

# Network news



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

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Editorial

## Make or break time for the Social Inclusion Strategy

**T**he Social Inclusion Strategy is four years old. It was launched as part of the Lisbon Agenda to modernise the EU economic and social model, using the Open Method of Coordination "to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010".

There have been two rounds of National Action Plans in the 'old' EU states and one in the 'new' states. These have been useful in developing national policies against poverty and in learning and information-sharing. They have strengthened working relationships between anti-poverty NGOs and specialists in governments and European Institutions. It is clear however that the Strategy will not reach its targets with current policies. In most countries, the Plans have produced few new policies or resources and many economic and social policies are actually deepening poverty and social exclusion. EAPN has made proposals to strengthen the Strategy, including a stronger legal base, more transparency and accountability and better resourcing. Fundamentally, however, it needs political commitment.

The next few months will test this, with reviews of the Inclusion Strategy, the Social Policy Agenda and the Lisbon Agenda, as well as plans for the future of the Structural Funds. The first signals are worrying, with the High Level Group on Lisbon almost ignoring social inclusion. All of us working against poverty, in NGOs, social partners and governments at all levels, need to ensure that social inclusion is put at the heart of these discussions.

*Robin Hanan*  
Coordinator, EAPN Review Group on Social Inclusion

## THE FUTURE OF THE INCLUSION STRATEGY

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## A flagging strategy...

While nowhere near dead in the water, the European Social Inclusion Strategy is severely lacking political leadership. It can be kick-started again, but there is no time to lose!

**T**he third Round Table on poverty and social exclusion, held in Rotterdam on 18 and 19 October was an opportunity to bring the different actors in social inclusion together, but it failed to generate the necessary confidence in the EU Inclusion strategy.

The speeches were informative, but held few surprises, with the single exception of an OECD representative who argued strongly in favour of giving material support to migrant communities as such, rather than financial help to individual immigrants, implicitly throwing into question access to all fundamental rights. Taken any further and we may as well just scrap the Universal Declaration of Human Rights!

### Decentralise the strategy?

Some speakers even queried the usefulness of the National Action Plans. After a presentation of the workshop recommendations (see opposite), the session chairman concluded that the better option might be to leave the local level free to manage its total funding for anti-poverty and social exclusion measures as it saw fit "instead of going through the motions of producing national and European level reports".

While EAPN acknowledges that poverty can be most effectively tackled at local level, leaving it to local authorities to run those efforts alone without the support of a broader strategy can result in absurdities. Decentralizing social protection and help for the poorest can create a postcode lottery between regions, towns and even neighbourhoods, whereas the European strategy at least sets common markers by linking the various levels (local, national and European) aimed at giving everyone everywhere access to fundamental rights. The importance of the strategic approach was also defended by the representatives of the European Commission.

### How to raise its profile?

One recurrent question at the Round Table was about the strategy's visibility with actors but also the public. How can people sign up to the "open method" if they do not have the ins and outs explained to them? One of the first steps could be to explain in simple terms what this "openness" is all about.

Jérôme Vignon, Director in the European Commission's Employment and Social Affairs DG, was very clear on this. At the close of the round table, he called for a coalition of commitment and awareness: *"The open method of coordination is not enough by itself. It is 'open.' because it must engage a broad public. The exchange of good practices is not neutral: it illustrates convictions and policy guidelines. That is what makes the input of research, civil society and the other actors so important: they do not put an end to differences, but highlight the real challenges of them"*.

Failure to generate confidence in the strategy

### A European Year

EAPN's Vice-President, Ludo Horemans, concluded his address with the call to *"Proclaim a European Year for the Eradication of Poverty!"*.

Some people are saying that the objective of "making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" by 2010 will not be achieved. But this was a pledge given by the Heads of State and Government themselves at the Lisbon Council in March 2000. For more than four years, EAPN has taken them at their word. It is now imperative to "make a decisive impact"... on the process itself! Proclaiming a European year against poverty would be a good way of turning the Lisbon pledge into a firm timetable of quantified objectives and measures. A campaign to that end should be launched at the national and European levels. And that's what we are calling on our leaders and the European Commission to do.

Vincent Forest

## Recommendations

At the end of the **Rotterdam Round Table**, a series of recommendations covering all the themes discussed in workshops was presented:

- **Employment:** A tailor-made approach embedded in policies geared towards employment opportunities;
- **Social protection:** Financial incentives need to be combined with larger obligations on both beneficiaries and local bodies to ensure reintegration;
- **Homelessness:** Each Member State should develop a comprehensive homeless strategy in the framework of the National Action Plans (NAPs);
- **Youth:** Strong partnership at all levels between all actors, including the young;
- **Children:** Implement measures to achieve the rights of children and make it a strategic priority;
- **Immigrants:** Mainstream the debate involving all relevant actors to create confidence in society in an immigration system that is based on respect for people's rights and to educate all to accept their responsibilities;
- **Open method of coordination:** Visibility and awareness of the strategy are essential;
- **Rural dimension:** Aim at balanced development in rural areas and integrate policy approaches;
- **Identifying key risks:** Extend the definition of social exclusion beyond poverty and take into account the interrelation between all risk factors.

## Maria Creighton, Ireland:

### *“It is very empowering to have your opinions heard”*

Maria Creighton is an activist. A lone parent living on a low income, she has decided to fight for making the voice of people experiencing poverty heard. Interview.

**EAPN: You gave an input to the Round Table in Rotterdam on behalf of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Why was it important for you to be there?**

*I was asked to speak as a delegate who attended the third meeting of people experiencing poverty. It was important to give feedback on this inspiring meeting which took place in May 2004 in Brussels.*

*However, I wasn't really sure what to expect when I arrived in Brussels. Part of me was cynical about what I would hear. It was a new and even frightening experience for many of the delegates; some hadn't even been abroad before, let alone speak in front of so many people. It was thoughtful to have this recognised during the welcoming speeches. Everyone felt relaxed and comforted.*

*For people who live surrounded by stress, worry and pressure, it was a change to have others looking after us. The cynic in me disappeared and I felt very proud to be a member of the European community.*

*This meeting was also a wonderful opportunity to air our difficulties, hear other practices and see if as a group there would be ways of dealing with them. It is very empowering to have your opinions heard, particularly by politicians. We all agreed that if each of the EU Governments would place people on equal status, all of our problems would be solved.*

**What about your personal background?**

*I have a secretary degree and I completed a correspondence course with the International Foundation for Adult Education. Then in 1998 I was given the opportunity to participate in a course in non-profit management.*

*I am from a rural town in the west of Ireland. As a lone parent, I can understand the needs of people living in poverty since I have experienced them on a daily basis for the past 11 years. The issues that we*

*all face are the same, just different degrees of poverty. My son is 11 years old now and I can't work. I receive a lone-parent allowance of around 150 euros per month for paying my rent, food, clothing, etc.*

**How do you cope?**

*Well I'm one of the lucky ones. I had support, first from my family and then I found others like me. We formed a self-help group. Accessing information is always the hardest first step for anyone living in poverty. But with information comes power... a light shines at the end of a tunnel and you begin to realise there is something you can do.*



*Then I discovered OPEN, which stands for the One Parent and Exchange Network. It was founded in 1994 by 24 lone parent self-help groups just like ours. The idea of the Network was that groups could come together to share information, training and support and that at a national level we would become a voice for lone parents. I found the confidence to join the Board of OPEN in 1999, and have since become Chairperson. OPEN is affiliated to EAPN Ireland.*

**What are your hopes for the future?**

*Personally, I'd like to find a permanent accommodation and a full-time job. I'm frustrated because I'm a skilled person. I could move to Dublin but I like living in a rural area because there is a social community spirit. For my organisation, I hope that we can continue to be effective in demanding anti-discrimination measures for the lone parents, as well as opportunities for choice and personal rights.*

*But things have already improved. If anyone told me a few years ago that I would have the opportunity to participate in European meetings, I would have stared at them in disbelief. And it is because of organisations like OPEN and EAPN that have believed and empowered me. This is because they have based their anti-poverty work on listening to the needs of people living in poverty.*

*Interview: V.F.*

OPEN website: [www.oneparent.ie](http://www.oneparent.ie)

## RURAL POLICY IN FINLAND

In Finland there are 5.2 million inhabitants but only one in five lives in rural areas. Rural areas are defined officially as any sparsely populated area and village with less than 500 inhabitants.

At a workshop of the Rotterdam Round Table on poverty and social exclusion, Pirjo Siiskonen, from the Helsinki University, explained that the current political trend in Finland is to promote a rural policy instead of an agricultural policy, notably through the promotion of rural entrepreneurship. As an example of good practice, she mentioned the **Village Action Association of Finland**, which started in the 70s. Composed of many rural committees in which many unemployed and retired people work, this association aims to promote social and cultural events, to repair village houses, and to preserve services in villages such as healthcare, post, road repairing, promotion of moving from cities to villages, etc.

Village Action Association of Finland:  
<http://www.maaseutuplus.net/>  
University of Helsinki - Institute for Rural Research and Training:  
[http://www.sjoki.uta.fi/hymakes/english/eng\\_index.htm](http://www.sjoki.uta.fi/hymakes/english/eng_index.htm)

# The PROGRESS programme: real progress?

## PROGRESS in a nutshell

**Programming period:** 2007-2013

**Proposed budget:** 628.8 million euros allocated as follows (minimum amounts): employment (21%), social inclusion and social protection (28%), working conditions (8%), discrimination (23%), gender equality (8%), implementation (2%). NB: the final financial framework will depend on the (tough) negotiations on the future financial perspectives.

A single **Programme Committee** with mixed responsibilities (advisory and management)

**Objectives** of the "social inclusion and social protection" section:

- To improve the understanding of poverty, inclusion and social protection
- To follow up and evaluate the open method of coordination in these areas
- To set up exchanges in order to promote mutual learning
- To stimulate debates, disseminate information and build awareness
- To support the main European networks (including EAPN)

**Procedure:** co-decision by Council/European Parliament, expected for the second half of 2005, under the British Presidency. The European Parliament's position should be known before June 2005. The EP rapporteur is Karin Jöns (PES).

The proposed new Community PROGRESS programme plans to streamline existing financial instruments in the social and employment spheres.

**T**he Commission manages a series of financial instruments under the Lisbon strategy, including to support the open method of coordination (OMC) in the field of poverty and social exclusion. To simplify and streamline these various instruments, the Commission last July presented PROGRESS, a single programme for 2007- 2013 destined to support measures in the fields of employment, social exclusion and social protection, working conditions, discrimination, and gender equality. Each of these areas will make up its own section of the Programme. PROGRESS therefore aims to replace the existing programmes, while opening up the approaches.

### The Programme's objectives

Luca Pirozzi of the European Commission presented the future programme at a workshop at the Rotterdam round table on poverty and social exclusion: "By cutting 28 budget lines down to two, and creating a single programming framework, the Commission means to streamline procedures and avoid overlaps, which will benefit the final beneficiary". Analysis, learning from one another, awareness-raising, and assistance to the different actors are central to the proposal, which also refers to a fundamental rights agency.

But what will change from the present social exclusion programme? Luca Pirozzi says that "the linkage made with social protection will help rationalize the two approaches. Also, a series of actions like evaluation, training and impact analysis are explicitly mentioned, and more will be done in the way of information and awareness-building".

### Risk of losing specific focus

EAPN sees the trend towards streamlining and simplification as a good way to improve the main-

streaming of key concerns into the general EU policy process. EAPN also welcomes the introduction of the reference to "social solidarity" - a clear message that the European institutions must make central to their policy making.

Nevertheless, a programme which spans over such a wide range and number of areas cannot possibly ensure the same level of **focus** to the key objectives under each of the sections. What is presented as a solution to duplication might in reality be a threat to specific priorities.

The move from clearly targeted programmes to a much bigger and probably less manageable programme is one of serious concern. For example, while the new streamlined approach to policy coordination for social protection and social inclusion, which brings together these two elements, still maintains a very clear social inclusion dimension, it is regrettable that in programming terms the two fields are merged.

EAPN wants to see a distinct social inclusion strategy maintained

EAPN wants to see a distinct social inclusion strategy maintained. And that means keeping all the existing elements and working methods of the currently operating OMC on social inclusion: common objectives, indicators, National Action Plans, Peer review and European Action Programme. This merge can only happen if the Programme still clearly supports activities on social inclusion to the same levels as currently, including addressing growing needs related to the recent and future enlargements.

### Where are the transnational exchanges?

The Network is also concerned that support for **transnational exchanges** is not clearly spelled out. This, added to the absence of mention of national level NGOs as key stakeholders in the programme, creates some concerns as to whether the Programme really can adequately support the implementation of the social inclusion strategy. The budget breakdown in the exclusion and social protection section does not have an entry for this type of activity. In response,

Luca Pirozzi of the European Commission said that the current heading was the result of a compromise and that *"this aspect comes under exchanges of good practices and support for key actors, which also includes actors at national level"*.

EAPN also regrets that the proposal was published **with no prior consultation** with key stakeholders. The participation of non-institutional key actors particularly those involved in the current Social Exclusion Programme should at least have been envisaged. *"PROGRESS is only a proposal!"*, chorused the

European Commission and future Luxembourg Presidency at the round table, adding that consultations had got under way and nothing was yet decided.

And while the financial framework is (slightly) up on the budgets for the different current programmes, it makes too little allowance for the joining of ten new countries into the European family - countries with even more glaring poverty and social exclusion issues than the EU15.

V.F.

## The new Member States have their plans!

**T**he ten new Member States submitted their national action plans on inclusion (NAP Inclusion 2004-2006) last July. The Commission is set to publish its analysis of these plans in December. At the Rotterdam round table of 18-19 October 2004, the European Commission's Armindo Silva gave an initial outline of them:

- Although heavily committed to the strategy, some countries had problems moving from a fairly descriptive memorandum (JIM) to a necessarily more policy-oriented plan.
- The economic context is favourable (with GDP growth of about 4% in 2004-2005). But these countries are faced with big deficits, falling employment rates and rising unemployment, especially among young people.
- The relative poverty rate is 14% (15% for the EU-25). Without social transfer payments, it would be 29%. The main victims of widening income gaps are children, young people, the unemployed, large families and lone parents.
- Social protection spending is lower than in the "old" Member States.
- The Estonian, Cypriot, Slovenian, Hungarian and Polish plans reveal a planned and coherent approach, but some priorities need to be clarified.
- Six countries have set themselves hard targets, which is a higher rate than in the "old" Member States.

### Don't just talk the talk

Izabella Marton of EAPN Hungary gave the meeting the Network's analysis: *"The challenge is not to just talk the talk, but to work for the benefit of people enduring poverty"*. She said that the only way to do that was to get NGOs participating in the process, and that had not been done. *"In Hungary, the voluntary community actors had only ten days in which to respond!"*, she complained.

EAPN welcomed the new Member States' first NAPs, while pointing out their many failings:

- Most of the NAPs simply listed existing measures, and lacked any clear objectives.
- There is an over-emphasis on employment-related objectives, but glaring omissions, especially regarding discrimination.
- Some data are extremely outdated - those for Cyprus date from 1997!
- In many cases, no resources are assigned; likewise responsibility for implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the NAPs is not spelled out.

Izabella Marton concluded: *"We are not belittling the efforts made by the new Member States. The NAPs are the best tools we have to combat poverty and social exclusion so far, but the process demands unrelenting efforts and a stronger and resolute political will. And we are still waiting for that"*.

V.F.

## EAPN RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### Building Confidence in the EU Inclusion Strategy

- EAPN position papers presented on the occasion of the Third European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion, Rotterdam, 18-19 October 2004:
- Reinforcing the EU Social Inclusion Strategy
- Streamlining: Strengthening a Social Europe while maintaining a visible Inclusion Strategy
- National Networks' stock-take on the implementation of the NAPs Inclusion 2003-2005 (in the 15 'old' Member States of the EU)
- The Social Inclusion Strategy in an enlarged Union: What kind of Europe do we want?
- Response to the Joint Report on Social Inclusion adopted by the European Council, March 2004

### Position paper on the Proposal for a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS

Response to the report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok *"Facing the Challenge: the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment"*

Final declaration of the 2004 EAPN General Assembly: *"The EU we want - Strengthening the EU Social Model"*

All these publications are available on the EAPN website [www.eapn.org](http://www.eapn.org) (EAPN profile and activities / Publications)

## The Maltese Action Plan on Inclusion

As the other new Member States, Malta submitted its National Action Plan on social inclusion 2004-2006 in July of this year. Overview of the Plan by EAPN Malta.

### A few statistics...

- Total population: 400,000
- At-risk-of-poverty rate (2001): 15% (Men: 15 – Women: 15)
- In the absence of social transfers (including pensions), the at-risk-of-poverty rate would be 30%
- Children (0-15) in poor households (2000): 21% (EU15: 19%)
- Older people (65+) living in poverty (2000): 20% (EU15: 17%)
- At-risk-of-poverty rate among employees (2000): 6% (EU15: 6%)
- At-risk-of-poverty rate among the unemployed (2000): 50% (EU15: 38%)
- At-risk-of-poverty rate among single-parent households with at least one dependent child (2000): 55% (EU15: 40%)
- Unemployment rate (2003): 8.2% (EU15: 8.1%)
- Employment rate (2003): 53.7% (Men: 74.2 – Women: 34.5) (EU15: 64.4%)
- Early-school leavers with lower secondary education (June 2003): 48.2% (EU15: 18%)

**T**he major challenges presented in the Maltese Plan are illiteracy and employment. It is also of utmost importance that disabled persons are mentioned particularly as regards access to the accommodation needed to ensure their involvement and participation in society, in compliance with the Equal Opportunities Act (Cap. 413, Laws of Malta) and EU policy. However, the omission of refugees and undocumented migrants as a particularly vulnerable group, given their growing presence and their obvious claim for recognition as an excluded group in our society, is striking.

### Lack of concrete targets

EAPN Malta believes that the link between the strategy, the main objectives and the key targets needs to be developed in greater detail than is the case at present. This link is very often weak, and sometimes inexistent, so that it will be very difficult, if at all possible, to evaluate the implementation of the Plan in terms of the objectives set.

As far as policy measures are concerned, it is very striking that only a few key priorities have more concrete targets linked to them. There is practically nothing about certain groups which the Plan itself identifies as at great risk of poverty, most notably children. Neither is anything said at all about how housing and other social problems of the Inner Harbour Area, justly identified as in dire need of regeneration, will be tackled. Providing raw data on the gravity of the situation without concrete measures for change can be counterproductive, because it can create a sense of hopelessness and discouragement. The measures and programmes should have target dates, continuous monitoring and evaluation. For example, the accommodation needed for disabled persons (who are not a homogenous group but persons with different impairments) to participate has to be significantly increased.

### Who is responsible?

In addition, it is not clear at all who is responsible for the implementation of what is described in the Plan, except the individual agencies and departments who are already doing their job. This is more serious in a country where the difficulty to coordinate efforts seems endemic, and the source of much loss of energy. Sometimes the Plan looks more like a list of what is already being done or being planned rather than a plan.

The good practices presented in the Plan are quite concrete and realistic, but although these examples are encouraging, it is important that disabled people are also included. For example, the literacy programmes should also be open for children who are disabled and who may need extra support in terms of facilitators or equipment.

In Malta, the difficulty to coordinate efforts seems endemic

### Process assessment

The process of drafting the Plan comprised a wider than usual consultation process, both in the drafting stage and afterwards.

The main weakness of it was the very limited time available and its limitation in scope. The questionnaires used often provided no more than a list of what is already being done or planned to be done in the near future.

According to EAPN Malta, such a process needs more time to allow more discussion on how to find new solutions together, and should involve more NGOs at an earlier stage. The involvement of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion was also very limited, and this must be improved in the future. In terms of visibility, the Plan has been given good coverage by the media, yet since this is a 'new' topic for them, the fact that there are groups in our midst who are excluded needs to be stressed continuously. We need to work hard to make poverty visible and develop a "rights-based mentality".

*Godfrey Kenely - EAPN Malta*

NAPs/Inclusion available at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2001/jun/napsincl2001\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napsincl2001_en.html)

# EAPN Malta: a new born anti-poverty network

At its General Assembly 2004, held in Groningen in November, EAPN has welcomed new national networks, including that from one of the smallest EU countries, Malta.

## Presentation.

**O**n 26 November 2004, a number of Maltese civil society NGOs and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion came together to officially launch EAPN Malta, as a means of strengthening the voice of 60,000 persons currently living at the risk of poverty and/or experiencing social exclusion in Malta (15% of the Maltese general population).

With the aim of bringing together all those with the capacity and the will to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, EAPN Malta will provide e-newsletters, organise seminars, meetings, focus groups and conferences, promote research, disseminate information on poverty and social exclusion and disseminate EAPN newsletters, publications and press releases.

## Membership and structure

EAPN Malta currently has 11 members from the voluntary sector and is open to a wide range of NGOs addressing poverty and social exclusion in Malta. The member organisations of EAPN Malta are: Jesuit Refugee Services, Caritas Malta, Malta Council of Disabled Persons, Paolo Freire Institute, Centre for Faith and Justice, National Council of Women, Dar Merħba Bik, Dar L-Emigrant, Richmond Foundation, SOS Malta, and DISCERN.

In order to organise its work, EAPN Malta has set up a Coordination Committee including staff and volunteers from the different member organisations. The responsibilities of the Coordination Committee are to plan and implement meetings, communications, promotions, seminars, conferences, focus groups, dissemination of information and events of EAPN Malta; to liaise with member organisations and groups; and to liaise with Government ministries, departments and agencies on behalf of the network.

EAPN Malta has also set up an Advisory Group to advise it on plans, policies, position papers, advocacy, research and use of EU Funds. The Advisory Group, made up of various professionals, academics, etc. will provide advice on social policy, gender equality, illiteracy, legal matters, the economy; needs of the elderly, the disabled, youth, children, EU funding, research and social ethics.

## Main activities

The EAPN Malta Coordination Committee has agreed to embark on various activities to network the various NGOs and groups as a means to strengthen their participation in social policy and plans. One of the means used is a website [www.eapnmalta.org](http://www.eapnmalta.org). The website will help to provide information and to facilitate sharing of best practices; it will be enhanced by the production of an e-newsletter for staff and volunteers who work in Social NGOs fighting poverty and social exclusion. Other means include various thematic seminars, and target groups committees to discuss common underlying factors among socially excluded groups such as illiteracy, domestic violence, asylum seekers and disability.

With the aim of building active participation of people experiencing poverty and exclusion, "focus groups" will be organised with these persons. EAPN Malta has already set up a focus group on domestic violence, refugees, unemployment and disability as part of its input in the drafting of the National Action Plan 2004-2006.

Most of the information obtained through the above activities will be used to provide quality input to the next National Action Plan on social inclusion due in October 2006. As a means of being active in promoting responsible business, EAPN Malta will also engage in various meetings and seminars on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the business sector. Initial talks and participation in seminars with the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise have already taken place.

*G.K. – EAPN Malta*

*Email: [info@eapnmalta.org](mailto:info@eapnmalta.org) - Website: [www.eapnmalta.org](http://www.eapnmalta.org)*

## A RESOURCE CENTRE FOR NGOS

Thanks to the generous support of SOS Malta, the Malta Resource Centre for Civil Society NGOs will soon be set up. The main aim of Resource Centre will be to provide capacity building as a means to help NGOs and groups working for social change, development, and the fight against poverty and social exclusion to become more effective and efficient and better equipped to operate and participate within the European Union framework, specifically the Social Inclusion Strategy and the National Action Plans, through sharing of best practices, and provision of training and consultation.

Among the various aims and services which will be provided by the Malta Resource Centre, one of the main services will be to provide administrative back up to EAPN Malta. Other services, e.g. services regarding capacity building, will be developed from January 2005.

Visit [www.mrc.org.mt](http://www.mrc.org.mt) - to be updated on various developments.

## Don't miss it!

# EAPN's new-look website: follow the guide!

Everyone working in the anti-poverty and -exclusion field in Europe can take comfort in knowing that the site they need is up and running at [www.eapn.org](http://www.eapn.org)

**T**he new website aims to be more an information resource than a site just about EAPN. That is what makes it different. And it isn't so much our site as your site, because any useful information you send us about your activities and publications can be put out there for all to see.

We'd like to take you on a little tour of the site to show you what it offers. One tip: log on and explore the site while reading the guide. Happy surfing!

**The home page** shows you a menu (in grey) with the four sections described below. We'll come to those in a minute. First, let's look at what you can find below the menu:

- Centre screen: a "special focus" issue (Highlight), followed by the five latest news items put on the site;
- On the right: a place to sign up for EAPN Flash, a fortnightly emailed briefing on developments on the European scene. Below is a search engine for searching the entire site by keywords, and finally, a "members only" area where EAPN members can download documents relating to the Executive Committee, General Assembly and training courses.

**News/Publications:** This gives you access to most of the information contained on the site, listed in date order (most recent first).

- The "News" section gives you all the news items on all topics.
- Likewise "Publications", from a whole range of sources. The ultimate aim is to turn this into an effective online library...
- European "Calls for proposals" on the fight against poverty and social exclusion (in the broad sense) are described here, with links to relevant documents for submitting applications.

**Who's who?:** To help get you better acquainted with those working against poverty and/or to find partners,

this section has been split up into three subsections:

- Useful links to different kinds of body at different levels. This directory of links is still under construction, but when it is done, it will be the page you can't do without!
- The directory of EAPN member organizations aims to show how widely representative the network is and to help in searching for partnerships. It will shortly be completely updated, and allow you to add or change details online.
- Finally, if you're looking for a partner organization, you can advertise the fact by in filling in the relevant form.

**The European agenda.** This centres around four of EAPN's touchstone issues: the European strategy on social inclusion, employment, the Structural Funds and the enlarged EU. You'll find a short presentation, news, publications, calls for proposals and useful links for each topic, plus information on events held around each one.

**EAPN profile and activities:** The last section gives a run-down on the network, things of topical importance (news, publications and events), and the people that keep EAPN running. And, of course, somewhere to make your donations!

### Site architecture and search engine

At first glance, the site might look very complex, full of disconnected bits of information. Don't be fooled: the whole site layout has been designed so that the same piece of information can be found in several places at once, so as to stick as closely as possible to what you are looking for. For example, an EAPN press release on employment will crop up in section 1 (under "News"), in section 3 (under "Employment") and in section 4 (under "News"). To find publications dealing with the Structural Funds, go straight to section 3 (under "Structural Funds/Publications"). But the thing you will probably find most useful is the search engine. Looking for the issues of *Network News*? Just type in "network news". One final thing: the site has identical English and French versions, and some publications are available in other languages, too (like Spanish, Italian, German...).

V. Forest

EAPN works to challenge the structural injustices that lead to poverty

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