

# Network news



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Editorial

## Social services respond to people's needs

**T**he European Commission produced a revised draft of the much-contested Services Directive on 4 April. Its decision to follow the Parliament's vote to fundamentally change the original Bolkestein Directive has been an important step toward European democracy.

For EAPN's members, the Parliament's decision to exempt all social services from the Directive was crucial. The proposal to subject care homes, homeless shelters or ambulances to the same competition rules as mobile phones, hairdressing or banking was a fatal flaw in the original Directive.

This would have undermined Member States', and regions', powers to control the quality of social services and to ensure the rights of users. Provision, standards and funding levels would have been taken out of democratic debate and thrown on the mercy of the market. This makes a mockery of 'subsidiarity'.

This is particularly dangerous in the absence of EU-wide social standards, which could put some limits on the 'race to the bottom' in quality, cost and working conditions in a competitive market.

Europe's social services need to be strengthened and made more responsive to people's needs, particularly people in poverty who depend on them most. They do not need to be thrown on the open market where profit is the only motive. It is vital that all who care about the future of the Social Europe use the next weeks and months to ensure that the Council explicitly exempts all social services from the Services Directive.

*R. Hanon*

## SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST

## CONTENTS

### Social Services

- Services of General Interest:  
What are we talking about?..... **2**
- The 16 February's compromise..... **2**
- Definitions of SGI and SGEI ..... **3**
- National networks on the front line ... **4**
- Social services : value added and  
employment ..... **4**
- European Commission to ban low  
rents? ..... **5**
- "The initial Bolkestein proposal is dead",  
according to the ETUC..... **5**
- "Small Czech NGOs are not even aware  
of this Directive". Interview with  
David Stulik, Civil Society Development  
Foundation ..... **6**
- Social services in the Czech Republic **6**

### News from Cyprus

- The social priorities of the Reform  
Programme ..... **7**
- Profile of EAPN Cyprus..... **7**

## The 16 February's compromise...

The undoubted highlight of the February plenary session of the European Parliament was the debate and vote - at first reading - on the Services Directive. Here are excerpts of the EP resolution:

*"Social welfare services result from the duties of the State - at national, regional and local level - in the social field. They are a manifestation of the principles of social cohesion and solidarity as reflected, inter alia, by the fact that they are designed to assist those who are in a state of need owing to insufficient family income, total or partial lack of independence or the risk of being marginalised."*

*"This Directive covers only services of general economic interest, i.e. services that correspond to an economic activity and are open to competition."*

*"This Directive shall not apply to the following activities: (...) social services such as social housing services, childcare and family services"*

*"It is necessary to exclude the field of labour law and social security law from the scope of this Directive"*

*"Service providers have to comply with terms and conditions of employment (...) in the Member State where the service is provided."*

## Services of General Interest: What are we talking about?

Ever had that feeling that everybody else knows what the Services Directive is about except you?

**I**n this article we try to set out what the Services debate is about, the latest developments and the implications for social services organisations involved in the fight against poverty.

### Services and the Bolkestein Directive

The liberalisation of the internal market is a central tenet of the revised Lisbon Strategy. Since the 1990s, the EU has been steadily removing red tape in the manufacturing sector, enabling companies to operate across national borders. But with the Service sector providing 75% of EU jobs and 65% of GDP, the pressure has been on to extend this process.

The new Services Directive, proposed in January 2004 under Commissioner Bolkestein, aims to do exactly this, making it easier for service providers to deliver services in other Member States. The underlying assumption is that "liberalisation" will lead to better quality services and lower costs. The fear is that it will result in exactly the opposite: social dumping - pushing up prices and lowering of standards. The proposal in its original form would also have lumped together a vast range of services under the same umbrella: from financial services, employment agencies, to gas, water and social, education, health and housing services.

### SGI and SGEI: What's the difference?

A central focus of debate has been whether **Services of General Interest** (SGI) and **Services of General Economic Interest** (SGEI) should be subject to the Directive (see margin p.3). Whereas the current consensus is to exclude SGI so far, SGEI remain in the Directive... so far! These latter services cover everything from the so-called network services: i.e. water, telecommunications and electricity to employment, health, education

and social services... For the Commission the central role of the EU in this area is to ensure that liberalisation works hand in hand with preserving the fundamental rights to these essential services. The Commission is confident that *"the objectives of an open and competitive internal market and developing high quality, accessible and affordable services of general interest are fundamentally compatible"*.

### What about social services?

The issue of social services highlights some of the key problems. When the EU talks of SGEI, in general they are concerned with the big "network" services, but in reality most social services are SGEI, i.e. they have an economic dimension with paid staff and economic frames of reference.

Most Member States are also keen to promote a mixed public/private social service delivery model, in the push to "modernise" the sector. But social services do not happily fit this mould. As the Commission pointed out in its White Paper, *"the personal nature of many social and health services leads to requirements that are significantly different from the network industries"*.

Social services are very different from commercial services. They are multifaceted services, providing a wide range of services in a holistic way. The issue of how quality is defined and from who's point of view, is therefore key to any discussion about defending social services specificity. Most agree that the EU cannot talk about defending the quality of such vital, fundamental services in the same breath as mobile phones.

### Country of origin

All Member States have national legislation to regulate the delivery of social services. These are vital to ensure social standards, and to protect often vulnerable users. They usually define standards and obligations, in relation to quality and the content of the services in order to guarantee

**The Service sector provides 75% of EU jobs and 65% of GDP**

accessibility, quality and continuity. The provisions of the Services Directive that were seen as particularly problematic were those related to the country of origin principle.

This principle would have enabled a provider to offer the services in another member state, using the standards and conditions of the provider's country. This could have meant supporting the lowest common denominator. What chances would there be to defend quality of services and wages/conditions for key workers if providers with lower wages/conditions and guarantees were able to undercut home bids?

#### Why is it important?

This may all feel irrelevant to most small service providers. Why would a foreign services company want to compete? What chance would they have against local providers? The reality is that with demographic change, personal services have become big business. The consequences of the vertiginous integration of women into the labour market on a rapidly ageing population are now coming home to roost.

Private and social enterprise companies have not been slow in spotting the key business opportunities emerging to provide key caring support services in childcare, and for ageing, sick or disabled dependents often previously provided by women. All this adds up to increasing pressure to open up the market. In the long-run this is likely to lead to more private/third sector services providing key services both internally and across borders. These are the real implications of the directive for the sector.

#### For or against liberalisation?

The debate also runs the danger of splitting the sector. Many non-profit making services are worried about the general trend of liberalisation leading to an irreversible downgrading of services, and the eradication of their own services. Others working in the private sector or some entrepreneurial social

enterprises are poised to take advantage of this process, particularly in the new member states that have been dominated by a top-down public sector. Most would agree that whatever position is taken the sector needs more time to prepare itself for this process. Most social NGOs have therefore supported the Social Platform campaign for the exclusion of Social Services from the directive as SGI and SGEI, based on this assumption.

#### Latest developments

On 16 February 2006, in a momentous display of negotiated pacts between the two major political groups (EPP and PES), the European Parliament adopted its report by 391 votes to 213, with 34 abstentions (see *margin p.2*). In this report the MEPs voted to exclude services "*pursuing a social welfare objective*" and for the PES amendments to exclude "*social services such as social housing services, childcare and family services*" from the Directive.

With demographic change, personal services have become big business

Other key decisions were the dropping of the country of origin principle and the exclusion of labour and social security law from the scope of the Directive. The revised

Commission position, issued on 4 April, seems to take account of the compromise position agreed by the Parliament. However, worries are already being voiced about how far this is likely to go, with a strong posse of Member States including UK, and most of the new Member States, determined to keep SGEI in the Directive and ambiguous about excluding social services.

For this reason, anti-poverty organisations continue to press the campaign on excluding social services of general economic interest and eagerly await the promised Communication on social services and health (rumoured to be out in May). This should explore the specificity of social services, tackling the key concerns on quality and the implications across all fields, including state aids and public procurement questions.

Sian Jones

## DEFINITIONS OF SGI AND SGEI

What are these? Surprisingly, there is no clear definition of either of these terms. The European Parliament has recently specified it is up to member states to decide.

The Commission White Paper on Services of General Interest - COM (2004) 374 - in its annex comments that only the term SGEI (Services of General Economic Interest) is used in the Treaty under Article 16 and 86(2) and refers to "*services of an economic nature which are subject to a specific service obligation, because they serve the general interest*". Under the Treaty, each country can decide how they organise these services: through public, private or third sector. These are services that count as an economic activity and are open to competition.

The term SGI is therefore drawn by inference to mean services serving the general public interest that are subject to a public service obligation. In simple terms, these are services which are held to be essential to the public interest and are therefore regulated by specific government legislation. As such, SGI are at the heart of the European Social Model, promoting fundamental social and economic rights and economic, social and territorial cohesion, together with EU Social Protection systems.

S.J.

## Social services: value added and employment

Contribution of education, health,  
social work and other services (%) :

	Total economy gross value added (*)	Total employ- ment
A	13,9	18,6
B	16,5	24,4
CZ	10,9	14,2
DK	19,9	28,4
E	14,6	19,7
FIN	17,1	26,4
F	15,5	25,3
DE	15,7	22,4
EL	13,5	16,1
HU	14,8	19,7
IRL	13,3	21,4
I	14,3	22,2
L	10,2	17,1
NL	17,2	26,8
PL	13,8	14,4
P	17,7	19,2
SK	11,1	18,5
SWE	18,5	32,3
UK	17,4	23,8

(\*) Gross value added is defined as the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption.

Source: OECD in Figures - 2005 edition

## National networks on the front line

Among others, EAPN Ireland and EAPN France have been active in campaigning on the Services Directive.

### Ireland: for the exemption of all social services

The European Parliament debate on the Services Directive in February 2006 caught the public imagination in Ireland more than most European issues. This was mainly because of the trade union campaign against the 'country of origin principle'. This was linked in public debate to a dispute at the recently privatised 'Irish Ferries' company. Management had tried to re-register the company in Cyprus, sack all workers and replace them with new workers with long hours and a third of the Irish minimum wage. This led to a strike and occupation of ferries, and the public biggest demonstration since the invasion of Iraq.

EAPN Ireland supports the trade union campaign, but gives priority to the Social Platform demand to exempt all social services from the Directive. We established a campaign and information web-page ([www.eapn.ie/policy/177](http://www.eapn.ie/policy/177)) for members and politicians. All Irish MEPS were briefed individually, and members were also encouraged to talk to their local MEP. Some, like Prionsias de Rossa of the Socialist Group, gave strong back-up to the campaign, while for others it was new.

In the last week before the Parliament vote, we concentrated on ensuring support for the amendment which would exempt all social services. Nearly all Irish MEPs supported this amendment, mostly against their European groups, and it was passed by a very small majority. When the Directive was discussed in the Irish Parliament ('Dail'), the social service issue became a central part of the debate.

The campaign is now focused on the Government and, to a lesser extent, the Commissioner responsible, who is Irish. Government representatives contacted us after a correspondence in the national newspapers and we hope this will translate into support in the Council discussions.

R. Hanan

### France: an over-simplified public discussion

In January 2006, EAPN France joined with 34 other French voluntary groups in calling on French MEPs to get social and health services of general interest (SSGI) excluded from the scope of the Services Directive. The policy position followed on from the campaigning done since 2004 by EAPN France member UNIOPSS - the national umbrella organization of private health and welfare charities. It was concerned to see that charities' specific characteristics were taken into account in the construction of Europe, and had urged the French authorities to give the Commission a clear understanding of the reasons for national practices on social services of general interest.

So, what is the verdict on what happened? The disputed draft Services Directive gave an opportunity for a fresh, in-depth, positive discussion on the nature of social services and the specific contributions made by the voluntary sector to them, and an awakening by the voluntary community of the need to take on board European realities. It also once again brought home to voluntary groups the difficulty they have in asserting their role and making their voice heard in what can be an over-simplified public discussion, as happened in particular with the Services Directive during the consultation on ratification of the draft Constitutional treaty. That said, the exercise seems to have paid off with MEPs in their February debate and vote on the Directive, since they finally came onside by giving recognition to the specific nature of social services by voting for their exclusion.

P. Boulte



## European Commission to ban low rents!

Sounds like a headline from eurosceptic sensationalist press? Applying the Services Directive to the social housing sector could, in theory, give rise to such outrageous scenarios.

**C**ECODHAS (\*) has been actively lobbying to protect the social housing sector from a Directive which does not distinguish between regulations which give an unfair advantage to native profit-driven service providers vis-à-vis their foreign competitors and regulations adopted to support individuals in accessing affordable, decent housing in increasingly over-burdened and over-priced housing sectors.

Providing affordable and social housing is crucial for the relief of poverty, for a successful economy and a fair society. Social housing organisations, be they associations, cooperatives, foundations or municipal housing companies, have been established to this end. The services they provide are not restricted to the provision of affordable housing. They also run community support programmes which promote integration and can provide vital support for the disabled, the elderly, the homeless, immigrants and other vulnerable groups. Many work with other bodies such as local authorities, resident associations, schools, government welfare departments, employment and training services and the police to solve local problems and to regenerate run-down neighbourhoods.

### Heavily regulated

The 'red-tape' and regulations which are to be prohibited by the Services Directive could include in some cases regulations which ensure the continuity of the services provided by these social housing organisations to communities throughout Europe! Throughout Europe different social housing regimes are in place and if not controlled directly by the state are supported by the state and therefore, by nature, heavily regulated. These regulations have been put in place to protect tenants and ensure a certain standard of social housing provision.

For example, in some countries, organisations must subscribe to financial guarantee systems. Some are obliged to declare themselves non-

for-profit and to have tenants and local authority representatives on their administrative councils. Some are bound to provide additional services to promote tenant participation. In many cases in exchange for state aid they are bound to respect rent ceilings, forbidden or restricted from carrying out evictions and denied the right to choose their tenants. They are obliged to operate within a restricted geographical area. There is a limitation on the number of organisations and they must be registered with a recognised monitoring body.

### A blatant mismatch

In the name of fair competition, the Services Directive aims to prohibit or limit this type of regulation, not because European legislators are out to destroy social housing systems, but simply because it was not written with social housing organisations in mind. The European Parliament has recognised the blatant mismatch and voted to remove social housing and social services from the scope of the Directive, the Council will hopefully follow suit. This however does not solve the underlying lack of joined-up thinking between social and economic representatives at EU level which initiatives like the Services Directive illustrate.

There is an urgent need for more regulation of housing markets and an increase in supply of social and affordable housing. Growing societal divisions and tensions based on wealth, ethnic origin, religion, age, also illustrate the need for the type of community support or 'social regulation' measures carried out by social housing organisations and other social service providers. EU legislation should reflect this need.

Sorcha Edwards  
Communications Officer, CECODHAS

(\*) European Liaison Committee for Social Housing, [www.cecodhas.org](http://www.cecodhas.org)

There is an  
urgent need  
for affordable  
housing

## "THE INITIAL BOLKESTEIN PROPOSAL IS DEAD"

Just after the European Parliament (EP)'s vote on the Services Directive, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) presented it as a "major victory for European workers", burying the initial Bolkestein proposal. "This vote shows clearly that MEPs have succeeded in finding a compromise that allows for the opening up of the services market, while at the same time safeguarding the European Social Model, even if there are still some improvements to be made", declared ETUC General Secretary John Monks.

ETUC has assessed the positive impact of the Euro-demonstration of 14 February, and believes that the compromise agreed by the EP must be the foundation for future decisions on the issue.

However, during the Competitiveness Council on 13 March, some of the 25 Member States took the view that the EP's compromise goes too far, and reduces the ambitions of the original proposal. "We remain very watchful on the evolution of this text and we will take care to ensure that the EP's proposal is not undermined in substance", added John Monks on 15 March.

Source: [www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)

## Social services in the Czech Republic

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, no comprehensive data currently exists on social services in the Czech Republic, or on services provided by NGOs. The Ministry annual report states that in 1999, 47.5% of services were provided by the state, 35.4% by municipalities and cities, 10.4% by churches and 6.7% by NGOs. Together they provided 929 social care facilities with a capacity of 71.977 places. This included: 329 old people's homes, 152 pensioners centres, 70 social care institutes for adults, 3 institutes for chronic alcoholics and drug addicts, 5 institutes for chronic psychotic and psychopathic patients, 185 social care institutes for young people, 35 foster centres, 33 homes for single mothers, 22 charity homes and 4 others.

The Ministry acknowledges that further development of the sector is being "hindered by out-dated legislation, division of competencies, methods of distributing funds and professional abilities of social workers in the public administration".

However, Civil Development Foundation points out that even if the State is the biggest financial spender, there are higher numbers of NGOs involved in social services than state institutions.

S.J.

Sources: <http://www.mpsv.cz/en/1613/>  
<http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/1998/2646.pdf>

## "Small Czech NGOs are not even aware of this Directive"

How is the issue of social services considered among Czech NGOs? Interview with David Stulik, Civil Society Development Foundation (\*).

**EAPN: How has the provision of social services changed in the Czech Republic? Do you believe this is a positive development?**

**David Stulik:** There are several major changes in the sector of social services. First, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been decentralising the system of financing these services and is passing over more competences to newly established regions and regional authorities. Second, the Act on Social Services is about to come into force after lengthy debates.

This Act should "equalize" the chances of NGOs and public institutions, which also provide social services, in their access to public finances. Also, standards of social service will be introduced. Those, willing to "use" public funds (including NGOs), will need to observe them. All this could mean a significant qualitative improvement (compared to current practices) for social NGOs and better mid-term prospects for them, as long as the standards that are applied focus on the real needs of the users.

**What is the value added of the services NGOs offer, as compared with normal public or private services?**

Social services of Czech small NGOs are better "tailored-made" for specific target groups. NGOs work individually and devote more time and attention to their "clients". Their biggest assets are their passion and devotion, with which they take care of their target group. Next, they know exactly what the needs of their "clients" are, they have excellent in-depth knowledge from their "field" work. Last, but not least, Czech NGOs are very innovative and efficient, they have many good ideas how to improve their work, services and performance.

Public institutions generally do not have personalised approach towards people in need, though

some of them do provide quality standards. But these institutions receive public funding "directly" from the regional authorities and thus represent unequal competition to NGOs.

**How do you view the Bolkestein directive?**

Small Czech NGOs are not even aware of this Directive. If, theoretically they knew more about it, they would be likely to demand that social services remain outside of the scope. Anyway, it seems to us that small NGOs will not have the problem with the potential possibility to provide services across borders. They work with concrete individuals and target groups and they will not see it as viable that somebody else would come to the Czech Republic and start providing services.

Any organisation coming from another country will be lacking the cultural background, the

knowledge of specific conditions, the situation of the particular target group, and the history of social problems. In short, they will not be able to provide a quality service. All these factors will significantly hinder NGOs or other organisations/institutions from abroad to expend their services in those areas, where Czech small social NGOs operate nowadays. Similarly, these small organisations do not

even think about extending their activities even in other cities and municipalities. Therefore, they would hardly even consider providing services abroad. As it has been said, any potential interest among NGOs should be expected among larger organisations, which have the ambition to grow and extend their areas of activities.

Interview: Sian Jones

(\*) An NGO administrating Global grants for small social NGOs throughout the Czech Republic.



## The social priorities of the Reform Programme

As any other Member State, Cyprus has submitted its National Reform Programme under the revised Lisbon Strategy.

**T**he Cypriot Reform Programme is structured in three chapters: macro-economic policies, micro-economic policies, and employment. Under the employment chapter, the

Programme examines how social cohesion could be enhanced, in particular through the integration of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups into the labour market.

The Cypriot labour market is characterised, comparatively to other EU Member States, by high participation and employment rates. Indicatively, the unemployment rate, according to the Labour Force Survey was at 5% of the economically active population in 2004, whereas the overall employment rate was at 69.1% and the employment rate for women at 59.0%, only marginally below the Lisbon targets of 70% and 60% respectively. Another basic characteristic of the labour market in Cyprus is the employment of large numbers of foreign workers, particularly in unskilled or low-skilled occupations, as well as an increasing number of Turkish Cypriots. In 2004, excluding EU nationals, foreign workers accounted for 12.3% of gainful employment.

### A gender pay gap of 24%!

However, the National Reform Programme stresses that the educational system fails to respond to labour market needs in a flexible way and that there is low utilisation of flexible forms of employment, including part-time employment, and low labour participation rate of persons with special needs. Moreover, it is necessary to reduce youth unemployment, which is much higher than the national unemployment average, indicating difficulties in the transition process from education to work.

Concerning gender equality, gender gaps in employment and unemployment and pay are still widespread in Cyprus. The problem lies primarily

in the pay gap (23.8 % in 2004, compared to 25.9% in 2000). The main reason for the gender pay gap is sectoral or occupational segregation; there is a higher percentage of men with professional qualifications and managerial positions in the labour market, whilst women predominate in lower paid, low skill jobs (shop and office assistants) and part-time employment (in 2004, 13.2% of employed women held a part-time job, compared to only 5.2% of men).

### Economic migration

As already indicated, a large number of foreign workers are employed in Cyprus, particularly in unskilled or low-skilled occupations: in 2004, 34.9% of the foreign workers in Cyprus were employed as household help, 17.9% worked in the sector of hotels and restaurants, 9.2% in agriculture, 8.8% in manufacturing, 9.6% in trade and 10.3% in construction.

The poverty rate is now equal to the EU-25 average

The Reform Programme proposes to review the overall strategy towards the employment of foreign labour force with the aim of establishing a balanced approach to the issue by taking into consideration the inter-play of three main factors: 1) the strategic re-orientation of the economy towards higher added activities; 2) the policy objective for the mobilisation of the presently inactive labour force and 3) the potential labour mobility from the labour market of the EU-25, and shortly EU-27.

### What about social cohesion?

According to the Reform Programme, Cyprus is generally characterised by conditions of social peace and broader social cohesion: *"Economic inequality, poverty and social exclusion are not major problems in Cyprus. This is attributable mainly to the traditionally low unemployment rate, as unemployment constitutes the main source of poverty and exclusion"*.

However, the Reform Programme acknowledges that pockets of exclusion do exist amongst the elderly, people with disabilities, the single-parent

## PROFILE OF NAPN-CYPRUS

Welcomed by the 2005 General Assembly into membership of EAPN, the National Anti-Poverty Network Cyprus (NAPN-Cyprus) has been formally set up on 28 September 2005 in Nicosia.

NAPN-Cyprus is an informal agency, who has the following objectives:

- Provide information and create awareness among the public and the institutions and agencies of Cyprus;
- Identify and make visible groups of the population which are victims of social exclusion, regardless of gender, race, religion, national origin, culture or sexual orientation;
- Exercise pressure on all decision-making levels in Cyprus so as to adopt and implement social policies and practical and legal measures which will prevent, immediately alleviate and finally eradicate poverty and social exclusion;
- Submit proposals for improving the Cyprus Action Plan on Inclusion.

**Membership:** Any NGO or Agency (excluding government bodies or government related agencies) can become a member of NAPN-Cyprus, provided that it subscribes to the Network's objectives.

**Contact person:** Ninetta Kazantzis,  
E-mail: [nineta@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:nineta@cytanet.com.cy)



families and families whose head has low educational qualifications.

In this respect, the Cypriot Government, within the framework of its overall social policy to ensure an adequate standard of living for everyone, provides public assistance to every person legally residing in Cyprus if their resources do not meet their basic and special needs as determined by law.

Moreover, it is noted that the current legislation on Public Assistance incorporates employment incentives to encourage the (re-)integration into the labour market of public assistance recipients and their gradual independence from public funds. For example, special categories of vulnerable persons are entitled to public assistance even if they are employed full-time. Furthermore, there are a number of Government schemes and grants targeting vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, drug users, low income households wishing to acquire their own home etc. For instance, social pension is granted to persons above the age of 65, who are not eligible for pension via the Social Insurance Scheme.

### Poverty figures

The Reform Programme mentions an improvement of the situation concerning social inclusion and income distribution. According to the results of the Family Budget Survey carried out in 2003 vis-à-vis the corresponding results of the Family Budget Survey of 1996-1997:

- The percentage of people at risk of poverty (having an income lower than 60% of the equivalent median income) fell from 16.3% of the total population in 1996/97 to 15.3% in 2003, and it is now equal to the EU-25 average for 2001.
- The risk of poverty for older persons (over 65), who represent 11.9% (2003) of the total population, fell from 58% to 52%.

Similarly, there was a 10 percentage-point decrease in the risk of poverty among persons living in one-person households (65+ years old). As the most vulnerable group of the population, these persons still have the highest probability of being below the poverty line, although the relevant figure fell from 83% in 1997 to 73% in 2003.

- The rate of child poverty, which according to the 1997 statistics was one of the lowest in the EU, decreased by 1 percentage point reaching 11% in 2003.
- The inequality of income distribution fell as evidenced by the S80/S20 indicator, which decreased to 4.1 in 2003 as compared to 4.4 in 1997. Similarly, the Gini coefficient fell below the EU average to 0.27, showing a long-term downward trend in income inequalities.

In order to enhance the conditions of social cohesion, the Cypriot Government has identified two main policy priorities: 1) ensuring an adequate standard of living for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and encouraging their (re-)integration into the labour market; 2) safeguarding affordable access to government services, including education and health to all.

Source: NRP of Cyprus, <http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/mof.nsf/>

### "A Future Worth Having"

This report is the EAPN assessment of how the new Lisbon process is integrating social inclusion priorities and promoting the active participation of social NGOs and people experiencing poverty. It presents the responses from 15 EAPN national networks to the social inclusion and employment content of their National Reform Programmes.

The report also presents EAPN's response to the Commission's Annual Progress Report "*Time to move up a gear*", which is the European Commission assessment of the first year of the revised Lisbon Strategy. EAPN comments on whether the key priorities identified in that report can promote synergy between social inclusion and social protection and growth and jobs, and make progress towards the eradication of poverty. The final section sets out a roadmap to a better implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in 5 key steps.

Available on the EAPN website: [www.eapn.org](http://www.eapn.org)

**Social services are vital to ensure social standards, and to protect vulnerable users**

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