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European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland Strand House, 22 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1

06 November 2009

Dear Mairead,

RE: [Parliamentary declaration on protection of social rights in fighting the economic crisis \(0056/2009\)](#)

The current crisis is starting to hit hard. Millions of people throughout the EU have lost their jobs, while the 79 million Europeans already in poverty, are facing an incredibly bleak winter – increased risk of homelessness, deepening cycles of debt without access to fair credit, and greater difficulties in accessing work. The experience of EAPN members shows that many Governments have actually increased pressure on people in poverty by restricting benefits and enforcing increased conditionality. These harsh measures are presented as ‘incentives to work’, despite a rapidly shrinking jobs market.

In its backing to the EU economic recovery package, the Spring Council in March 2009 called on the need for “solidarity, allowing social protection systems to fully play their role as automatic stabilizers, calling for particular attention to be given to the most vulnerable and to new risks of exclusion”. However no social impact assessments have been carried out and in many countries public services are being undermined in an effort to deal with increasing public deficits.

For new Member States like Latvia, Hungary and Romania, the situation is even worse. The bail-out loans given by the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission have focused on the need to cut public expenditure without guaranteeing social rights through social conditionality. This has led to massive cuts in pensions, wages, hospital and child care services and benefits - threatening the very livelihoods of people already on the poverty line.

EAPN Ireland is asking you, as an Irish MEP, to support the fight against poverty and exclusion in Europe by:

- Signing the European Parliament written declaration (0056/2009) on the protection of social rights fighting against the economic crisis in the European Union.
- Taking action within your political group to get signatures before the deadline of 11 February 2010.

We very much hope you will sign the declaration and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Anna Visser.' The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Visser
Director