditionality could mean that the public servant has the obligation to find quality, sustainable jobs. What is not acceptable is situations like in Hungary, where one of the conditions is keeping your house clean, and public authorities come to your house to check. More general and more comprehensive schemes are sometimes better than targeted (educational subsidies, housing support etc), as one may lose out by receiving piecemeal support. Social assistance are not a deterrent to getting people back into work – on the contrary, there is evidence that adequate benefits and supportive active labour market policies achieve much better results in labour market integration. This issue is clearly picked up by the Employment and Social Developments in Europe report of the European Commission. Denmark has a very generous minimum income system, but it combines it with appropriate, not exaggerated or over-conditioned support for people to get them back to the labour market. The issue is that there are simply not enough appropriate jobs for people. Social economy, among others, should be supported.

**Kärt / EE** – We held a meeting in Estonia with people on benefits, and the social assistance is so low, that it is impossible to live on this. So people recur to the black labour market, especially in construction.

**Iris / RO** – There is a link between migration and social benefits. In Romania, the lifting of the restrictions on the European labour market started a huge debate about migrants coming, to the UK for instance, just for what is called “benefit tourism”. So there is talk about restrictions on benefits, for instance for Romanians and Bulgarians, and much heavier conditionality. This should be integrated in the analysis.

**The Chair thanked Vincent Caron who is leaving the secretariat for his work and Vincent thanked the group for all he has learnt and called to continue investing in the work on Structural Funds.**

**Paul reminded all that the evening is a good opportunity to speak to Vincent personally. He also reminded the group of the buddies system for new members.**

*Saturday, 17 May 2014*

**Wrap up of the previous day and day ahead from the Chair, Sonja Leemkuil, EAPN Netherlands, and she referred to the draft minutes and action points.**

**Robert / LU** – suggested to establish a to-do list for EXCO members.

**Sonja / NL**, chair - reminded the participants that “we should not forget what people on the ground feel.”

**Sian / Secretariat** - asked for suggestions for topics for the hot spots during lunch time.

**Catherine / Eurodiaconia** - proposed to talk about Roma inclusion.

***Youth Inclusion paper***

**Amana’s presentation of the paper**

We started to talk about this paper in Mallorca, October 2013. Youth are facing a lot of difficulties now. We felt that there was a lot of focus on employment; a more integrated approach was missing. We then had a second plenary debate in Brussels, February 2014. We also distributed templates for you to fill in, but only half of you responded. The template asked you to take gender differences into account. Young women and men are affected differently. Comments in that direction will be much appreciated to capture it adequately.

The reason for this paper was to go beyond employment and more towards social inclusion. But the discussion and what came back was more employment related. One of the reasons for that, of course, is the availability of data. Nevertheless I would ask you please to beef up the poverty section.

Another issue and something that also came up in the employment subgroup was to make the economic case. But the lost generation is not just in terms of the labour market so it would be good if we had more info on why it needs to be seen as social investment.

Finally, the paper has some recommendation on the EU part. I will be meeting with EU officials and some NGOs over the next few weeks.

These are the dimensions I would like you to focus on. Immediate reactions are more than welcome.

**Discussion**

**Katherine / UK** - I think it is a good first start and I agree with the beefing up. What do you want us to do on poverty; and what is the political message and who will it be directed to?

**Jeanne / FR** - This is not a question, but additional info. We have problems with the youth guarantee. We have 150,000 school drop outs and only 300 people benefitted from the youth guarantee. We are quite afraid that overall budget cuts will weaken the youth guarantee even more. The reason why young people do not get the youth guarantee is a financial one. There is a body in France which is specialised in reaching out to drop outs. There are on-going negotiations between this body and the financial authorities to better support the youth guarantee.

**Vito / IT** - In Italy EAPN was invited to participate in the partnership of two youth programmes. My observation is that the work is important to create a new generation of young European people.

**Katherine / UK** - It depends. In the UK we do not have the youth guarantee and we will not have it in the near future. We are talking about some countries with 60 percent unemployment. The tone of the paper does not bring that forward; that difference between countries and between adults and young people. Labour markets provide jobs. If you do not get a job then your life will be worse. We need to make the tone stronger.

**Iris / RO** - We have the youth guarantee. Thousands of people benefit. There is a lot of focus on the economic participation of young people. Another question is if it is ok to give it a special focus on migration not only immigration and non EU immigration where the immigrants are mostly young people. Non EU migrants experience a lot of poverty and under the immigration regime they are not allowed to participate.

**Catherine / Eurodiaconia** - We have no position on youth, but we are in the process of collecting data on services and writing to the Italian presidency on youth inclusion. The Youth Forum will stress the need to supplement the EU funds. To make it a success we need to use national budgets. There is a lot expectation on the youth guarantee.

**Sonja / NL** - Employers cut money and young people under 27 get assistance and have to go to school or study or work as volunteer. If they refuse, social benefits will be cut. I will send you a paper on work and employment. You will find in it a lot of information about the participation and feelings of younger people. It also has an 8 page summary. It is very useful.

**Katherine / UK** - How is it in other countries… cuts and benefits? For people under 35 in the UK there is no housing allowance. Between that and cuts to programmes and benefits the situation of young people is becoming a rights issue. And it is beyond social rights; it becomes human rights.

**Paul / IE** - Partly connected to that is the situation in Ireland. Issues which have developed from the housing bubble into a housing shortage. A lot of youth find themselves homeless. It is wider than young people but affect young people more.

**Vito / IT** - The work is very important and a special focus should be put on the NEETs.

**Ryszard / PL** - My first suggestion is to change the name and frame it more positively. There was a thick report in 2013 on social inclusion promoting positive thinking towards strengthening resources and not dwelling on problems. That is important in our work, too. Secondly, I agree that housing is very important and now we have a post crisis situation with new ideas for housing and young people and lending agencies.

**Graciela / ES** - In Spain, the big problem is the budget – 2 billion looks like a lot, but in the face of 57 percent youth unemployed what is it that one can do for that money? Reform the labour market in order to force employers to hire young people? Dismiss people over thirty and hire under 30? This is a tricky thing we must be careful about. Do we want to put all money in the hands of employers? It is ok to promise companies money to hire young people, but it must be done with conditions and not so that they hire and then let them go after six months.

**Sian / Secretariat** - We are focusing on youth guarantee and employment. But what is the Youth poverty side of it; the reality of young people? Let’s look at the issues that came out of the Drivers project on health, equity, social determinants? The five partners (Poland, Sweden, UK, Portugal and Hungary) look specifically at use and identify how young people relate to social protection and compare it to adult groups.

**Marjatta / FI** - The biggest problems here in terms of social exclusion are found in many of the activation measures. The mostly help those young people who study or work anyway.

**Amana / Secretariat** - The question on what and who the paper addresses can be found in the scoping note. The paper wants to help build consensus in EAPN by bringing together our thinking on youth policies and what the realities are on the ground. The other aim is to contribute to the ongoing debate on what are the solutions/ recommendations for the EU and the national level. We agreed to focus on youth beyond employment and education; yet ten people spoken mainly about employment and education. This paper brings a comprehensive view with a focus on poverty – that means that youth guarantee is one focus, but not the only one.

On migrants, the paper raises the ethnic obstacles on inclusion. You mentioned quality of housing. It is in there. The rights approach is there as well.

As to the name, we call it youth inclusion in the office. We thought it was important to have the word poverty in there, too. This final open debate creates a lot of ideas. Please also bear in mind that this was to be 10 page report, now it is 35 pages. This also means that we cannot just bring up a new topic and explore it. I appreciate written feedback. More information is needed on the gender dimension and perhaps on the funding situation at the national level. If you feel that is missing, please send me information.

**Zuza / SK** - I am confused about conditions for comments. Is the paper limited in extent? If so, do we need to send you info which is not included in the present version?

**Katherine / UK** - Regarding minority ethnic groups. I know that the data is not good. But we have good data in the UK. In any case, and for the UK, no paper on youth would have credibility without addressing the situation of black youth.

**Action Points**

**-*Amana will send out the paper again in early July for final comments to finalize in September.***

**Sonja closed the session and the plenary split into subgroups.**

**S*ub Group sessions - see your group’s full minutes***

**Feedback from the sub groups**

**Employment Sub group, reported by Slobodan**

**Attending:** Loucas Antoniou (CY), Katherine Duffy (UK), Iris Alexe (RO), Kiira Nauts (EE), Vince Magri (MT), Kristijan Nushkov (MK), Sonja Leemkuil (NL), Ryszard Szarfenberg (PL), Iris Alexe (RO), Slobodan Cvejic (SR), Karel Schwarz (CZ) + Amana Ferro (Secretariat)

* A more loose discussion. First impression was that there is a plenty of different things happening in different countries. Some structural changes have been implemented. More details on specific measures have been outlined.
* The use of EU Funds has been repeatedly stressed as well as the influence of economic growth and the way other factors are influencing policies.
* Migration linked to employment has also been discussed. Young people are leaving because of lack of employment prospects. UK migrants have decreased from 300.000 to 160.000 – the market is shrinking.
* There is a tendency towards private companies being funded to do activation. States think that private companies have the answer, but UK and PL see the pattern that the most deprived are victimized and get least support.
* In Macedonia, the Government will cover the costs for 1 year to employ people – what will be the effects?
* Everyone is waiting for the economy to recover to start new investments; banks to give loans
* In Romania, a positive thing has been happening with the setting up of the Youth guarantee fund and the promotion of entrepreneurship through funds for start-ups.
* For Poland, a big reform of active labour market measures is being implemented with the differentiation of 3 categories, the 1st one having the most problems will be offered up to private companies.
* In the Czech Republic, the economy is in a state of transitory shock – there is an attempt to fight the problem of unemployment through the ESF.
* In Cyprus, 5 million EUR will be used to fund the youth employment scheme in view of maintaining jobs for 2 months more.
* In the UK, work placement is outsourced to the private sector – private companies are being paid to do it – but there is a creaming phenomenon leading to targeting the easiest to reach. In 2015, a law on shelters should be voted on.

**Structural Funds (SFs) Sub-group, reported by Sophie**

**Attending:** Sophie Schwab (DE), Graciela Malgesini (ES), Katarina Klamkova (CZ), Douhomir Minev (BG) + Vincent Caron (Secr)

* SFs Leaflet which aims at providing a practical support for NGOs to help them to design a good project on Social inclusion funded by Structural Funds: The Secretariat will revise the draft and then will send it to EU ISG members for comments.
* SFs Toolkit is more geared to be an instrument to monitor and evaluate the compliance of the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes with the provisions of the EU Structural Funds’ Regulations on social inclusion/ poverty reduction and partnership principle. Vincent to integrate some comments and get written comments and then it will be sent to EUISG.
* SFs Handbook is going to be a checklist illustrated by with examples – this might need to be organised by members’ themselves.
* Mid-Term Review: ask Commission to monitor the 20% ring-fencing and follow up on the flagship initiatives particularly EPAP/access to SFs to make it easier for social NGOs. A mechanism to centralize complaints from NGOs about how it’s used – from the Commission or central body.

**Active Inclusion Sub Group, reported by Jeanne Dietrich (FR).**

**Attending:** Robert Urbe (LU), Jeanne Dietrich (FR), Elke Vandermeerschen (BE), Kärt Mere (EE), Zuza Kusa (SK), Paul Ginnell (IE), Joanna Lazslo (HU), Vito Telesca (IT), Henrik Nielsen (DK), Marjatta Kaurala (FI), Thorbera Fjolnisdottir (IS), Karel Schwarz, (CZ), Catherine Mallet (Eurodiaconia), Maciej Kucharczyk (AGE), + Sian Jones (Secr).

* Review of EU policy developments: new work on reference budgets, Commission study on one-stop shops, mainstreaming through Europe 2020 with an internal guidance note on indicators is being developed by the Commission, social innovation conference.
* National level development: key new issue of migrants – with support from Malta/Greece and Cyprus that EAPN should demand for an EU strategy.
* Key new developments on housing: health and minimum income in many countries with declining access and coverage. Improvements in Icelandic housing benefits; Ireland has a growing crisis; Czech Republic has new social housing law; Luxembourg has rising need.
* Health: in Finland reform and in Ireland, not universal health insurance not care; in France – there’s a national health reform.
* Minimum Income: some countries getting worse – Slovakia seeing a rise in work conditionality with work fare, also in Hungary. In Belgium social benefits coverage may be shortened, work on reference budgets is helping to support the raising of all income support benefits – all parties have said yes. Czech Republic and Luxembourg may see positive reform but not clear about the levels.
* Growing issue of privatisation of activation services.
* The group agreed to focus at the next meeting on key themes, eg one-stop shops or privatisation of Active Inclusion services.
* The group’s proposal on 10 Arguments for Active Inclusion has been revised following input.

**Action Points**

***- The Active Inclusion leaflet (10 arguments) is adopted by the EUISG and will now be laid out and distributed for use by members.***

***Mid-Term Review: Europe 2020*** *–* ***preparing out response and conference***

**Sian’s introduction**

This session is aimed at deepening the discussion we had in February. The Mid-term review gives an opportunity to assess how Europe 2020 is working, to come up with concrete proposals for change. The new Commission will make proposals or not. It could be all kinds of changes (drop the targets – change them…).

*Process*:

* The Commission’s Communication was released on 5 March: it does recognize the failure on the poverty target. It must have a credible framework for policy implementation – the need for a long-term strategy and collection responsibility is mentioned as well as the necessary involvement of all kinds of stakeholders.
* Since 5 of May the Commission’s online consultation is out.
* The proposal is to develop a paper which is more proactive – what changes are needed – it would prepare our more formal response to the Commission’s Consultation.
* EAPN’s internal process: during this session, the content discussion shall be deepened. EU ISG members will send written comments. On that basis, a draft position will be produced and discussed by the EXCO/ GA. The final draft will be ready end of July and laid out early September. The EAPN Conference on 3rd October will give the opportunity to present the main findings of the EAPN position and engage in a debate with EU-Policy makers. This will then be followed by a more detailed advocacy work at EU and national level.

The scoping note provides a proposal of the structure with our main messages, demands and concrete proposals.

**Discussion**

**Sophie / DE** - There is a big problem with the indicators – it would be important to have more strict communication from the Commission to the Governments that they should be using adequate indicators.

**Sian / Secretariat** – Aim is to put forward our position – if we want to change Europe 2020, what changes should EAPN propose?

***I/ Coherent economic and social strategy***

**Robert / LU** - The reference to the Antwerp Seminar is useful. Following the work of the OSE (Frank Vandenbroucke), we should have a European social union – besides the monitory, economic union, we need a social union to have a common understanding about social issues, how they should be brought to the floor. The fiscal union didn’t change any national rules, but convergence still happened at EU level. If we think that the idea of a social union is a good one, our paper is an opportunity to advocate for it towards the outside world.

**Sian / Secretariat** - There are lots of things around the concept of a social pact and social union – it is important to see what the important issues are.

**Katherine / UK** - Are there our maximum, key demands? We should bear in mind that some countries are in Eurozone, some others are under troika arrangements… – we should have a wide union – we need to be clear – that’s our maximum demands – the stability pact controls social budgets – but the social union should include that.

**Sian / Secretariat** - Are we going for the maximum agenda or rather a short term, long term vision?

**Ryszard/ PL** - Many things are ongoing with the new ESF – changing everything is a bad option – maybe we should get really well-prepared for the next European Strategy. We should focus on some things which could be improved in the agenda of Europe 2020 like the proposal of making Governments more accountable to the Commission.

**Paul / IE** - This might be too ambitious to go for everything and more important to seek for improvements and flag up important questions.

**Robert / LU** - The report is about the fact that the fiscal & monetary Union cannot go without a social union. The issue of a binding EU legislation on minimum income should be brought forward.

**Sian / Secretariat** - The secretariat will disseminate the Report but we cannot base our paper on this - we can only refer to it.

***II/ Establishing credible poverty and other social targets***

**Katherine / UK** - The current poverty target is a mess. Member States use it the way they want – data are outdated. It does not change the life of people – we should say something stronger about the poverty reduction target. We could have a percentage measure, a stronger encouragement for Member States to use it as well as a better surveillance (including in employment).

**Maciej / Age** - As far as the poverty target is concerned, this should not be seen as a theoretical problem. In 2010, this was a clear political commitment. There is no equivalent to any sanction – we should defend the poverty target – this is the key element that NGOs could get – it gives the opportunity to put pressure on Member States by asking them to deliver on this for the 5 coming years. We can come up with some more ideas on how the composition of the target should be re-balanced.

**Elke / BE** - It is important to have a discussion on indicators and not to lose the target – target is linked with the indicators – if the indicators are changed, this will impact the target.

**Sian / Secretariat** - The question of the percentage is central – the poverty target is the only target without percentage.

**Graciela / ES** - Why not using the work developed by the Sub-group on indicators of the Commission. This should include a broad scope with child poverty and well-being indicators (i.e. broader dashboard).

***III/ Effective anti-poverty in all policies***

**Sian / Secretariat** - Highlighted that Sèrgio, as president had underlined that we needed to state the need for an EU integrated strategy more explicitly - the title should be re-worded as “EU integrated anti-poverty Strategy.” The group agreed that it’s the right approach.

**Katherine / UK** - Minimum income and social standards should be more explicitly mentioned.

**Paul / IE** - Access to quality services should be added.

**Robert / LU** - Minimum income should not be included under Active Inclusion – Active inclusion is wider than minimum income. Active inclusion entails more generally “adequate income support.” This is in line with the EAPN 10 arguments on active inclusion.

**Ryszard / PL** - Don’t agree with Robert – minimum income should go under Active inclusion – The EC recommendations in 1992 referred to adequate minimum income – the first pillar is income support. It’s the main hook. Stress each pillar individually then integrated approach.

**Graciela / ES** - Health is missing (access to health –preventive healthcare…).

**Katherine / UK** - We should restate what Active Inclusion is about. It’s the best-known concept in the UK.

**Zuzana / SK** - There is a good coverage of all important aspects in the different pillars – it would be good to have safe housing as an important base.

***IV/ Democratic and accountable governance***

**Graciela / ES** - We need some time to re-think scarce possibilities for NGOs to connect to EU institutions – we need instruments to connect with EU institutions – EC public consultations are a shame – Spanish candidates for EP elections said they might re-think the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI). Different methodologies are used for ECI. We have to work on transparency – we need to work with these organizations working on transparency – we cannot work on our own.

**Sian / Secretariat** - We will be working with the Social Platform.

**Vito / IT** - The knowledge of the situation on poverty and social exclusion is important otherwise strategies are useless. Strategies are necessary but they should be based on more evidence-based elements with more timely data on the ground.

**Katherine / UK** - On the governance, we’ve got the feeling of being excluded in the UK – it’s still a problem that it’s under the employment guideline. EPAP is just a European Initiative – no national level with national platforms against poverty. The structure is absent beyond a platform with EU players.

**Barbara / Secretariat** - If we submit all our demands we need overarching and specific arguments about why these things need to be done.

**Maciej / Age** - We should ask for genuine involvement – a process of consultation around the European Semester including the NRPs.

***V/ Using EU money for poverty***

**Graciela / ES** - We’ve already made some proposals in the Structural Funds subgroup.

**Vincent / Secretariat** – We can also use the proposals from the powerpoint presentation of the EMIN project.

**Presentation of Conference programme**

The EAPN annual policy Conference will take place in Brussels on the 3rd of October.

Sian / Secretariat - the only Members who will come are the EU ISG members – it will be part of our meeting – so there will be only 1 day and a half left for the rest of the EU ISG.

**Graciela / ES** - What do we want to get from this conference? What concrete outcomes?

**Sian / Secretariat** – It’s in the scoping note but it will aim at presenting our response, positioning ourselves and following up with key EU policy makers and prepare our advocacy – lobbying work.

**Katherine / UK** - Why not try to invite Thomas Piketty to dynamize and get a more lively debate?

**Barbara / Secretariat** - We should be looking at keynote speakers as well – it is important to have more punch.

**Catherine** **Mallet / Eurodiaconia** - It is important for networks to also respond themselves to the Commission Consultation but also to get media attention.

**Graciela / ES** - We should also get voices from the ground. A 5 min video with testimonies of PeP at the PeP meeting would be good. This video would be presented at the very beginning to allow that the voice of PeP from all Member States is heard.

**Sian / Secretariat** - This is a good idea but there is an issue of money and timing. This year, the PeP meeting will take place a week before the EU ISG but we could check the workability with Nellie Epinat (Secretariat).

**Action Points**

***- Secretariat to circulate the 10 tough nuts to crack document from Franck Vandenbroucke.***

***- Secretariat to get in touch with SPC Indicators sub-group about current proposals on the indicators and new indicators.***

***- Secretariat will work on the wording of minimum income.***

***- The deadline is extended for comments on the Mid-Term Review approach/content and members will have until the end of May 31 to send concrete written inputs, should discuss with their national networks, particularly the EXCO members.***

***- A draft will then be prepared for discussion with the EXCO/GA in June.***

***- A revised proposal on the conference agenda will be prepared and circulated.***

***- SJ to check with Nellie Epinat about having video.***

***EU Semester Alliance for a democratic, social and sustainable EU***

**Sian’s presentation**

* The Alliance was launched at the beginning of this year.
* The CSR proposals document was built on EU ISG members’ inputs and other partners’ inputs.
* We organised a hearing at the EESC in April 2014.
* The blog of the Semester Alliance has been set up & a leaflet produced.
* We have a series of actions and deliverables going on.
* The next thing is the Report on the semester process and looking at the NRPs and CSRs with a simple questionnaire - you can copy-paste your input from what you’ve already given.
* Edward Thorpe has been hired as a consultant to draft the joint NRP Report and Marije Cornelissen will work on our advocacy strategy.
* National alliances: 3 EAPN networks were selected to lead the 3 national pilot alliances to try to have some impact (including EAPN Bulgaria with BG Women’s lobby).   
  3 countries are Bulgaria (Douhomir), Denmark (Per) and Ireland (Paul).
* A capacity-building will be organized on the 6th of June.
* A 2nd hearing together with national pilots will be held in October/ November 2014.

**Input on what EAPN Members will be doing at national level:**

**Paul / IE** - EAPN IE is very interested because of its previous engagement in the Lisbon Strategy – by giving this extra emphasis, it can help us to raise our profile and have more impact in the process. We have a Europe 2020 working group including Trade-Unions – a number of them are included in the Irish Alliance along with environmental NGOs, voluntary housing organisations. We will use the CSRs to lobby on the Semester. We will have meetings with the Parliament, the European Commission Office in Ireland as well as the government. This part of the year – this is the best focus, as the NRP has already been presented. We will be organizing a Conference in November about the lessons learnt. By the end of this period, we will be in a position to influence next year’s process. See whether we can take it forward. Take it as an opportunity**.**

**Sian / Secretariat** - The problem of the project is the timing – European Semester starts much before the beginning of the year. Now the input to the next CSRs should be given by end of the year.

**Douhomir / BG** - This work gives the opportunity of questioning the way policies are designed and implemented and raise media attention. We’ve actually had a lot of interest from NGOs, strong dissatisfaction with the policies and the NRPs and the way it’s implemented. Perhaps the expectations have been raised too high, but better this way.

**Henrik / DK** - This is a great experience for us, this is an opportunity to widen our alliance (with green organisations, women’s organisations) – we will have a convention in June with politicians and 25.000 people on the Island of Bornhorm. This will be an opportunity to meet EAPN and other alliance networks in different tents and market places to discuss the alliance project. Conferences and seminars in different places are still to be decided.

**Katherine / UK** - These 3 countries will do a good job but it’s less than 5% of the EU Population – we should think about the impact of our work.

**Maciej / Age** - To add something about other partners, we are very much appreciating the Alliance’s work. We will we try to apply for new funding for all of us. This is important for producing our alternative proposals. We would like the 3 pilot countries to liaise with other national networks of the Alliance Members to widen the discussion at national level.

**Sian / Secretariat** - Members have been encouraged to liaise with other Alliance Members, but not all have sent their national lists – so it’s been left up to the initiative of the pilots.

***Capacity Building Session: Giving a Voice to Citizens –***

***Action Note for using the handbook***

**See Elke’s powerpoint presentation**

The target audience of the handbook is decision-makers, making the case and guidelines for meaningful civil dialogue, in Europe 2020 and similar processes, but also to our members – using accessible language, enough tools and tips to stakeholders.

The Action Note sets out some ideas on how to use the handbook. Obviously it’s up to each national network to use it how they want, every context is different. Possible uses:

1. Internal use.
2. Quality Alliances.
3. Communication Tool – draw attention to your work, and need for engagement in European Processes (wait for final document).
4. Use it for advocacy – strengthen yourself and then use it to convince your governments.

**Discussion**

**Katherine / UK** - How to be inclusive on gender, age, sexual orientation, disability to facilitate access to transport, childcare…? There are a lot of toolkits like that in the UK.

Richard: Co-production is the new framework – in design of services, but also co-governance – make the connection to the co-production. Also engaging citizens through NGOs, as they are the intermediaries.

**Elke / BE** - The handbook specifically focuses on the inclusion of disadvantaged people in stakeholder dialogue processes like Europe 2020 and there are some concrete tips are provided including a myth buster but it is important to have examples like in the UK and reference to useful documents.

**Ryszard / PL** - This is an interesting theoretical framework. This could be elaborated a bit further by reflecting on the issues of co-production/ co-management in design of services, but also co-governance. It is important to make some connection with this more theoretical work. This would allow to engage citizens through NGOs (organized or non-organised citizens).

**Katherine / UK** - We should make sure that consultations are monitored.

**Ryszard / PL** - Consultation is not participation.

**Sian / Secretariat** - The main focus here is about dialogue in the Europe 2020 process.

**Feedback from buzz groups** *– in your country, what’s the state of play regarding engagement of PeP and NGOs in the whole Europe 2020 process? Based on the handbook, what could we do to improve it? Think about an action plan.*

**Loucas (CY), Graciela (ES), Henrik (DK), Thorbera (IS), Marjatta (FI)**

A lot of experience in engaging in stakeholders’ dialogue emerged from the discussion. But, differences are big: some others are starting to get engaged (like Cyprus). All of us are struggling to improve this. EAPN DK sees itself as a lobby organisation to influence decision-makers so this is not a work they are going to take over. In Iceland, they managed to get places and to use EAPN’s documents like “Breaking barriers.” In Finland, 29 NGOs are in EAPN’s membership, 10 of them meet regularly. There is a parliamentary poverty group with regular meetings. In Spain, all regions have a structure, a secretariat. EAPN ES works at local, regional and state level. They devote a lot of work to dialogue, lobbying, having meetings, making proposals, doing campaigns, capacity-building.

*Weaknesses*

* In Spain, we depend a lot on public funding – sometimes, this hinders our independence because the money is going to be short in the next call for proposals.
* In Finland, we face a problem with the organisation because the membership of the Steering Committee changes every 4 years. The flow and circulation of info is not always effective.
* In Cyprus, 5-6 organisations are still very active out of 10 organisations.
* In Denmark, the financial restrictions do not allow to fund a secretariat to do actions.

*What to do?*

* In Spain, we are trying to reduce the dependency rate on public funding with payable courses, fundraising. On dialogue, we will keep on doing what we do now.
* In Finland, the parliamentary elections will be coming next year so we are going to make an input to candidates and then recommendations to the Work Programme of the new Government. We would like to involve more PeP.
* In Iceland, we need more members – to cheer, to encourage people – we want a successful PeP meeting and we are willing to form a group with these people to have more activities.
* In Cyprus, we are going to motivate other NGOs to increase the number of members and to make it possible to get a legal status and funding.

**Katherine (UK), Sonja (PB), Ryszard (PL), Maciej (Age), Jeanne (FR), Johanna (HU), Iris (RO)**

* Different angle is noticeable between the EU and national context.
* Age does talk to politicians and civil servants on policies about legal frameworks (right of initiative at EU level).
* In France, the national body for the fight against poverty (local, national level and PeP) is questioning the outcomes and dialogue’s process.
* In Poland, the interministerial body provides a structured dialogue which gives a chance to build alliance with other stakeholders.
* In Romania, the same goes, we have joined structures.
* In the Netherlands, where a dialogue structure exists (Social Alliance), there were only 4 meetings at regional level and no meeting at national level organized last year as no resources.
* Hungary has no dialogue at all so they changed their focus – PeP work/ Community-based work and try to get media attention.
* UK has no dialogue and the media is controlled by media barons controlled by the conservative party. 2 examples of judicial reviews: taking the government to court when gender obligations not respected (lost but raised awareness) and refugee action when basic needs of asylum seekers are being infringed – the judge said that the process was not rational and looked at the real costs. Another tool is strategic litigation if the door is closed.
* You need hooks for dialogue – elections are ones – referendum on independence in Scotland gives a good example (role of Welfare State, what do we mean by it?)

**Ryszard / PL** - Strategic litigation is a good option (European Court of Justice gives many judgments in social areas) – should we use these possibilities and how?

**Graciela / ES** - EAPN ES participated in a big movement around eviction including a big claim to the European Court – 750.000 signatures have been collected to change the law – the proposal was accepted by the Parliament but only some points were taken on board, so EAPN ES is now participating in a Commission on housing with the bad banks to redistribute 750.000 empty dwellings.

**Kristjian (MK), Sophie (DE), Douhomir (BG), Vincent (MT), Vito (IT), Slobodan (SR)**

* EAPN SR is an informal network with 25 Members (5 are active) and is very oriented towards EU issues. There is an obligation for members to organize activities every 2 months to give more visibility to the network. Roma NGOs. Activities to EMIN and General Assembly. Raising awareness.
* Germany not part of EMIN: strong members operates at national level – we have strong activities towards PeP with regular meetings and an annual meeting. For the next period, we will have a huge public event to raise visibility of activities. Regular task forces.
* In Malta, there is 13 ONGs in our membership, 2 of them represent poor people. They will be involved in the next PeP meeting. They don’t have premises. Will be involved more with youth.
* In Italy, the situation is dramatic – guidelines are being elaborated on participation. Plan for extreme poverty - with FEANTSA and CILAP.
* In Bulgaria, we need more instructions on the tool kit on how to mobilize PeP, and a methodology about reference budgets.
* In Macedonia, PeP are involved through a focus group methodology. There is no support from the Government, no media attention because media is in public hands. The Government was against our research, saying that it was insufficient, challenging our research. So we have to look at alternative actions.

**Elke / BE** - This was an interesting discussion with very relevant things and commitments that came up. The text will be finalized in the coming week. We will organize a launch event after September. We are contacting some present and future MEPs to organize the event all together. We will review the follow up at the next meeting.

**Sian / Secretariat** - The idea around this work derives from the feeling of frustration in engaging in Europe 2020 for NGOs. The Commission has had in EPAP as commitment to develop guidelines on stakeholders’ engagement but this was not done because this is seen as a hot potato. So, this should be linked to Mid-Term Review and the work with the Semester Alliance. Commissioner Andor agreed to give us a special quote for the text.

**Action Point**

***- Important to use the handbook at national level and to translate the Action Note. Members should let us know if they plan to translate it***

**Confirmation of the next meeting**

3-4 October, starting with the policy conference.