



Cilap eapn italia

- Influencing National Governments for Better Policies: Advocacy, Lobbying and Policy-Making linked to European Level developments

In 2013 Italy had two governments: from January to April the government led by Mr. Monti and, after the elections, a new government led by Mr Letta. Under these conditions, even if objectives and overall policies stay the same, people in charge change constantly and by the time they are ready to meet the organizations of civil societies they are removed, making it next to impossible to try to “advocate for better policies”, meet the people in charge, start any kind of discussion or lobbying .

Under such circumstances, CILAP EAPN ITALIA focused on lobbying local authorities for the design and development of the Local Plans for Social Inclusion (mainly through its members) and, centrally by striking a new collaboration with Association TECLA (the technical structure of the Union of Italian Provinces), the latter giving some important results. CILAP EAPN ITALIA co-organized with them three important meetings, in June 2013 in Ascoli Piceno (Region of Marche), in October in Reggio Calabria (Region of Calabria) and, in November in Busto Arsizio (Region of Lombardy) focusing on the role of the municipalities and regions in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

CILAP EAPN BASILICATA worked on many issues, continuing its long engagement with regional policies:

1. Participation in the Observatory on Social Inclusion and the Service Council for Social Inclusion in partnership with the Trade Unions, the Regional Council for Voluntary Service and the local Administrations;
2. CILAP EAPN BASILICATA continued its work, as the main actor, for the creation of the Regional Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion
3. Presentation to the Ministry of Social Affairs (in collaboration with CILAP EAPN ITALIA) of the final draft for a network of the Local and National Observatories against Poverty and Social Exclusion
4. CILAP EAPN BASILICATA is now an official partner in the consultation meetings for the use of the Structural Funds at regional level

Since 2012, faced with a decline in the number of members and the lack of participation, CILAP EAPN ITALIA’s statutory bodies and volunteers decided to engage with more impetus in alliance building, being convinced that only together - putting aside differences and finding points of convergence - we will emerge from this crisis. We did as much as we could, although there have been failures such as the network “Rete Cresce il Welfare, cresce l’Italia”, which started in 2012, stopped working in 2013.

On the “win” side, CILAP EAPN ITALIA continued to work steadily with the “Ban Poverty” Campaign participating to its initiatives, among which the meeting with the Gruppo Missioni Africa in Montagnana (VR) on September 8th.

2013 was the year for European Citizenship . In Italy the Italian Alliance for the European Year (EYCA 2013) was started and CILAP EAPN ITALY joined. The goal of the Alliance was to establish a network of national

organizations working on issues such as gender equality, young people, volunteering for an inclusive society, sustainable development, proximity and subsidiarity. CILAP EAPN ITALY is part of the working group " for an inclusive society ." Unfortunately, because of the many commitments of its active members, CILAP's involvement in this network was very limited.

CILAP EAPN ITALIA 'continued to be engaged with the Italian group belonging to the European network SMES (Mental Health and Social Exclusion), making a contribution to the organization of the European conference "Home and Home-less-first" (Rome, March 6 to 8 2013).

CILAP EAPN ITALIA also participated in and contributed to the feminist movement, "Se non ora quando" and even if the European commitments of CILAP representative to this group have prevented her regular participation, CILAP EAPN ITALIA has helped organize the meeting with the women candidates to the City of Rome urging the candidates - and the new elected - to engage against poverty and exclusion of the women living in Rome.

Starting in February 2013, the EMIN project (European Minimum Income Network) has made a further contribution to the acknowledgment of CILAP EAPN ITALIA as European thematic network. In 2013, the CILAP was involved in the launch of the project at the national level, the writing of a first analysis of the minimum income in Italy, the preparation of a questionnaire for stakeholders and one for the beneficiaries, the organization of meetings for the construction of the national network.

- Participation of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion in Internal and External Workings of the National Network

To the words "People experiencing poverty and social exclusion", CILAP EAPN ITALIA prefers to utilize the words "People with direct experience in poverty and social exclusion" since the standing and by now 10 year old working group "participation of people in poverty" encompasses both people in poverty and people who went through the experience but have overcome it. This group, with a fluctuating membership of 40 people, is an integral part of CILAP EAPN ITALIA and is one of the main actors in shaping our political positions. This is done through regular meetings held in various part of the country, where people with experience of poverty and social exclusion talk about their problems and try to give solutions. The outcomes of these meetings become reports that are then used for shaping our political positions.

In 2013, this process was further enriched by the transnational project "Increasing participation and Citizenship in Europe – ICE" (Grundtvig - Learning Partnerships - see: www.iceproject.eu). The project is coordinated by CILAP and has the following partners: the Association di Volontariato Solidarietà Caritas di Firenze, EAPN Hungary, EAPN Austria, EAPN Netherlands. Transnational meetings for 2013 were held in the Netherlands, Hungary and Austria. Each meeting was preceded by national meetings to prepare the national delegations and to link this work with the European meeting of people experiencing poverty. The final part of 2013 has seen us involved in the organization of one of the two transnational meetings planned in Italy (Avellino, January 2014).

From April to May, CILAP EAPN ITALIA, in collaboration with Cooperativa Ermes, held a training course for operators of projects in favor of the Roma and Sinti communities living in Rome. It was a chance for reflection and formation, starting from the EC Roadmap for Roma inclusion and ending with the local policies in favor (or against) the Roma and Sinti populations. The training dealt with themes such as poverty, social inclusion, European national and local regulations, available tools. Many of the participants belonged to the Roma and Sinti communities and work in the cooperative as first-level operators (driving children to school or giving basic information on social services etc.).

- Development and Growth of the Network (including growth and training and capacity building actions)

In 2013 the Italian network made a number of important steps forward and has greatly developed its ability to build alliances, being present in major alliances (one of which is being formalized by the time this report is being written), enhancing its ability to be an actor in the political arena. This leap forward unfortunately was not matched by a growth of the network itself. Although we did acquire a couple of new and important associations, the membership has been steadily dwindling making it harder and harder to keep up with all the new and old engagements.

CILAP EAPN ITALIA does not deliver services, being a network that collects third sector organizations (voluntary organizations, think tanks and research centers, social cooperatives etc.) which provide these services, and that are paying a very high toll to the crisis and the austerity measures implemented at national and European level. If it has never been easy to keep up the interest of these organizations for European policies, to raise awareness of these policies and to build a national platform with strong European link, today it is more difficult than ever, given the low enthusiasm that the European social policies enjoy nowadays and with good reason, we believe.

- Governance and Internal Democracy (including internal governance, respect of statutory requirements, management in the network and funding).

All statutory activities were conducted regularly though, at least for the meetings of the Board, we made large use of skype conferences.

The general assembly decided to restore a membership fee that, although minimal (given the time certainly not favorable to this type of requests) it will be useful not so much to swell the coffers of the network but to have members genuinely interested and engaged.

There still is, of course, the great difficulty, common to almost all of the third sector - excluding only a few powerful organizations that occasionally manage to pierce the wall - to be able to interest the media on our core business, which, not being based on sensational news, is not, in fact, "news". But, at the end of 2013 CILAP EAPN ITALIA hired on a part-time basis a journalist now in charge of our Press Office.

For CILAP EAPN ITALIA the materials and the positions expressed by EAPN remain fundamental. From here stems the decision to translate and disseminate all the numbers EAPNMAG, regretting that the recent budget cuts do not allow more EAPN publication and its translation as they always gave us the opportunity to reach many associations or representatives of local / national authorities which seldom look into our website.

In relation to EAPN materials, we point out that almost all of EAPN press releases have been translated and disseminated and, when necessary, adapted to the national context. The same was done for all lobbying letters and relevant materials and documents.

The website (www.cilap.eu) (to which a face-book address has been added) remains the main tool we use to spread news from CILAP EAPN ITALIA.

We also have a specific email address for sending out press releases, invitations, etc.

The June issue of the magazine "Confronti" published an article signed by Teodosi and Cesarini Soforza, in behalf of CILAP EAPN ITALIA, on the right to Health and fight against poverty in Europe.

Scarpetennis (a street magazine), Volontariato Oggi, Redattore Sociale published articles on the Peps meetings and on the Grundtvig project ICE.