



# Can the Semester deliver on poverty and participation?

## EAPN Assessment of the National Reform Programmes 2015

### KEY MESSAGES

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

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

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

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

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

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