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Hungarian EU Presidency 2011

10th EU MEETING OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY

13 & 14 May 2011 Egmont Palace–Brussels

EMPLOYMENT, WORK, JOBS

The Reality for People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion

Supported by The European Commission
Organised with the assistance of The European Anti-Poverty Network–EAPN
Hosted in Egmont Palace by the Belgian Government

EAPN
EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

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Contents

Will Europe 2020 make a difference?

'Employment, work and jobs: the reality for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion' was the topic of the tenth European meeting of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in Brussels on 13–14 May 2011. The meeting was organised by the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union, with support from the European Commission and the European Anti Poverty Network and was hosted in the Egmont Palace in Brussels by the Belgian government. As during the previous nine years the delegates were people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, organised in national delegations from 26 countries. Other participants at the meeting were guests who included decision makers from the European institutions (Commission, Parliament and the current and future EU Presidencies of Hungary, Poland and Denmark), national and international bodies, the social partners (European Trade Union Confederation and Business Europe), academics and other NGOs.

Set in the context of deepening crisis which is making jobs scarcer, social benefits harder to come by and a deteriorating quality of life for many people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, a central question for many present, was whether the new instruments put in place, in particular through the Europe 2020 strategy, would really make a difference to their lives.

People experiencing poverty had the opportunity to describe the key issues and to make proposals surrounding the difficulties of accessing employment, work and jobs. Central to the reflection is the fact that despite any progress that has been made in recent times at European level (and often at national level too) they are angry to note that in many instances this progress has not been followed through with implementation. Faced with the impact of the global crisis, they can no longer wait: "people experiencing poverty feel the impact of the crisis stronger than the banks".

The guests, who were present to listen and exchange with the delegates; each reaffirmed the vital importance of listening to people experiencing poverty in EU policy making.

This report aims to reflect the debates and proposals made by the delegates and their guests during the meeting: firstly a reflection on the outcomes and follow up of the previous European meetings of people experiencing poverty, secondly the creative presentations by each of the national delegations of their first hand experience of employment, work and jobs, and in the final part delegates debate and make recommendations to decision-makers on employment, work and jobs emerging from their experience and their work together with the guests in six workshops.

In appendix to this report you can find the responses of the European Commission and EAPN to the demands and messages arising from previous European meetings, as well as a list of delegates at this meeting.

Key messages to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council from the 10th Meeting

The theme of the annual meeting was "Employment, Work and Jobs: the reality for People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion". Set in the context of deepening crisis which is making jobs scarcer, social benefits harder to come by and a deteriorating quality of life for many people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, the question, for many present, was whether the new instruments put in place through the Europe 2020 Strategy would really make a difference to their lives and the lives of their children.

Key Messages of people experiencing poverty were:

- **The need for quality jobs:** If employment is to be a way out of poverty then public authorities and social partners must ensure that the trend towards 'working poor' is reversed and conditions that quality jobs with living wages, decent social protection systems and conditions that respect work and private responsibilities are created. Poor quality jobs for poor people is not an answer.
- **The absence of jobs:** The delegates confirmed that people who live in poverty want to work but the reality is that there are more people wanting work then there are jobs available. The crisis has made this situation even worse. In the absence of jobs people need access to income sufficient to live in dignity.
- **Support to access employment:** Even in case of difficulties to find employment, tailored support should be provided for people living in poverty or the long term unemployed to help them access to decent employment. Investing in early childhood development, schooling, including not abandoning people who drop out of school early and opportunities for people in poverty to access life long learning are essential investments to increase chances to access employment.
- **Tackle discrimination:** Specific attention was given to the problem of discrimination and exclusion for groups including: disabled people, migrants, ex prisoners, long term unemployed and Roma. The implementation of anti-discrimination legislation as well as positive actions should be taken to overcome the barriers caused by discrimination. The particular difficulties faced by women, who often have the major caring responsibilities, and often work in sectors with precarious and poor quality jobs needs special attention.
- **Implement the commitments:** Delegates said that they have heard many fine proposals to fight poverty at these and other meetings, such as: the target to reduce poverty, the active inclusion recommendation on adequate minimum income, access to essential services and support to access employment, the commitment for strategies to address homelessness or child poverty. The delegates gave a clear message that real action is needed to follow up and implement the commitments. They reiterated that people experiencing poverty are ready to engage at all levels in the implementation of the necessary actions.

- **Tackle the causes of poverty and not only the symptoms:** The delegates reaffirmed that the current economic and social systems have an effect on the occurrence and levels of poverty and there was a clear call on the political institutions to respond by combating the causes of poverty and not only the symptoms.

As regards the future, there was a call that the annual meeting should have a structural place in the "European Platform against Poverty" and that this should be underpinned by meetings held at national and regional levels as part of the strategy to fight poverty.

Setting the scene: the opening plenary session

Welcome by Csaba ORY, Member of the European Parliament, Conference Chair

Opening the meeting Csaba Ory (MEP) insisted on its great importance, as he had already attended many meetings on this topic in the European Parliament and confirmed his support of the Open Method of Coordination approach. It is an honour for the Hungarian Presidency to chair this meeting as the Presidency is concentrating on the 2020 strategic framework. The Roma community in particular is impacted by poverty in the EU. The EU has acknowledged that poverty is a Europe wide issue that requires a lot of attention and has launched the Europe 2020 strategy which plans to make a Europe of "vitality and dynamic".

With the increase in the number of elderly in society Csaba Ory recalled that it is necessary to strive long and hard so "people access employment to ensure their own future". Globalisation is important, and the economy and politics need to be overhauled to bring together actions in a harmonised way. Anti poverty strategy is at the heart of the 2020 Strategy.

This meeting is one way to discover tangible solutions to everyday problems and to convey ideas and proposals to politicians. Many delegates experience poverty so it is important that the work would be fruitful.

Zoltán BALOG, Minister of State for Social Inclusion, Hungary

To be poor means a lot of different things. For a politician, in order to answer the question "What does it mean to be poor?" it is important to ask people experiencing poverty. Protagonists in this meeting are people experiencing poverty, hence the importance of this dialogue is to find solutions. We have to listen to what people have to say, which is what this dialogue is all about. One weakness of policy making is that politicians discuss policy without listening.

The Ministry for Social Inclusion in Hungary is responsible for the fight against poverty and social exclusion, being responsible for programmes to fight poverty amongst children, as well as promoting inclusive living conditions for the Roma community. They believe that work/employment can help people get out of poverty. For Hungary this is a 'sensitive' issue. The lack of employment causes problems for people: there are 700 000 Roma in Hungary and more than 75% don't have access to employment. Besides, in Hungary 16% of children live in households with low work intensity. The aim is to get 400 000 people into employment rather than depend on social benefits, by creating jobs in the labour market and making sure people are more prepared for employment.

Employment programmes are not enough for people who are long term unemployed; there is a need to raise awareness among people experiencing poverty so that they "can become more interested in getting a job". All social programmes need to be coordinated; the Open Method of Coordination is well recognised and has had an important impact on social policies, as it works positively.

"We need to listen to people"

Recently Mr Balog met a group of 45 people who have become "experts of experiences". Europe 2020 should not only focus on economic objectives, but should include the social inclusion of people… "We cannot have society driven only by employment, societies goal must be social inclusion." With poverty there is a risk of losing self esteem, so we must continue to be sensitive to democracy/solidarity which must develop throughout Europe via social inclusion.

"In Hungary there are changes in the political élite: some leaders of the new political élite come from a poorer background… we need to remember that what they experienced in the past is still experienced by many today."

László ANDOR, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The Commissioner reaffirmed the importance of the annual meetings of people experiencing poverty because each year they help to keep the struggle against poverty and social exclusion high on the policy agenda, both at EU and national level, demonstrating clearly that social inclusion policies can only be effective if people experiencing poverty participate in the policy process. The number of people living in poverty has not decreased in recent years and with the economic and financial crisis the number of those at risk of poverty is well above 80 million. A key question is how to avoid a deterioration of social protection and an increase in poverty at a time of tough budgetary constraints? For the first time, the fight against poverty is at the heart of the EU

agenda, with Europe 2020, the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

First, the Member States have adopted a common **European-wide target to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty** by 2020. Last month, the majority of Member States presented their national targets to make this happen. "But we cannot do it alone. We need your help to build on these targets through your activities".

Second, the **European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion** was adopted in December 2010 with the aim to tackle not only the symptoms of poverty and social exclusion, but also the causes, by looking beyond those fields that have been traditionally at the heart of our action, such as social protection or services. The Platform will also support social innovation to promote more innovative responses to social needs. It will also set out specific ways to make better use of EU funding.

Third, the Commission has adopted a policy initiative that translates and applies the approach of the Europe 2020 strategy to the socio-economic situation of **Roma**. In April the Commission presented a Communication stressing that this situation is not acceptable and proposed an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The first ever EPSCO Council meeting devoted exclusively to Roma will outline the next steps in implementing this new EU Framework.

The focus of this year's European meeting of people experiencing poverty is on **employment, work and jobs**. Alongside the poverty reduction target, Europe 2020 has also set an ambitious employment target of 75% of men and women in employment by 2020, which is a huge challenge given the impact of the recent crisis. There are currently around 23 million people looking for work across Europe - 7 million more than before the crisis, and youth unemployment has risen by 1.3 million with many youngsters who have never had the chance to acquire work experience. The goal is to empower all Europeans and provide them with the right mix of skills.

However, having a job does not always lead to an absence of poverty and precariousness – even today, 8% of **the working population** are now **at risk of poverty**. Employment protection legislation needs to be further reformed, to achieve a genuine balance between employment growth and job quality, as well as reducing labour market segmentation.

The **active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market** is a key priority for the EU and for the Member States. It is vital that those furthest from the labour market continue to benefit from enhanced social support even after they are in a job, so it is important to avoid a situation where they become trapped in a cycle of moving from unemployment to low-quality, precarious employment and back. However, in several Member States, a significant percentage of people in need have no access to social assistance or do not take up their rights.

In 20 out of 27 Member States there is a high level of **child poverty**, and in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, some Member States have made the fight against child poverty a priority within their National Reform Programmes. A Recommendation on Child Poverty will be proposed in 2012.

Europe 2020 has put forward a new governance structure that favours a **partnership approach,** in particular by strengthening the involvement of key stakeholders in assessing and evaluating progress. As part of this, the Commission has called on the Member States to establish real partnerships with their national parliaments and stakeholders, such as social partners, civil society and people experiencing poverty, to support the design and implementation of their National Reform Programmes.

Commissioner Andor concluded by saying that he counts on the continued support of the delegates to help the efforts to bring about real change for all Europeans.

Poul Skytte CHRISTOFFERSEN, Danish Ambassador, on behalf of the Danish Presidency of the European Union in 2012, for the Danish Minister for Social Affairs, who was unable to attend

Poul Skytte Christoffersen confirmed that the meeting was about hearing from people who themselves have been exposed to poverty and social exclusion. In 2002 the first Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion took place in Aarhus, during the last Danish Presidency of the European Union, and is now a regular feature every autumn. In recognition of the importance of involving those who know the problems first hand we also have the springtime conferences of people experiencing poverty, like the one we have today.

The Danish Minister at the first Round Table had stated that "above all it is important that everybody participates in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. All players shall be involved: at national, regional and local level. And not least the voluntary players have an important role. It is the common efforts that give the best results. We must create partnerships. The stronger persons have to be front runners and help those who have few resources. We have a common responsibility. We shall be open – and above *all the users shall be involved*".

These words are still valid and are important in the Europe 2020 strategy, with recognition that growth and social inclusion must go hand in hand. Social inclusion will be high on the agenda for years to come, and cooperation on social inclusion has been strengthened.

Poverty is multi dimensional, entailing not only money, but also employment, health, and social resources of the individual person. Therefore it is important to have an *integrated, holistic and preventive approach*. It is basically about looking at the underlying problems and finding new and innovative solutions.

Governments and politicians cannot do this alone. It also requires the efforts of the NGOs and other citizens. That is why strengthening voluntary social work ranks high on the Danish agenda with a National Civil Society Strategy. The top priority of the voluntary sector in Denmark is based on the recognition that the voluntary sector can do something different, for example personal trust-filled relations with citizens as well as new ideas often come from NGOs. That is why we hope that 2011, the European Year for Volunteering, will give more impulse to innovative ideas, since new solutions are needed. Denmark is looking forward to hosting the next meeting of people experiencing poverty during its Presidency of the European Union in spring next year.

Leif JENSEN, Denmark, Experience Report on behalf of the delegates at the 9th European Meeting of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion

Leif Jensen asked what this kind of meeting brings to us. Though the starting points are very different it gathers people who experience the same problems as a basis for discussions, not to stigmatise vulnerable people but to identify common solutions to poverty in different forms. It struck him as very positive that the meetings are not about ranking the miseries such as asking "Who is poorest?" or "who has the hardest life?", but rather about finding common headlines on the problem of poverty in Europe. There is no doubt that poverty is expressed and experienced differently in different countries. But generally, it is not acceptable that there are citizens who are unable to take part in the society they live in, simply because they do not have the financial means.

The 9th meeting made it clear that the problems are diverse and complex. But common to all countries are the lack of affordable housing for people with low income, lack of jobs for decent pay, lack of rights for disabled people and a lack of openings in the labour market - so that everyone who is able to work can get a job. Last time we asked "is it not a game?" "Are we truly heard", "are we being listened to?" We came up with suggestions and the delegates' wishes were heard; they might not be implemented, but the points we formulate hopefully plant a little seed in the mind of the decision makers: a little seed which will hopefully grow into large and concrete initiatives, *if the will is there*. It is important to remember that money is not everything… "But it is jolly nice to have".

This event was also the occasion to remember those who are no longer with us, either because we have lost track of their whereabouts or because they have passed away: Marc Jacques from France, Ole Rudolf and Steen Viggo Jensen from Denmark, Dan Nilson from Sweden, Sandor Lajtos from Hungary, Dian Said from Malta and Fiorella Inbimbo from Italy.

Why are we here again? The follow up of European meetings of people experiencing poverty

Fintan FARRELL, Director, EAPN

Five main messages emerge from the delegation questions about the reality of the follow up from the European meetings:

- The **crisis and austerity measures** are the reality faced by people on the ground. In reality it is "people experiencing poverty who have to pay the price of the crisis". It is as if good social protection systems were the cause of the crisis rather than reckless speculators. Given that reality it is hard to take seriously the poverty reduction Target and the social elements of the Europe 2020 strategy. Delegations ask for evidence that the poverty reduction target is a serious target for EU leaders.
- People heard about the **Platform against Poverty** and have a big question as to how to get involved at national and local level. Will there be a link between the Convention planned in the Platform against Poverty and the annual European meeting of people experiencing poverty?
- **Homelessness and child poverty** were strong issues in previous meetings. There are few poor people in rich families… so we need to deal with these issues. How to ensure that addressing homelessness is part of an integrated approach to tackle poverty? Will the homeless strategies also address the needs of specific groups such as Travellers and Roma? Will a Recommendation on Child Poverty really make a difference?
- Has there been any progress on **adequate minimum income**? Has the Active Inclusion Recommendation made a difference on the ground? Has the reference to energy poverty in relation to national plans on energy as part of the Energy Package had any concrete outcomes?
- More people are carrying the stigma of the links between **discrimination and poverty:** how to overcome this and get access to employment? In considering support for single parents, they must not be forced to make impossible choices.

The delegates' view

For the German delegation the meetings of people experiencing poverty are of fundamental importance, yet "every time we start from scratch". "Nothing gets done"…answers are not very tangible; each and every year there are problems preparing for the meeting, financially… *"We would like to achieve clear results. We need action."*

The Austrian delegation proposed that in order to achieve this it would be necessary to be better organised between meetings, and to exchange information about what is going on in the EU. Coordination is needed, within our countries and throughout Europe. "We *need to create conditions for fundamental rights to be respected."*

Delegates from Belgium and Italy asked what links are there between the meetings of people experiencing poverty and the annual meeting foreseen in the Platform against Poverty? What does the Commission plan to do with the National Reform Programmes from the Member states? In Italy, where there is no minimum income there are 22 lines about poverty in the National Reform Programme. Achieving the poverty target is only feasible if the economy picks up. What can be done to overcome the lack of partnership and the lack of minimum income? "*The National Reform Programme will not help to achieve the targets. We also need to tackle discrimination".* (Italy)

The German delegation presented a statement that they asked the delegates to support:

> *"Being aware that we "the poor" in Europe are being kept poor (and we represent about 100 millions of poor people), that our poverty is caused by unjust economic and social systems, call on the political institutions to finally combat the causes of poverty and not only the symptoms. We want: not to be employed as cheap labour, as opposed to regular labour; when we are not employed and cannot work for whatever reason (e.g. due to illness, old age, homelessness, helplessness…) we want sufficient living standards; finally the abolition of an economic system which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. We, the representatives of the European poor people, wish to send to all poor people of the world our sincere solidarity and encourage all to take on the common fight against riches with us. Let's have a fairer distribution of wealth in society."*

On the topic of the tenth meeting, delegates were concerned with the difficulties in accessing employment for older people and young people, "*we talk about employment for young people and young Roma; what is envisaged for the over 50s?" What will we achieve by the end of 10 years? Will people who are already retired take up the issue of young people?"* They added that in particular it is difficult for poor parents to hold down a job. 'Unseen' work is not considered

as a 'real' job, such as looking after children; so there is an increase in poverty among women; unless we have young people we will not have employment for people; a recent European Parliament document points out that *"investing in young people does not mean eradicating poverty... this is an investment in all of us"*. Employers are taking on people at low level: "we must *make sure employers do not exploit the crisis"* (Spain).

The guests on the Panel on the follow up of previous meetings

Jean LAMBERT (UK), Member of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is preparing its response to the **Platform against Poverty**. Regarding the concern that 'things are going backwards'… the fight against poverty is now part of the Europe 2020 strategy: we need to think how we manage this. Jean Lambert encouraged NGOs to get involved with other groups at local and national levels as social policy lies at national level, for example housing, benefits etc, so meetings like this one should be organised at national level.

Despite the efforts by EAPN and Members of the European Parliament to promote a **Minimum Income Directive**, many still need to be persuaded. This is important as a social 'stabiliser' in times of crisis, which should help those arguing for a minimum income. We also need a 'living wage', for example as in London, where the London Citizens Living Wage Campaign is pushing employers to provide a 'living wage'. There is a proposal from the Commission to bring an evaluation of the **Active Inclusion** recommendation to the European Parliament.

A serious follow up of the Active Inclusion Recommendation would go a long way towards satisfying the demand to have real follow up of the recommendations from these meetings.

More generally we need a new way to measure progress in our socities. The debate of measures beyond GDP is very important. For example the 'gross national happiness index' used in Bhutan is a more holistic approach which could provide inspiration.

Regarding **discrimination,** many are appalled by the use of 'paramilitary action'… we need a more societies approach. The Parliament is still trying to get anti discrimination legislation implemented to provide equality of opportunity, to make a more equal society. Regarding migration we must strive to have equality of rights and treatment. Finally, reflecting how increasingly those on benefit experience discrimination, Jean Lambert told how during a recent demonstration in London posters stated "*before we were the poor dears, now we are the social security scroungers*".

Philippe COURARD, Belgian Secretary of State for Social Integration and Combating Poverty (EU Presidency 2010)

The Belgian Presidency from a social perspective focused on three areas all of which have been key aspects of the recommendations from previous European meetings of people experiencing poverty: **adequate minimum income**, **child poverty** and **homelessness.** The effort to make progress on a directive on adequate **Minimum Income** failed, as many governments were not prepared to consider this possibility. We did manage to have a positive 'peer review' on this topic, but there is still a long way to go to make real progress. Regarding homelessness we had with support from FEANTSA an important consensus conference on this topic. There are commitments in the Platform against Poverty to follow up the outcomes of this conference. In relation to child poverty we were able to make most Progress and we achieved a commitment to bring forward a European Recommendation on child poverty.

On the topic of employment Mr Courard said that we must be realistic and recognise that we will not have full employment in the near future. We therefore must ensure good welfare systems to ensure people who can't find work have financial support. In relation to employment we need to ensure quality jobs. If we are to make progress in the fight against poverty then we must reverse the trend of creating 'working poor'. Regulation to ensure quality jobs is essential. ...

The fight against poverty should start with **preventive actions**, such as housing, health, education, training, employment support etc… Affordable and accessible services as well as good welfare systems are essential to prevent poverty. In the future we must also ensure, as Commissioner Andor has said, that **structural funds**, are used to support the social inclusion agenda.

Antonia CARPARELLI, Acting Director EU 2020, Social Policies, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

The Commissioner gave the political response of the Commission during the opening session. Concerning the involvement of people experiencing poverty in the new **Platform against Poverty**, this is a new programme with a new structure, complementing what has been done for years, for example through the Open Method of Coordination; we want to give teeth to what we have already, for example the annual Round Table against poverty and social inclusion becomes an Annual Convention. The aim is to make a link between the Convention and a better involvement of partners. The link between people experiencing poverty and the Round Table and the new Convention will remain.

> *"The fact that the meeting of people experiencing poverty is not mentioned in the Platform against Poverty has not weakened the role of people experiencing poverty."*

What about trends about volunteering weakening public intervention? This is not the Commission's idea of what is behind the European Year 2011. The Platform against Poverty flags up the importance of promoting the social economy at large, to facilitate its role in public procurement and state aid.

The meetings of people experiencing poverty make a contribution to the knowledge about poverty in Europe; otherwise it is difficult to put faces on poverty. We must not underestimate the focus on 'silent Europe'; in some countries people are systematically silent, with huge levels of new forms of poverty. The annual European meeting of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion can continue to speed the practice of meetings of people experiencing poverty to the national and local levels.

70% of delegates consider that the political impact of the annual meetings is low. Yet last year our Director General Robert Verrue said that the meeting was a 'revelation'. More and more politicians and policy makers attend the meetings of people experiencing poverty, which is very important.

Ludo HOREMANS, President of EAPN

There is a need to address the crisis across all policy. EAPN has prepared a report showing that the lessons of the crisis have not yet been properly drawn. Countries with well developed social welfare systems resisted the crisis well, yet governments are reducing social benefits. There is a need to develop a European strategy, which is not dominated by a narrow economic approach. The Belgian Presidency worked on minimum income but was faced with many reluctant governments, so we need to ensure the fight against poverty is taken up by everyone. There is a hope for support from the ETUC for minimum income for all, and further consultation with social partners is needed to ensure a positive relationship between adequate minimum income schemes and minimum wages.

EAPN considers that the ambitions for the **poverty targets** are too low, and that they should be a minimum, not a maximum, and that it is important for national governments to be involved. However there is not enough space for the **assessment of national poverty plans**. This year we are seeking to ensure the reinforcement of the Open Method of Coordination to ensure active engagement at the national level.

There is no mention of the meeting of people experiencing poverty in the **Platform against Poverty.** We hope that in future people experiencing poverty will be granted enough space as part of the Annual Convention due to take place for the first time later this year. We want people experiencing poverty to be really recognised as part of the Platform against Poverty, including at national level.

Danielle DIERCKX, Researcher, Antwerp University[1]

Danielle Dierckx asked why we are here for the tenth time. Research on the impact of these meetings concluded that

- they made decision-makers smarter by showing the reality behind the statistics as a first step forward
- people experiencing poverty can be active citizens
- they contribute to agenda setting by challenging that the message must be strengthened to be included in the press in each country represented
- they articulate the importance of poverty eradication.

It is agreed that this meeting must be part of the broader policy making in the EU. It would be helpful if annual objectives could be formulated.

Additional values of the meeting are that strengthening civil society is important for the fight against poverty, that as a result of the meetings of people experiencing poverty new organisations and cooperation have been formed, the importance of involving the stakeholders, and that people experiencing poverty feel less isolated, more empowered and more supported. At a time of crisis and austerity measures these meetings are more necessary than ever to keep the fight against poverty visible on the agenda.

1 Author of the Impact study on the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty

Our reality: accessing work, employment and jobs across Europe

Prior to the meeting the national delegations were invited to prepare brief presentations to illustrate different aspects of their experience of access to employment, work and jobs, and some solutions; they made their presentations in plenary using a wide variety of media and creativity: role plays, miming, music, PowerPoint and film.

UK: the **'Climbing out of poverty' snakes and ladder board game** aims to show in a very direct way how people's various experiences impact on their chances of getting out of poverty or plunging deeper into it. The game also refers to some of the barriers and supports needed including a number of policies and certain elements in the structure of the employment sector, in the education, benefits and employment support services as well as family, friends and the wider community support.

Belgium: the presentation was around a **magician's hat** to help people in poverty to overcome difficulties. *"People experiencing poverty must be super magicians, so we must propose practical solutions".*

Bulgaria: the presentation showed a **dice game with 'rich' and poor'**: the rich win every time!

Estonia: the presentation was on "**an insight into Estonian reality of work"**: most Estonians probably believe that hard work means a happy life, yet wages are so low that even an average salary can lead to poverty. In Estonia success equals dignity: asking for support makes you look like a looser… yet nowadays most people are struggling to cope with everyday life and many go to work when they are ill. …greater awareness is needed of rights, possibilities and choices.

Finland: a **Minimum Wage Law is needed as well as a basic income**… to protect people in unstable work; either through training or a job; transitional labour markets should not create social marginalization; socially responsible corporates and public enterprises should be supported in order to recruit workers, and unions should also increase opportunities to recruit more workers; the duration of the employment relationship should be long enough to guarantee the continuation of the earning related allowances.

France: a 'Sandwich' board represented **precarity and unemployment**… referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:… We need appropriate training, simplified bureaucracy, stability, career paths, equal treatment, investment in projects about people, to fight discrimination as well as coordinated administrative management.

Ireland: a scenario depicted the difficulties encountered by people experiencing poverty in **accessing essential social services:** a person overcoming the struggle to cope with poverty/unemployment but gaining in self-confidence is faced with bureaucratic procedures. By the end of the process the person seeking assistance is too tired, slumped and disengaged to respond. So all abandon her.

Italy: in order to **end all poverty**, the questions are: where are my house, my job, my clothes, my food, my childhood, social justice, my equal opportunities? Everyone… has the right to a decent home, to a decent job, has the right to eat, to clothing, to play, to schooling, to equal opportunities and has right to dignity. Everyone has the right to be listened to. Ending poverty is possible.

2 Illustrated on the front cover of this report

Germany: role play showing a rich woman stripping off the poor down to their underwear, then beating and mistreating them…

Netherlands presented the '**simple phase project'**: the *"before-it-happened-to-me phase"* ('Why don't they get a job?'); the *"beginning-of-the-endless" phase* ('too old' – 'rejected'! 'expensive') and then the "*emotional-crisis phase"* (depression … 'hopeless'… 'stop making excuses'…'time to learn'). Timeless tips for "*the willingness-for-learning phase"* are education, as the key to success, a job and reintegration.

Poland: **solutions** to inadequate social inclusion in the field of work: ensure that those who are concerned are heard, guarantee income on an individual basis, hire people for Social Assistance on the basis of their own experience, their sensitivity, kindness, innovative skills/authentic commitment and unconditional respect for law that is accessible and citizen-friendly, raise employees' awareness about their rights and reinforce control over employers with regard to violations of labour law, public grants for companies/ employers that invest in job training for newly hired employees (young people) and monitoring of how these funds are used.

Portugal: a door symbolizes the **labour market**. Each member of the delegation knocks at the door in search of work. Systematically the door is closed. An 'employer', showing his contempt, refuses any type of candidate. Frequently, public programmes aimed at finding a job are a short-term help that serves to mask the reality through the statistics as they fail to achieve the effective integration of the beneficiaries into the normal labour market. Training offers are also inadequate as they do not correspond to real needs.

Slovenia: another **job-seeking** scenario: an employer interviews a person over 60, a well qualified young university graduate, and a migrant looking for a job in order to settle in the country, but refuses them all (no computer experience, unwilling to work anti social hours or hours 'in the black'). The result is that the employer decides to either relocate his production to China, or import workers from China.

Sweden*:* the healthcare system removes people from the health welfare. Even though people still ill, they are considered to be able to work. People are placed outside a real safety net and a real income. One should have a salary for work that's been done and have an identity through the job, with a sustainable income. Fulfilling demands in order to receive social welfare is demeaning for a person who is ill.

Greece: "3 cities, 3 streets, 1 dream": four women took photos of their lives and people around them, showing what kind of work they do, the lack of employment and the poverty, in three Greek cities: Athens, Thessaloniki and Lerapetra: three different cities, three different streets, one (same) truth. Five children from 8–18 years old draw their dream job.

Hungary asks **what is work,** and shows how the answer differs for the most excluded. It then contrasts different kinds of work and how schooling leads to qualifications, with scenes of the living conditions of the most excluded; the final scene shows the goal of a job seeking service and support group work.

Lithuania: unemployment in Lithuania is at 14.4%. In Lithuania the at-risk-of–poverty rate in 2009 was 20.6%, the in-work poverty rate was 10.4% whilst over the entire EU-27 the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 16.3% and the in-work poverty rate was 8.4%.

Norway: barriers to employment: students who have not completed secondary education at the prescribed age; 8 000 young people under 29 receiving a disability benefit; young people who have been out of work or school for many years; non Western immigrants excluded from the labour market because of their weak social capital (networks/age); people with missing front teeth socially excluded in the job seeking arena; the homeless have no time for job seeking, because they use their time to find a place to sleep; limited employment opportunities for single parents who have to work a little less in order to have time for domestic work.

Denmark: the **dilemmas** surrounding employment and social marginalisation: social policies are closely linked to labour policies: "everybody" has to work. However the labour market is very 'closed' and if you are unable to work full normal hours it is difficult to get a job. In order to receive any form of benefit you have to be available for the labour market, to attend regular meetings at your local job centre and to participate in social activation on a regular basis. If you are unable to live up to this due to circumstances in your life you do not get any money… what if you have an addiction or a mental illness? It is stressful being part of 'the system' if you are vulnerable.

Malta: People suffering from poverty and social exclusion continuously face problems. The cultural, legal, health and age-related issues complemented with labour market shortcomings add up to poverty. No matter how hard they try, these same problems keep pushing them back from eventually achieving financial and social security.

Slovakia: examples of **in-work poverty**: Mirka a mother of 4 children with a disabled daughter...Ján, who grew up in a small Roma settlement, and now a head manager in a high school, teaching Roma children how it is possible to have high education... Petra, a nurse, born in a small village in eastern Slovakia, and Stanislav, father of 11 children and a disabled, scientific worker. The delegates were invited to place a white sheet of paper on their window to mark "Invisible Work Day".

Spain: employment as a factor in social inclusion… Everyone contributes with their work to the social and economic development of the societies in which we live... fighting social exclusion through employment is a shared responsibility. Having a job should offer the possibility of access to culture, sports, and to a home, to participate as any other citizen with equal opportunities, to not be under the mandate of the markets and banks, and to be people with rights, participating in the society where we live.

Czech Republic: a Pantomime, the **'3 seasons'** against a musical background: *birth* - full of hope, but reality – rejected by my surroundings (Music: B.

Smetana, Vltava); *Jump into the world of dependencies*, there I am a King, there I am lost (Music: ABBA, Pink Floyd, Money, Money) and finally *Catharsis* – being supported by peer group (Music: A. Dvorak: The Bartered Bride).

Austria: Exploitation of working poor makes rich people richer. As a symbol, the Austrian delegates gave candies to the participants meaning that they demand a well balanced repartition of the wealth so that everyone can have a dignified life.

Work, employment and jobs: messages and proposals from the workshops

Six simultaneous workshops during the meeting each gathered participants from up to six national delegations as well as a number of guests. All the workshops addressed the theme of employment, work and jobs. Drawing on the workshop reports, what follows aims to capture the essence of the statements and proposals by theme, rather than by workshop. The voice of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion highlights some of the many powerful statements by the delegates. We have attributed the country delegation wherever known.

Quality employment, a decent salary and social rights

Quality employment

It is agreed that everybody should have access to a **decent job** regardless of the type of work and that the European level also must take its responsibility and strive for decent and sustainable jobs. Employers are taking advantage of people – for example telemarketing companies offering commercial contracts with no right to social security. Very often they don't fulfil their promises. Seasonal workers are often hired for 10 months but social security is only paid for 2 weeks, so more monitoring and controls are needed to prevent employers from exploiting the crisis, as there is a sense that they're taking advantage of the vulnerability of people. One of the workshops observed that working conditions have worsened in a number of Member States because of the bad implementation of flexicurity, which strengthened flexibility for employers to fire employees rather than providing workers with the security they need.

> *"We're decent people and want to work for decent wages – we want a decent life".*
>
> *"I want to be respected as a man and not be plundered or exploited like a mobile phone that only lasts 3 years and then gets discarded" (*Austria).
>
> *"I work in a refugee camp… It's very difficult to get the minimum wages – workers don't get that because they're illegal"* (Spain).
>
> *"…employers do not respect us and our rights. We are expected to take any work which is not enough for us or our family's needs"* (Poland).

People want to be legally recruited but "*employers would rather hire you on the black market because they don't want to pay insurance or taxes- people don't have insurance or cover if something happens*." (Poland). Even if people work, their salary is so low they have to ask for help or do moonlighting in order to survive. "*If you are unemployed you have to take any job that is proposed, as otherwise you will lose your social supports"* (Slovenia).

Legislation defending workers exists but the problem is that it is not often properly implemented. Delegates insist that while a job is desirable it is not always a solution for everyone: people who cannot work must be supported, for example where some want or can work only 3, 7 or 10 hours a week, they should receive a decent wage for this, supplemented if necessary by adequate income support.

The Estonian delegation are concerned that *"if people are ill they're not compensated after three days. People go to work even if they're sick. "People are not aware of their rights – the government says that they can get information on the website but what about older people?"* Another delegate described the difficult situation for homeless persons in Denmark "*You must be available for social activation all the time. They send you letters, but if you're homeless you don't receive them*".

> "*Being unemployed, I have to be available for the job market all the time. But, I'm not sitting next to the telephone waiting for a job offer that never comes. If you are unemployed for 2 or 3 years, you develop a different lifestyle, you start to develop other activities instead of waiting and you become less available. This causes stress and psychosomatic diseases*." (NL)

The Polish delegation proposed that employment costs for employers be reduced to allow them to employ more people, which would in turn increase income for Government in taxes. The German delegation did not agree. They thought that what is needed is to distribute the benefits better from work. They did not agree with decreasing the social charges on salaries but to introduce a protection on wages and that people would have to get a certain amount per month… redistribution must start from the top to the bottom level.

All jobs are dignified

Many delegates highlighted the need to recognise that all jobs can be dignified jobs: *"you need doctors, lawyers but society will not function without cleaners, factory workers, plumbers (blue collar workers)"* but often important jobs are not recognised. *"People working in low-skilled jobs suffer from depression and other mental health problems. Housing and accommodation, high rents and/or inappropriate housing… impacts on all forms of life quality*." (Ireland). It is important to stimulate an economy of solidarity instead of an economy of profit that (ab)uses people, placing people at the centre of the economy, not profit. Governments can do this through investments to boost economic growth, but governments have financial difficulties and are saving on social expenses. It was recalled that it is important to bear in mind that **reduced contributions for employers reduce the contributions to the social protection system.**

New jobs

There is scope for new jobs in the social sector, in the cultural sector, in the care sector and in schools, yet there is the fear that jobs will disappear and volunteers will be asked to do these jobs. Jobs that are well paid are important to open up the way to receive social security benefits, such as for example a decent pension. The strong links between social inclusion and sustainable development must be strengthened through sustainable jobs and investment in the new jobs linked to overcoming energy poverty.

Self employment

Governments encourage people to work as independents; however they were among the first victims of the crisis and often have to work for less than the legal minimum income and don't receive pension rights. Other areas which the delegates insist must be addressed are undeclared work, low paid/ insecure work and sub-contracting agencies, and the gender pay gap. In Poland some large companies which could employ many people are now looking at new approaches. They are sub contracting and using **interim agencies** to recruit people… employers say they pay 8 zloties (€2) per hour but this goes to the agency which takes a fee and the worker gets less. 'Why do we accept interim agencies? Other people are exploiting us" (Poland).

Another major problem is the lack of money for those problems that might affect your chances for employment, for example **dental care:** many people in poverty cannot pay the dentist for example, but the Norwegian government doesn't support dental care.

Lack of jobs

Access to a job is important but what if there are **no jobs**? Unemployment is a structural problem. If you don't find a job, this structural problem becomes a personal problem, while it's not the fault of the individual. In Austria there is 1 job available for every 10 unemployed and yet unemployed people are treated like criminals. Politicians only see figures and not the people behind them... and labour contracts when they do exist impose more and more conditions.

"I am selling newspapers on the streets, from the morning on. Last week I received a remark from 2 young people, who were drinking coffee on a terrace, to go looking for a real job. I would really like to do so, but there are no jobs." (Austria)

"As an unemployed person I always feel the accusing eyes of others that do work. I want to take part in society. I want to send my children to school. I want to fill in the necessary forms. But I don't like to see myself as someone without a function in society. They don't have to blame me that there are barriers that prevent people to go to training or to find a job."

"It is still a common belief that those who really want to work will find work."

"… if you're not working you don't get a lot of money and it is difficult to participate actively in our society. You live without a perspective for the future because you have no money and will not have it in the future." (NL)

Important elements for a decent job are a contract for more than 6 months, a decent salary, and work that gives satisfaction *(*Belgium). *"If you have a contract with a limited period you cannot get a loan from the bank and this effects younger people mostly"* (Slovenia).

There is a difference between urban and rural areas, where it is much harder to get to work...

"*People live off nothing. There are many alcohol problems; we are at the top of the suicides in Europe… Our salaries are too low and especially in rural areas travel costs are too high"* (Lithuania).

Homelessness and bad housing: a barrier to employment

Delegates agree that homelessness and bad housing are a big barrier to employment that is often ignored, whereas in our rich countries housing should be decent, especially now that Member States can use EU Structural Funds to fight bad housing conditions. *"People think that homeless people are only the ones living on the streets. You can be sleeping in hostels, with friends, or on railway stations. They're poor people indeed but they are not taken into account in the statistics."* (Spain).

Quality employment, a decent salary and social rights: proposals from the workshops

A minimum income scheme in every Member State, higher than the poverty threshold, with no discrimination especially related to age, which would allow us to have a decent life, based on indicators of the household shopping basket, but also bearing in mind other indicators, such as access to education, telephone, internet and travel

Implementation of the European Recommendation on Active Inclusion, addressing the three pillars: adequate minimum income (including a specific directive), access to quality services and supports to access decent work; this must be done in an integrated way and not focus on activation only

Decent social allowances for people who cannot work due to severe illness

End cultural discrimination between white collar and blue collar jobs

Awareness-raising of employment and social rights and their implementation

The freedom to reject or accept the jobs that are proposed

Regulations on the quality of work and a living wage for workers and their families

Restrictions on insecure exploitative types of employment

Maintain level of contributions to support financing of the social protection system

Equal pay for the same job – including between women and men

Adequate salaries that pay a 'living wage' must be a primary goal for employment policies.

Create opportunities in terms of mobility, child care and access to employment

Employment security through long term contracts and protection of employment rights

Put the question of working-poor high on the agenda

Put forward proposals related to the hidden economy

Quality Standards (indicators) should be developed

Education, training and learning

Access to fundamental rights for all must include employment, housing, education and **training**… the delegates consider that education and training are often lacking or inadequate especially for people with specific needs, or are too expensive for low-income groups to take part in due to the associated costs, such as travel, which are not always reimbursed. Furthermore, there is a sense that training is often a way to employ people for free and then they do not end up in a paid job. Even after a training programme work is never guaranteed. It is suggested that the administration should provided subsidies so that employers could train people in their companies in real jobs and people could then get a real job. Delegates ask how the European Union supports access to training (Luxembourg).

Education must be for the whole life cycle, for girls and boys, so investment in schools is needed, as well as culture, music and sport, which all give people a better chance.

Delegates draw attention to the **mismatch between the training on offer and the labour market.** Training for new jobs is needed: for example in the field of personal services, and of environment. They are concerned that EU funding for training often gives work to private companies rather than getting unemployed people back into work, so more control of European funds is needed. Whilst some schemes will actually pay for childcare or travel, in order to train, the problem comes when you actually want to start work because you lose social benefits. Securing funding for training is therefore an important first step.

"We work with Roma but I'm not able to pay teachers properly because we don't receive support from the Government. We are the poor who cannot help the poor" (Slovakia).

Outcomes are important *"I had a drug problem and I'm now in a training programme, I do not know what will happen after training… we are people who are numbers after the training. There are opportunities but the companies must give you the chance"*. Nevertheless there are plenty of highly educated/trained people (especially young people) who are out of a job, so training is not all that is needed. In Finland a survey has shown that adaptability and motivation were the main factors in getting a job, not training or age.

Lack of recognition of qualifications can often provide a barrier: the training and qualifications that migrants had in their former country should be recognized in the immigration countries. *"I'm from Venezuela and my qualifications are not recognized in Portugal, my son has to go to high school, but I do not know how I will have to pay. I do not live, I survive. I have to take courses if I have no job, but have no money to pay them. And how do I find work if my degree is not recognized?"*

A strong message coming from the delegates is that apprenticeship is an important tool and that all building trades are worthwhile and should be recognised as being important, and they call upon the Member States to develop training in these careers. While the social economy is being dismantled in many countries more and more people are being excluded from training and services. For example the Polish delegation mentioned how lone parents were being excluded.

Education, training and learning: proposals from the workshops

Overcome barriers to education and training

Facilitate access to information and support

Strengthen monitoring mechanisms

Reinforce support for people unable to reach the labour market.

Information on rights for all the unemployed

Financial support for those following a training

Recognition of qualifications

Stop funding cuts for schools and education, austerity or not!

Create pathways to support access to employment to include basic services, housing, adequate income schemes in all countries.

Employment services: a missed opportunity?

Many delegates spoke of their difficulties with employment agencies, agreeing that they are mostly "*only job oriented, and don't take into* account *the complex issues which go with it… such as transport, health etc" (France).* Often these services are experienced as a hindrance rather than as a help for getting into employment. *"Looking poor doesn't help to find a job"* (UK) and *l*ooking for a job is a job in itself. "*We need tools, money for transport and phone calls" (*Czech Republic), and *"a single tutor so we are not shuffled from person to person and from office to office" (Hungary).* The experience of the delegates is that officials often come up with absurd conditions. In Austria people are pushed by the employment agencies to become freelance or self-employed and this is a risk as people do not have guarantees, for example if they get sick.

There is a need to recruit people (to work in employment agencies) who have an experience of living in poverty and be properly trained, with on-going training. They should know what it means to live in the here and now. It is good for people experiencing poverty to meet people who experience the same as you, as "*we are best placed to explain what it is to be poor and can design a customised approach"*. *"Many people do not claim their benefits because of the stigma and others do not know that they are entitled"* (Finland)**.**

Delegates spoke out about their experience with employment services:

> *"I am Roma and I'm used to discrimination, as a student, as a job seeker, people just look at me and don't consider me for jobs." (CZ)*
>
> *"Public services are not helpful at all. Internet is much more useful to me" (CZ).*
>
> *"One woman was told to put her children into an orphanage because she did not have enough money to look after them. This is absurd. She had four children." It would have been much more expensive to have the children looked after in an orphanage.*
>
> *"In Slovenia about 300 people have lost their jobs in my city and all the families are affected. The children can see that their parents cannot afford things. People are too ashamed to go to seek social supports which involve signing tons of forms. According to legislation if people receive social supports they have to sign their houses over to the state. Instead of doing this many older people continue to accumulate debts and pass this onto their children. My children can see that they have not got what other children have. Parents cannot afford the expense of their children who are students. When you see an official they say, 'what can I do for you?' and you say you do not have enough money to survive."*

Employment agencies: proposals from the workshops

Employment services must be supportive and not force people into unsuitable training or jobs.

Employment policies and services need to be informed by people experiencing poverty who need to be valued as experts.

Provide support to social NGOs and the social enterprises which support access to jobs for excluded groups

Discrimination: a major barrier to employment

For many delegates the difficulty of accessing employment is often based on discrimination. One way of countering discrimination is through networking. Since many jobs are filled through your network, "*it is difficult if you don't have a network*". This will of course also affect your children; they become de-motivated because they see that education works less than networking. This situation leads to more poverty and exclusion (Norway).

Despite many anti-discrimination laws and regulations (at national and EU level) Roma, disabled people, elderly people and migrants are being discriminated based on their ethnic origin, their gender, their age, their capacities... Some grants are allocated to fight discrimination in the EU but have they been used? For example the antidiscrimination laws help but *"when you are face to face with your "probable" boss…who is asking you if you are going to marry and to have babies…"* People should not be discriminated against because of their colour, age, disability or sexual preference.

Roma and Travellers

The Roma populations are still living in camps, many of them illegal and without facilities. For Roma it is much harder to get papers because they have no home address and because they are undocumented they also find no work *(Italy)*. Delegates welcome the current approach of the EU Roma strategy, linked to Europe 2020 but asked when all this would be implemented.

> *"I come from a Roma family, with several problems but I'm supported and I'll probably get out of the poverty trap. I think that better use of the funds could solve the situation – sometimes we do indeed have funds; the problem is how they're used. I registered as unemployed although my business card would tell you I'm director of a non-profit organisation. Roma are stereotyped and discriminated against. I have 5 children and they risk staying in the poverty trap. If we want to achieve the target of 20 million fewer in poverty we need courage to implement the legislation* (Slovakia).
>
> *"Social inclusion is difficult but possible, job inclusion is impossible for Roma: this is a racial issue"* (Czech Rep).
>
> *"If you are a Roma woman once you have children it is impossible to find work"* (Hungary).
>
> In Ireland *"we don't implement anything – we have Traveller accommodation programmes but when nothing happens there are no sanctions".*

Age: young people and the elderly

*"Children are considered to be half persons, not citizens (they don't vote) but they are our future" (*Hungary, France*)*. Across Europe more and more unemployment affects young people. Young people lose their self confidence and self esteem. They feel lost in the national labour market and the European labour market and need more support. Faced with more and more controls on benefits they feel afraid. They take part in training but in the end become job seekers again and they ask why this is so. The number of places in training centres is also limited. *"A survey asked about the motivation of young people and the result was that it was a matter of attitude to motivation. The most motivated did best..."* (Finland). In general employers expect people to have a long experience, but these ask for a higher salary and employers do not want to employ them.

Employers do not recruit young people who have no experience. *"They want people who have experience, but how do you get this experience?"* delegates agree that *"It is important for young people to have a job as soon as possible after school. If they have no work for months after they leave they lose hope and this tears their dreams to pieces." "Young people need supports which will get them off the street and which will help them to see what they would like. Their talents are lost for all of society"* (Austria). *"We need to support young people who fail at school as early as possible to give them an early chance"*. Support for schools entails not only free access to meals, school trips, libraries, holidays, music, theatre, school and training, but also to culture, to help young people in their vocational choice.

Older people with some experience often work in fragile or precarious conditions. Other older people are pushed out of jobs. Older people also do not find work even though they have experience. This then means that they do not earn a high enough pension. Also due to technological changes it becomes more difficult.

Discrimination against migrants

Many migrants are unable to get recognition for their qualifications. In addition they face racism and prejudice in seeking employment, in particular for North-African citizens or for Roma. There is also discrimination by employers because of their address (*Ireland)*. Many migrants working under horrendous conditions and in the lowest paid jobs are exploited and underpaid *(Malta)*.

For an immigrant, it is harder to find work if your diploma is not recognized:

"I am an immigrant from Sudan. I worked in Sudan on microfinance. I arrived in 2000 in Norway. Although my degree is recognized in Norway it is still difficult to find a job. I am returning to study in Norway in the hope of a quick job. I have my Master since 2005, I applied a lot but I have not found a job. I am never asked for a job, that's because I don't have a network. So I just keep going to courses (now accounting) but none of it helps. I have insufficient knowledge of the labour market. I have asked for help with the employment. They sent me to a course for low skilled, it was a motivation course, but I'm motivated. Then I was told that I am overqualified. This is an example of good initiatives that are not efficient" (Norway).

Discrimination against people with a disability

Discrimination in accessing employment occurs for a person with a disability but also in the case of the parent caring for a child with a disability… all people have a right to a dignified life. A delegate stated that *"even disabled people in poverty have a soul and mind; they should take us seriously and eliminate barriers. I love life and want to be respected. It's annoying always having to ask for help. We want to participate independently"* (Italy). "Benefits should be adequate including if you need to look after a disabled child or adult." Delegates with a disability or caring for a family member with a disability spoke of their difficult experience:

"I live in a small provincial town where there are many disabled people, there was a special EU programme on work, but it was not accessible to disabled people. I now work but they do not pay, though on paper they pay me a salary so I can no longer qualify for social support" (Lithuania).

"I am a job seeker, I am 28... I left secondary school and graduated in corporate economy but still could not find a job. I think it is because I have a disability. Employers will not employ me" (Bulgaria).

"Universities in Spain offer support for disabled people. The problem is that someone with a degree still ends up doing unskilled jobs."

Mental health

Discrimination against people with a disability also affects people with mental health problems: delegates proposed that sheltered workplaces be created where people feel integrated and where they feel useful for the society. The Dutch delegation said that *"we see more and more young people with a mental problem coming back to the sheltered workshops... If they are forced to work in a regular enterprise and they fail, the process must start all over again"*. They also called for investments in protected workplaces for people who have psychological and social conditions as it is important for these people that they can integrate at their own pace and work out a personal plan in consultation. The freedom of choice is important.

Other forms of discrimination

Transsexual people are highly discriminated against in the workplace and in society: they find no work, they are stigmatized and many are forced into prostitution which is sometimes the only way to make money and stay out of poverty (Italy). Victims of trafficking are a group who need many institutions to cooperate to address their situation (Italy). "They are not recognized by the EU, they are not protected, and there is no law giving them access to training and education due to the absence of a legal framework to take care of those who have 'dropped out" (Italy). Particular attention must also be given to the stigma of ex drug users who do not get a second chance in job seeking.

Discrimination: proposals from the workshops

Stop stigmatisation and discrimination with strong discrimination legislation which is implemented

Tailored personalised support services to address the specific needs and obstacles of different groups

Measures to address discrimination against people with disabilities must address the needs of people with mental health problems

Measures to address discrimination against people with disabilities must address the needs of people with mental health problems.

Invest in schools and do not abandon young people to themselves when they stop schooling

End education cuts to save future workers, and invest in Life Long Learning

Reconciling family and working life, carers and volunteering

Reconciling family and working life

Delegates spoke of the lack of recognition of the impact of unemployment on family life and of the difficulties they face accessing, maintaining or returning to employment. "The EU tends to have a debate on the fact that people should work, and not about how to deal with family life", so reconciling work and family life is a key issue. It was said during the meeting that one of the reasons for family poverty is parents not being able to find a job. However it was recalled that we cannot reduce child poverty to family poverty as children have rights and children need to participate.

Daily tensions due to lack of income in a poor family increase the risk of divorce. Children have also be taken away from parents for economic reasons such as unemployment, leading to a high risk of cutting off links.

A key to accessing employment is the support provided to the family: family is an investment and must provide support to the whole of society, as the relationship between the parent and child is important for the development of the child. In Austria if a child becomes sick a parent has a right to 10 days paid leave, but the number of days is the same even if there are five children "*Employers do not want to recruit these women because of these ten days.*"

The well-being of families is not always supported by Member States and often ignored. For example single parents are left to their own devices; children are taken away, allegedly for their own benefit, whilst the problem is not the family, but rather their difficulty of finding a suitable job. Delegates insist that conditions must be created to be able to raise children in a dignified manner, not by taking away children. In addition many have to go elsewhere to find work, leaving their children, 'Euro orphans', in the care of the extended family who are not always able to care for them: *"We work abroad and go home on holiday"* (Lithuania).

> *"We need a cultural shift so that the burden (and pleasure) to take care for your family is equally shared between partner and family members"* (Hungary).

> "Services have to be accessible, not only child care but also wider as health services so that people can go to work."

> *"If you are a mother, the mother has to work more and more to earn an income and see less of their children. When my contract ends in June I will have no income and may have to leave my home and maybe lose my children. A decent income is essential. It is absurd. Children now inherit the debts of their parents"* (Poland).

Carers

The work of carers, whether inside or outside the family, is rarely recognised, paid, or taken into account in the calculation of rights to services and pensions. In many countries a person caring for a member of their own family is not entitled to the support they would receive for caring for someone outside of the family, so many people work as carers in the home but are not recognised as such. These people are not sufficiently protected, not socially insured, they do not have a health insurance and they have no wages. Many carers have no choice but to look after their family members with disabilities for example. This should not be unpaid work.

In Spain an autonomous community passed a law in order to support carers – but it also depends on the degree of illness of the persons. Before having the rights recognized it takes time – the law has been approved but not applied. In the meantime there is nothing to support the carers. *"We cannot wait until the terminal phase of illness"*.

In the Netherlands delegates note that more and more jobs in the social, health and cultural sector are disappearing as a result of cutbacks, and the professionals are being replaced by volunteers. Services have to be accessible, not only child care but also wider such as health services so that people can go to work.

"I have a daughter with disabilities – she is now finishing the basic education and she's going to be 18 …she doesn't have any chance to be included. I had to adapt my life to her needs. When she's 18 she will get disability benefits. She's locked at home – and we don't have enough money – we can't go to restaurants or cafés – we don't have any extra money. We want our daughter to be integrated but it seems to be impossible" (Slovakia).

Single parents

Single parents suffer particularly from the poverty caused by unemployment:

> *"As a single parent it is really difficult to work and to raise your children. Additional difficulties include a*

limited labour market, or the kinder garden that closes early, this can be a reason why single parents have to stop working" (Norway).

"In the Netherlands, our organisation lobbied hard for a law that gives single parents the opportunity to work only for 25 hours, but that they receive a full salary. The law is adopted but the politicians refuse to implement it."

"*Work, work, work, work. You hear nothing else at European level. Also in the Netherlands the Minister says "Work, work, work, this will solve all your problems. For single parents it is not so evident to go to work. For example, the hours that your children attend school are not adapted to the working times. If your child is sick, you feel guilty and you also feel judged about. Everything is put on your shoulders when you start working. People are not aware of this."*

"For single parent households it is difficult as there are not enough kindergartens and for those with older children the mothers find it difficult if schools cannot look after the children in the afternoon. Looking for a job becomes even more difficult" (Austria)

Volunteering

During 2011 the European Year of Volunteering delegates asked whether this could be the opportunity to build a new model of society. It was pointed out that the value of volunteering is to feel useful and active and volunteering lets you live solidarity instead only of competitiveness… it can be of great cultural value. On the other hand volunteering is important in its own right, not as a labour market solution. Some delegates consider that a person being expected to work for nothing is "worse than workfare", and that a voluntary job should not be a tool to fight against poverty and social exclusion, though it is good to work on a voluntary basis if you can afford it. Volunteer work is often seen as having unpaid work and not paying any social contributions.

"If I stop doing the things that I do as a volunteer, many things would stop functioning in our society: taking care of my parents, my children, helping other people. But this kind of work is not recognised by the society. Those jobs have more meaning than packing groceries in a supermarket."

Family, carers and volunteering: proposals from the workshops

Integrated family support to address issues of income, support services and ensure children's rights and early learning.

Support for parents by providing free education and a place in childcare for all children

Caring should be seen as an investment.

Find a balance between maternity leave and parental leave so that both parents can return to work easily.

Provide support to the families for women who have to work and have to take care of their children rather than having to put them in someone else's care.

Encourage those who wish to work voluntarily, instead of creating additional obstacles like control, forms and authorisations

Base employment criteria not only on professional experience but also on volunteering experience.

The right to dignity

Delegates asked why some people loose their lives or have serious accidents in the workplace due to the bad conditions of work: *"people die because they are poor, they don't have choices"*.

For example people in wheelchairs don't have free movement: they should have choices too. We need to ensure that EU directives are respected: "justice must be observed across the Member States". Our starting point must be respect for the human being; we should be recognized for who and what we are. People are not machines, it is more complex than that and this complexity is not recognized. It is not enough to have a training or food, you should live.

> *"I get the impression that in all our countries having a job doesn't make you happy. The Happiness Index is a sort of contradiction: you're blessed if you are ignorant…"* (Estonia).
>
> *"If I have to wait until they call me with a solution, this is a barrier to access my fundamental rights."*
>
> *"I can not let my kids participate in leisure activities because I have to pay for them."*
>
> *"We represent the poor people of our country and we ask for our and their rights. We ask for dignity."*

How does the EU respect and safeguards Human Rights within its territory, given the internal migration happening during the past few years (especially after the burst of the economic crisis)? A common migration policy is called for that would respect human rights for all (including migrants from "third" countries), free movement and which would include additional financial support to poorer member states to **increase their work-force and lessen forced immigration** (Cyprus).

Work should be a guarantee of rights – it should guarantee an income for a decent life. There needs to be more redistribution. We have to change the system. Most important is to **fight the negative stereotypes** of people without employment.

> *"There is a stereotype that people without a job are supposed to be passive and lazy. What takes people much time is their health and their families, search for a job, transportation, and getting in touch with people they don't know in places they don't know"* (Poland).
>
> *"Unemployed people don't want to stay on benefit; they want to work and to be independent"* (UK, Malta).
>
> *"People don't want to be rich, they want dignity in their life"* (UK).

The right to dignity: proposals from the workshops

Give dignity to all kinds of work

Support for people with a disability, and for the parents of disabled children, since caring for them should be considered as a 'job'.

Access to fundamental rights: housing, employment, culture, income and health.

The crisis

The message that *"people experiencing poverty feel the impact of the crisis stronger than the banks"* was felt strongly by the delegates, who noted that although there is now a European target to reduce poverty, due to the crisis poverty is increasing. Therefore when looking for solutions to overcome the crisis, the fight against poverty must be a priority. The emphasis must be on a switch to an economy based on social solidarity. In particular "*the unemployed pay for the economic crisis twice, and the crisis should not be used as a reason for everything"*. A delegate stated that the EU needs to recover from the crisis, *"just as it recovered from the word war"*. Given the crisis, delegates are concerned to know what the Commission will do to ensure monitoring of national policies on how these policies really implement EU anti-poverty recommendations and strategies (Cyprus). With the crisis unemployment has risen a lot... there's a situation of structural crisis which has to be changed as it is felt that the global crisis provides the opportunity to cut off people who are less competitive in the labour market.

People experiencing poverty across Europe see companies being closed down, yet the banks are still open, so poverty has to be looked at in the context of wealth. Investments must be geared to services, and wealth should be distributed in a more fair way. They also note that competitiveness doesn't work: many people are left at the side of the road and are trapped there. More and more is asked of the workers and burnout has become a 21st century disease.

> *"Banks are responsible, and yet the poor are the victims".*
>
> *"The decision makers have the money to properly allocate and spend. It's always the poor who lose. We don't necessarily need more jobs. Maybe there is too much work (paid and unpaid), but it should just be better distributed."*
>
> *"What a poor man wants is a better life, and for this we need work. "*

The crisis: proposals from the workshops

Meeting the social implications of the crisis should be on the top of the agenda

Social reform – to reconstruct the social system – redistribution of the wealth – different taxes for different groups – business sectors need to be more monitored.

Recognise indebtedness as a cause of hidden poverty.

Place people at the centre of recovery. A united EU can make a change towards a more social Europe.

Tax financial transactions

Redistribute the profits of the banks for a more equal society

Stop re-locations

Stop competition (it doesn't work) and discover Solidarity

More cooperation in the global labour market…

Participation

Whilst the guests of the meeting were unanimous in confirming that the voice of people experiencing poverty must be heard, many of those most directly concerned, the people experiencing poverty and social exclusion participating in the meeting, stated strongly that it is urgent that the conclusions of the European Meetings must be integrated in the work of the Platform against Poverty and that organisations of people experiencing poverty must be involved in policymaking: this empowers them and makes them stronger.

However they felt that *"Only being listened to once a year is not enough. As well as participation rules, actions should also be evaluated."* It is also important to be able to see the results of the impact of these meetings: … "*We often hear beautiful promises, but cannot see any changes in the reality. Paralysis is a part of our daily lives. There is no real dialogue."* The Netherlands delegation proposes a "Comité des Sages" to develop standard rules for participation at all levels: *"a lot of people are making decisions in our place..."*

Participation: proposals from the workshops

Ensure that the annual European meetings of people experiencing poverty are fully integrated in the Platform against Poverty

Create rules for participation at all levels

Participation shouldn't just be about involvement; it must be about achieving results

"The problem is implementation…"

feedback from the guests who took part in workshops

Summarised by Julien Van Geertsom, President of the Belgian Public Service for Social Integration

Suggestions from the guests

The meeting may not have the highest number of guests, but it does have the greatest variety of guests: MEPs, SPC, EMCO, Commission, administrators… this meeting is very important even if does not have a structural position. Julien Van Geertsom presented a report on the comments and proposals of the guests on the key insights/messages, suggestions and commitments.

One of the general messages was that *"many delegates are in fact in line with what has been formally agreed upon at EU level especially the Active Inclusion recommendation with its three pillars of adequate income: resources, access to the labour market, social economy and participation in society as an active citizen, and access to services: childcare, health, housing and participation…the problem is implementation: we need to make it happen!"* This recalls what was said during the 9th Round Table on Social Inclusion: *"you can't eat paper"*.

The second point is that a job is the best solution to fight against poverty, but several guests had added: yes, but not always, the importance of the quality of jobs, decent wages and stable jobs, and the importance of the work life balance, so we need measure to support families, for example by providing kindergartens, but we need to fight against poverty among children: we need to look at the rights of children.

Specific attention was given to the problem of discrimination and exclusion for disabled people, migrants and Roma. A key message was also the need for more solidarity and fairer distribution of wealth and income in Europe. Last but not least it is crucial to give the floor to people experiencing poverty, to listen carefully to them and to take their opinion in to account.

As expected there had been much agreement on the need for real implementation of the active inclusion recommendations. Several guests proposed to develop a framework directive to oblige every country to provide adequate resources (use budget standards), access to the labour market, access to services (kindergartens for every child), continued work life balance plus special attention for active inclusion for targeted groups (disabled, low income, migrants), with for example sheltered workplaces, the social economy etc.

Particular suggestions on the implementing of the EU2020 targets and especially the poverty target included close monitoring and assessment of national targets in the National Reform Programmes, real implementation of article 9 of the Lisbon Treaty (social impact assessment) and research and dissemination of good practices

These suggestions are formulated towards the European Parliament, the Commission, the Social Protection committee, EMCO, the Council of Europe and the social partners. Each one has to follow up his or her own responsibilities. Last but not least everyone agrees that the conclusions of this 10th meeting should be largely disseminated through all European institutions starting with the Commission and the Council. *"This meeting should have a structural place in the European Platform against Poverty"*.

Guest commitments

Every guest committed to take the experience of this meeting, as well as the conclusions, to their regular job to help fulfil the demands and to implement the recommendations. The social partners committed themselves to follow and assist their members in the implementation of the European social partners Framework agreement in the inclusive labour market. In general this quote gives the overall feeling: *"if anything the workshop has reinforced my commitment to contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion"*.

Conclusions from the guests

Yesterday it showed from research that most of you thought that this meeting has not much influence on policy matters. On the contrary for the guests it was clear that the real experts on poverty are people experiencing poverty (you know what is poverty. Therefore the fight against poverty is not possible without people living in poverty, and the participation of people experiencing poverty is a condition for every policy. The guests were thanked for their contribution.

"The scream of poverty is getting louder": delegates react

A member of the Austrian delegation read out a recent call by Michaela Moser, EAPN Executive Committee member for Austria, for decent salaries, and conditions that recognise the importance of family life and of health… A delegate from Norway highlighted the need to talk about poverty prevention for children and young people.

It is pointed out that people experiencing poverty are now considered to be important actors of combating poverty and social exclusion in the EU 2020 strategy. However a few years ago a strategy for Roma was established but never implemented. The EU must elaborate monitoring mechanisms to measure the success in combating poverty so we can say we are following the right way, so we can have measurable indicators that can evaluate the strategy to be able to change the strategy if necessary to achieve the goals set out (Slovakia).

A delegate from the UK pointed out that "poverty is an experience not a status.": *"we should not alienate people because they are rich, we should work with everyone to fight poverty, including the rich."* We would like these meetings to build up solidarity between groups; the poor are not responsible for the crises. Rich people in banks are responsible. So "*we need to work more on our own image, which means investing in communication"*.

The price of the crisis is too high, as it is devastating people's lives: *"stop the cuts in social spending"*… *"The scream of pain from this room is getting louder, but not enough decision-makers are here"*. Delegates recall that last year we already put a motion asking why the politicians were not here; their absence is unforgiveable; we need to understand why. *Why are Member States dismantling the social systems that underpinned the EU? Is it possible that the media has not spoken out enough about our meeting*? *(Italy)*

> *"NGOs helping people experiencing poverty do not have enough money. Social workers have a lot of paper work to do; they should be helping people, not just filling in forms"*

Institutions and social partners fighting for decent jobs: the view from the panel

Antonia CARPARELLI, Acting Director EU 2020, Social Policies, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The main call across Europe is for employment, as jobs for everyone are a priority for Europe, and "decent" jobs are central in the EU agenda. All the interventions point to the fact that creating jobs must be central to all policy. There should be attention to access to services such as housing, but also a broader access to essential resources. *"Goods for the poor are becoming more expensive (for example services such as water etc) and goods for the rich are becoming cheaper"* (quote from one of the workshops).

Anti discrimination policy is central, and must be combined with social and employment policy. Family policies are not keeping up with changes in family structures, though this is a priority under the Hungarian Presidency. Other areas include education: tools are needed to address this, as well as dignity of the kind of jobs: we need to increase the **quality of all jobs**, linked to the environmental challenge to add quality to our life.

The Commission is committed to the integrated approach; the Europe 2020 strategy covers all policy areas in working for a better Europe. "*I share some of your frustration"* concluded Ms Carparelli *"but there are signs of hope, so reinforce the trust built up in this meeting"*.

Mik Woolley, Chair of the Employment Committee (EMCO)

Mr Woolley first introduced the work of the Employment Committee. He stressed that many of the issues raised at the meeting confirmed issues which have also been raised in the employment committee so been present has confirmed that they are identifying right issues. He agreed that the real problem is implementation and that implementation is the focus of EMCO. A performance monitoring report is to be presented to ministers, to analyse what works and what doesn't work to get people into work, including an analysis of wages, especially regarding continuing benefits after getting into work. This should respond to a number of the issues raised at this meeting.

The EU Employment Committee spent an intensive two days looking at the National Reform Programmes and the poverty targets, with a special look at 'social enterprises', which have the ability to "deliver more and better" jobs. He noted the discussions at the meeting about social enterprises and social economy.

Mik Woolley recognised that EAPN has been a good alliance working with other NGOs and that the work on participation is very important to build people engagement and it also builds their skills. Being present at the meeting makes him more determined to follow up these areas of work and he thanked the delegates for their openness.

Estelle CEULEMANS, European Trade Union Confederation

Thanking the delegates for their participation, which was direct, lively and warm, Estelle CEULEMANS informed them that during its meeting next week the ETUC would discuss the new economic governance, for example concerning financial transfers, and would be recommending that salaries should increase: salaries should not be seen as 'enemies' but a source of quality of life. There is pressure for a framework for Social Services of General Interest (SSGI): quality, access, enhanced systems of education.

12.5 million jobs have been created, but this is less than the 16 million before the crisis. Many are precarious: part time, interim, and internships etc. and though many of these are targeted at young people, women, migrants etc. they are of low quality and often unstable. There is a difference between the number of jobs and the quality of jobs: in the EU there are 19 million working poor. Solutions must include quality employment, salary, training, working conditions and career prospects.

The ETUC is committed to fight poverty. The "Athens manifesto" due to be agreed next week includes the following commitments:

- Campaign for a Social Progress Protocol to be enshrined in the European treaties to ensure that fundamental social rights take precedence over economic freedoms
- Implementation of the transversal social clause (implementing article 9 in the Lisbon treaty)
- Fight against poverty amongst young people
- Fight against discrimination and dumping
- Increase the protection of workers' rights

- Demand the regulation of financial markets and rating agencies
- Harmonisation of the corporate tax base
- Support fair and sustainable globalisation
- Promote a balance between public and private life

The ETUC fight against poverty also includes the implementation of the recommendation on Active Inclusion, a clear framework for Social Services of General Interest and the implementation of the framework agreement on training especially for young people, older people and women. The ETUC is also working with the World Trade Organisation, which has more progressive texts than the EU, although they apply to poorer countries, with very little or no safety nets.

Rebekah Smith, Business Europe

Rebekah Smith agreed that Integration into the Labour market is important to combat poverty and is also a benefit to society. It is important to have a good economic system to support a good social system. Growth in the economy is needed to make social systems sustainable. A lot of companies are in difficulty during the crisis, and efforts have been made to keep workers, which sometimes has meant reducing working hours. We need the right skills for the labour market. Regarding the quality of work, health, safety etc implementation of existing European directives is needed. Considering the work life balance, part time work can be a way of returning to working life *"…I don't agree that part time and temporary work is necessarily precarious : better a part time work for a good employer than a full time work for a bad employer"*.

Up skilling is important: skills are needed that suit the labour market, not only in companies but also in public authorities. Collaboration is being developed in the form of the *Framework agreement on inclusive labour markets* between the ETUC, Business Europe, the UPME, European Association of Craft Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the CEEP, European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services.

Finally Rebekah Smith stated that to access, integrate and improve the labour market we must look at the general obstacles, but also at solutions, for example the image of the type of job needs to change, diversity must be promoted, and individual skills respected.

"We are the only ones who can express our situation": delegates respond to the panel

"Part time work is good for those who choose it, but not for those who are forced to take up a fixed term or part time contract" (Italy).

*"People experiencing poverty should ask the ETUC to convey messages to workers, as they need to have the workers on our side" (*Germany).

"… I would like to make a wish. None of us decided to become poor. We want people to take our experience into account. We are the only ones who can express our situation." (France)

A Slovenian delegate called for a more social Europe, recalling that Slovenia was formerly very equitable and people are nostalgic of the former situation, as now there are problems, as they consider that EU capitalism doesn't work. We need sustainable development to include economy, the social and culture.

A delegate said that more MEPs should come to the meeting… *"If the governments don't want to do the work, we have the skills."* The message to the Commission is that "*the money must be distributed!"*

Another delegate asked who can help us fight an employer who receives subsidies from the EU and who is not paying salaries; "*since December the labour exchange refuses to pay benefits, since we remain officially employed. What can we do?" "The scream of poverty is getting louder",* but (policies adopted are) not being implemented; the question is whether we have the right structure?

"Your voice should be heard": closing words

JANUSZ GALEZIAK, representative of the future Polish Presidency of the European Union

Janusz Galeziak thanked all present for one of the most important meetings in the EU Social agenda *"Your voice should be heard"*. Up to April the Member States had to report on their National Reform Programmes. In mid June the Council for Employment and Social Affairs will adopt Country Specific Recommendations in order to ensure implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Polish Presidency will monitor the implementation of the National Reform Programmes, to follow up the objectives and to draw conclusions by the end of the year. On the occasion of the 'new' anti poverty annual Convention, replacing the annual Round Table against Poverty, they hope to hear what is happening with the National Reform Programmes.

The Polish Presidency priorities are firstly solidarity between generations, as an opportunity for new jobs, services and products, to prevent rifts in society, i.e. solidarity between those who can pay and those who cannot, secondly an active Europe, i.e. Europe that works, and thirdly citizens' partnerships entailing cooperation between administrations and the private sector. We think that supporting the public sector is crucial as a condition to achieve cohesion in Europe. "*Your voice, your message and recommendations are very important"*.

IZABELLA MARTON, Vice President EAPN

All has been said and I agree with the messages. *"People cannot eat paper":* many important decisions have still not been put into practice. Governments must stop cuts in social spending: people experiencing poverty cannot pay the price of the crisis and social services are crucial. More fair distribution is essential to eliminate poverty.

Though it is also frustrating that the outcomes of the meetings are not always implemented, they are still important for decision makers. EAPN thanks the Hungarian Presidency, and Denmark for welcoming the meeting in 2012. EAPN would like to support the idea of national and local meetings of people experiencing poverty: this would be a good sign of commitment. *"You are the experts on poverty; poverty cannot be eliminated without your voice"*.

Appendix 1 European Commission, DG Employment, response to the demands and messages coming from the European meetings of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion

AREA 1: OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES	
Demands from the Meetings	**Response**
Reduce the gap between economic and social policies; strengthening of social cohesion; measure the impact of all policies on access to social rights	Europe 2020 Strategy encourages measures to meet by 2020 three headline targets: 75% Labour Market participation for people aged 20-64; school drop-out below 10%; at least 20 million people lifted out of poverty. National poverty targets set by all MS except SE, NL , ES Monitoring through National Reform Programmes(Social guideline 10) EU platform against poverty to support achievement of poverty reduction target Commission to further enhance impact assessment , to encourage other EU institutions to assess the effect of changes they make to Commission proposals and to invite MS to consider the social impact of domestic policy change
Resolute commitment to reduction of child poverty	Council Conclusions adopted on 31-3-2011; EU Platform provides that Commission will present in 2012 a Recommendation for tackling the multidimensional nature of child poverty and for promoting children's well being
AREA 2: FINANCIAL INCLUSION	
Demands from the Meetings	**Commission Response**
Minimum income as dynamic tool and investment to promote social inclusion; part and parcel of an effective system of social services and linked to real cost of living	Monitoring of the crisis showed that minimum income schemes provided invaluable safety nets that now have to act as springboards back to employment. But still need to fully implement active inclusion reforms, in particular re-organising services to provide one-stop-shop- approaches to vulnerable groups and linking employment policies with social support. EU Platform provides for Commission Communication in 2012 on in-depth assessment of implementation of AI at national level
Micro credit schemes should be encouraged	PROGRESS Microfinance facility operational since early 2011 for support to young people , women and long term unemployed
Bank accounts for all	Commission analysis an broad consultation revealed broad support for EU action to promote access to basic bank accounts; Commission to present in 2011 a legislative initiative
AREA 3: HOUSING EXCLUSION AND HOMELESSNESS	
Housing as European fundamental right; Structural Funds used to support access to affordable and sustainable housing; effective support and services to be available for people in social housing and for homeless	2010 = year of breakthrough towards more effective policies Joint report on social protection/inclusion calls on MS to develop integrated policies to tackle homelessness, and provides guidance on how to do this(governance, monitoring and evaluation, setting of specific targets) European Regional Development Funds provisions modified to finance housing interventions for marginalized communities. 'Consensus conference' (a first in the area of social policy): policy recommendations from high level jury after public hearing of experts, a transnational consultation of homeless people in 8 MS and a two-days conference on 9-10 December. Highlights: promotion of housing-led approaches instead of shelters and transitional accommodations; integrated approach to the situation of migrants and EU citizens facing homelessness Tackling homelessness and housing exclusion: key priority in EU Platform

AREA 4: SERVICES	
Establish quality standards	2010 Commission's Voluntary European Quality Framework for social services, for creating a common language on social services quality across the EU, to be implemented through exchange of good practices and financing transnational projects. Commission will develop the Framework at sectorial level, including long-term care and homelessness.
Everyone has a right to access social services	Access for all to quality social services to support active social participation is one of the three pillars of the active inclusion strategy EU Platform provides for Commission Communication in 2012 on in-depth assessment of implementation of Active inclusion at national level
Promote social innovation	Strong emphasis on social innovation in the EU Platform as means to ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion Funding of projects on social experimentation under PROGRES (2009 and 2010) EU Platform to promote social economy initiatives as innovative responses to emerging social needs
AREA 5: EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING	
Access for all to education and training as part of Labour Market activation	One of the three pillars of the active inclusion strategy EU Platform provides for Commission Communication in 2012 on in-depth assessment of implementation of Active Inclusion at national level
Young people from underprivileged background to be able to meet challenges	Europe 2020 targets: school drop out below 10% and at least 40% of 30-34 years old completing third level education
AREA 6: PARTICIPATION	
Participation must be regular and given formal status and structure	Commission promotes structured dialogue with EU stakeholders Possibility for similar structure at national level
Participation of people experiencing poverty	Key component of the EU Platform
Expand dialogue at all levels	Participative approaches are part and parcel of social innovation which Commission promotes

Appendix 2 EAPN response to the demands and messages coming from the European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion

AREA 1: OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES	
Demands from the Meetings	**Response**
Reduce the gap between economic and social policies	This demand is a key part of all EAPN documents and in particular our reports on the impact of the Crisis. EAPN ran a lobbying campaign at EU and national levels involving other actors (Social Platform, Environmental NGOs, Trade Unions and Development NGOs) to try to get the new EU strategy (called Europe 2020) to have a more balanced approach between economic and social policies. The NGO Coalition for the 2010 EU Year against poverty and social exclusion also worked to achieve this objective. This lobbying with the support form other actors resulted in achieving for the first time an EU target to reduce poverty, a new social guideline as part of this strategy and the proposal for a 'Platform against Poverty". We now try to ensure that these proposals are followed up with concrete actions.
Support for more effective NAPs/social OMC – integrated policy systems facilitating access to rights, resources and services.	EAPN has defended the need to continue with the Social OMC in the new Europe 2020 strategy – particularly emphasizing the need for integrated national strategies on social protection and social inclusion, based on access to rights. EAPN is calling for National Anti Poverty Platforms, involving people experiencing poverty and other stakeholders to be engaged in the development, implementation and follow up of these Strategies. This campaign is ongoing.
Human rights – promoting access and multidimensional policy and strengthening social cohesion, anti discrimination and equality	Our lobbying campaign for Europe 2020 is based on the recognition that poverty is a denial of fundamental rights and calls for a human rights approach to fighting poverty it also calls for greater attention to reducing inequality and fighting discrimination. The Human Ring organised by the 2010 NGO Coalition which engaged 3000 people in a human ring around the European Parliament was aimed at showing that a right's based approach to fight poverty and discrimination is essential for respecting human dignity. It sought to get across the message that there is enough for everyone if we share it equitable and sustainable.
Active Inclusion	Lobbied to get Active Inclusion Recommendation (2008) with integrated approach on access to services, adequate income and access to work. Continue to lobby for the implementation of this recommendation and have now developed an EAPN booklet on Active Inclusion highlighting good practices and our key concerns/demands.
AREA 2: FINANCIAL INCLUSION	
Demands from the Meetings	**Response**
Minimum Income adequate to live in dignity, with EU being a driver to ensure adequate levels.	The European meetings have been central in identifying this as a key demand for EAPN. EAPN has a Minimum Income campaign since 2008 – adequate income for a dignified life including website and key documents such as Adequacy of Minimum Income Explainer. Joint EAPN and Belgian EAPN conference on minimum income was a key event of EAPN in 2010. This event included lobbying for a framework directive to guarantee Minimum Income for all. We have worked with European Parliament on Minimum Income report and follow up. We lobbied with Belgian Presidency and Commission for a 'Peer Review' on budget standards to establish a participative method for establishing an adequate level of minimum income.
Financial Inclusion – making a bank account accessible to all, with debt advice and credit.	Demand included in EAPN manifesto for Europe 2020 and with Spring Alliance. EAPN responded to the Commission consultation on financial inclusion and have followed up on this work.

AREA 3: HOUSING EXCLUSION AND HOMELESSNESS	
Affordable Housing as a fundamental right and action on homelessness made a priority at EU level	This demand included in EAPN manifesto for Europe 2020 and Spring Alliance. Support to thematic year on homelessness and housing exclusion. Participation in Belgian Presidency Consensus Conference on Homelessness. Supported FEANTSA's lobby for a European Parliament declaration on homelessness (2010)
National strategies to address Housing and Homelessness	Demand for integrated national strategies on social protection and social inclusion to include priority actions on housing and homelessness. Support that Housing and homelessness is a thematic priority in the European Flagship Platform against Poverty
Housing as a focus in Structural Funds	Successfully lobbied for use of Structural Funds to finance access to affordable housing. This demand is further developed in EAPN position paper on Structural Funds and the future of EU Cohesion Policy.
AREA 4: SERVICES	
Universal right to access quality social services	Key demand in EAPN manifesto on Europe 2020. Campaigned to get social services excluded from the Services Directive.
Quality standards, including involvement of people experiencing poverty	Joint work with Social Platform on quality principles, including involvement of people experiencing poverty. Current work on exchanging on quality standards and tool kit.
Use of Structural funds to finance better access to quality services.	Demand in EAPN position and lobbying work with the Commission/ Council and European Parliament on the future of cohesion policy and structural funds/highlighting good practice examples.
Access to quality health care and Charter for rights	Demand in EAPN manifesto and Spring Alliance. Support to European Public Health Alliance Charter. Work with PICUM and Women's Lobby and King Bedouin foundation etc on right of access to services, particularly health for undocumented migrants (we had a joint conference and meetings to follow up this work)
Expand childcare provision	Continual demand made in EAPN positions on National Action Plans and the Social OMC – highlighted in "light year report" on child poverty Demand in EAPN manifesto on Europe 2020 and in Flagship Platform positions, supporting Eurochild work in this area.
Tackle energy poverty	Lobbying campaign together with trade unions and NGOs to get demand to tackle energy poverty through national action plans in the Energy Package. Now lobbying on implementation – joint work with Cecodhas, Belgian Presidency, ETUC and BEUC.
Area 5: Employment and Training	
Access to quality and healthy work, and support through education and training	Part of EAPN demands on Active Inclusion under Inclusive labour markets. EAPN responds to European Employment Reports and stresses the need to create quality jobs and increase access opportunities for people long term unemployed. EAPN has sought to ensure access and quality of work is addressed in the Employment Guidelines of the Europe 2020 strategy. EAPN is producing a video on positive activation to support active inclusion. We also work with Trade Unions on other actors on these demands (e.g. Joint social conference - March 2010)
Counter legislation/policies which promote punitive sanctions	EAPN has been highlighting and lobbying on the negative impact of punitive sanctions, in reports assessing the National Reform Programmes, but also EAPN Crisis Reports (2009 and 2010).
Renewable energies as a source of jobs	Key demand in manifesto of EAPN and Spring Alliance. Letters/lobbying to Ministers on the need to create quality green and white (caring social services) jobs.

AREA 6: PARTICIPATION	
Promote participation of people experiencing poverty in the fight against poverty	Key priority for EAPN. Coordination of annual People Experiencing Poverty Meetings of the Presidency and sought to have practice replicated at National level. National people experiencing poverty meetings and actions organized by most networks during 2010 EU Year. More links between EU PEP meetings and other European policy meetings on poverty: for example message delivered by participant in the 9th meeting to the Annual Social Inclusion Roundtable during 2010. EAPN continues to demand that European and national policy-making involve people living in poverty and their organizations at all levels and stages. Support to members to increase participation through seminars and activities. New methods tried out in 2010 with whispering translation (e.g. Minimum Income conference). Participation book (2009) Small steps, big changes and new booklet planned for 2011 to highlight more good practice of participative policy-making and organizations. A strategy to make EAPN more participative has been developed together with people living in poverty, national coordinators and executive committee members identifying key objectives for national networks and EAPN European work. This strategy will be integrated in the next strategic plan of EAPN (2012-2015. A training event will be organized in 2011 for people living in poverty and social exclusion active in National Networks and willing to become more active in European work of EAPN.
Participation must be regular and given formal status and structure	Demand in: EAPN manifesto, 2010 NGO Coalition key demands and all key EAPN documents, including proposals for Platform against Poverty. Key objective of Social OMC, the importance of participation is explicitly referenced in the Council Declaration for the EU Year and in the Commission's Platform against Poverty Communication. EAPN makes a strong defense of the importance of yearly EU People Experiencing Poverty Meetings and the need to transfer such practice to the National level. We also stress that this can't just be once off meetings but need regular structured dialogue on policy solutions, particularly as part of the Social OMC, and at all levels of the platform against poverty. Pressing for guidelines on participation to be agreed and implemented at EU and national level.
Indicators for monitoring participation	EAPN has made proposals for indicators and contribution to the Commission study on this topic. We hope to see results from this in 2010.

Appendix 3 Delegates and guests at the 10th European meeting of people experiencing poverty

Austria	
SCHUTTE Michael	MindestVerUnischerung
SCHMIDT Wolfgang	AMSEL
MAIR Martin	Aktive Arbeitlose
GURTHNER Christine	Verin Pe-Le
BRANDEL Doris	SHG "Gutes Leben für alle"
Belgium	
BACKES Stephan	EAPN Belgium
BAERT Geneviève	Réseau wallon de lutte contre la pauvreté
DELESCAILLE Alain	Réseau wallon de lutte contre la pauvreté
STEPMAN Patricia	Vierdewereldgroep Aalst
MEULEMAN Daniël	t'Hope Roeselaere
Bulgaria	
PEKANOV Angel	Mecembria
HRISTOVA Ekaterina	Nevo Drom
PAVLOVA Adriana	EAPN Bulgaria
IVANCHEV Petar	EAPN Bulgaria
HRISTOV Aleksandar	EAPN Bulgaria
Croatia	
SVAGUSA Vesna	Drop of Kindness
CZ Rep	
MALIKOVA Barbara	BLISS without RISK
HORVATH Jan	BLISS without RISK
BLAHA Petr	BLISS without RISK
PIJALEK Jiri	BLISS without RISK
JASKOVA Radka	BLISS without RISK
KANOCHOVA Katka	BLISS without RISK
Cyprus	
Apologies	
Denmark	
BAY PETERSON Sofie	Sand
HOLCK Ivan	Sand
HOLMGREN René	Sand
ERNSTSEN Per	Sand
JENSEN Leif	Sand
Estonia	
MERE Maur	EAPN Estonia
TOPAASIA Ervin	Nömme Child Welfare
TRAMBERG Irma	Nömme Child Welfare
KAHJU Laura	Eapn Estonia
Finland	
VAISANANEN Veikko	EAPN Finland
HAKANIEMI Matti	
KYTOMAKI Tim	
HASANEN Liisa	
TYYNELA Arja	
France	
COLINET Geneviève	EAPN France
PY Sofian	Fondation Armée du Salut
VARET Sylvie	EAPN France
KUCHARSKI Sonia	EAPN France
PION Dominique	Hospitalilté des Femmes
GHARBI Arnaud	Espaces
Germany	
BIEHN Erika	Verbanc alleinderziehemder Mütter & Väter
FRANKE Werner	Strassenfeger
HUGET Brigitte	Frauenladen Beesko
SCHMIEDL Robert	Verdi Erwerbslosenausschuss
SCHROTER Jens	Institute fur angewandte Armut
WEBER Jürgen	hartzIV Betroffene
Greece	
KALDANI Maria	EAPN Greece
DINOPOULOU-TZATZIMAKI Fani	Ass.for the Social support of Youth
SANKOH Hawanatu	
VANGELA Maria	Social Work Foundation
VAGGA Giannoula	
Hungary	
MESTER Attila	Hungarian Anti Poverty Network
BARANYECZ Janos	Hungarian Anti Poverty Network
HENN Brigitta	Hungarian Anti Poverty Network
KISS Csabane	Hungarian Anti Poverty Network
SZEKELYHIDINE B. Maria	Hungarian Anti Poverty Network
Iceland	
GUDNASON Gudni Heidar	EAPN Iceland
Ireland	
LYNCH Kay	
MACKEY Michael	Simon Galway
CONNORS Annie Mary	Irish Traveller Movement
PIERCE Laura	Irish Nat.Org. Of the Unemployed -INOU
FITZPATRICK Karen	One Family
Italy	
ALILOVIC Vesna	
BYBLIV Oksana	
FIORETTI Franceso	
BATTAGLIA Beppe	
EMILIO Sabrina	
RUFINO Francesca	

Lithuania	
BARANAUSKAITE Vaida	HPI Baltic Foundation
NORMANTIENE Natalija	Zlibinai Community
GRISKEVICIENE Lolita	Gelvonai Community
LAUKEVICIENE Gema	Lithuanian Red Cross
Luxemburg	
LUDWIG Caroline	EAPN Luxembourg
FANNAN Zarah	EAPN Luxembourg
Macedonia	
CAROVSKA Mila	Macedonian Platform against Poverty
Malta	
VELLA HABER Paul	EAPN Malta
CAMILLERI Helen	EAPN Malta
DIALLI Christopher	EAPN Malta
GOITOM Yosief	EAPN Malta
Netherland	
SMEEKES Alida	EAPN NL
AIBICH Abdel	EAPN NL
VAN LINSCHOTEN Marianna	EAPN NL
PAVLIASCHRILI inga	EAPN NL
LEEMKUIL Sonia	EAPN NL
Norway	
GENFELDT Anna	House of Poverty
HASSAN Jamila	Bibi Amka
MATHISEN Kim	Total Rehab
LEGPOLD PETTERSEN Merethe	Single Parents Ass.
FORSBERG Tore	AKTBO Selfindependent
Poland	
OSINSKA Anna	ATD QUART MONDE
SLEDZ maria	ATD QUART MONDE
DARKOWSKA Elzbieta	ATD QUART MONDE
CEDRO Alina	ATD QUART MONDE
WIERA Mirosslaw	ATD QUART MONDE
FREY Wlodzimierz	ARIADNA Warsaw
Portugal	
LOPES Rui	EAPN Portugal
COSTA Higino	EAPN Portugal Lisboa
CARRASQUEL Iris	EAPN Portugal Braga
ALMEIDA Paula	EAPN Portugal Guarda
CANHOTO Prudencio	EAPN Portugal Beja
Serbia	
KRUNIC Jasmina	SeConS Development Initative group
Slovakia	
TRNOVEC Stanislav	Slovak Anti Poverty Network - Large families Club
FEJKOVA Petra	Slovak Anti Poverty Network
HERO Jan	Slovak Anti Poverty Network - Roma Gymnasium Kremnica
SPIRKOVA Miriam	Slovak Anti Poverty Networks
Slovenia	
NOUHOUM Ibrahim	Zavod Risi - EAPN Slovenia
NOVAK Miroslava	Zavod Risi - EAPN Slovenia
KNIFIC Vida	Zavod Risi - EAPN Slovenia
SVETANIC LIonka	Zavod Risi - EAPN Slovenia
Spain	
ALLENDE Isabel	EAPN Spain
AKRIKEZ Layachi	
CERQUEIRAS Ana	
VILLAFRANCA d.I.T Martin	
DE DIEGO Marta	
DIAZ-PLAZA Maria S.	
BAIXAUILI M. Luisa	
Sweden	
ANDREASSON Rasken	EAPN Sweden
ANDREASSON Ann Kristine	EAPN Sweden
CARLSSON Bengt	EAPN Sweden
ANDREASSON Theres	EAPN Sweden
NORDSTROM Mari	EAPN Sweden
UK	
RAMADAN Nazek	Migrant voice EAPN England
MUHIADDIN Maysoun	Migrant voice
TARUVINGA Yeukai	Migrant voice
HESLOP June	ATD Fourth World
McMURCHIE Mary	ATD Fourth World
NEVILLE Anne-Marie	ATD Fourth World

Chair	
ÖRY Csaba	Member of the European Parliament
Speakers	
BALOG Zoltán	Minister of State for Social Inclusion, Hungary
ANDOR László	EU Commissioner Employment, Social Affairs and social inclusion
CARPARELLI Antonia	Director ff.Europe 2020, Social Policy, EU Commmission
BEETS Lauris	Chair of the Social Protection Committee
Poul Skytte CHRISTOFFERSEN	Ambassador of Denmark
WOOLEY Mick	Chair of the Employment Committee

DIERCKX Danielle	Oases - Antwerp University
COURARD Philippe	State Secretary for Social integration & Combating Poverty, Belgium
CEULEMANS Estelle	ETUC - CSE
SMITH Rebekah	Business Europe
HOREMANS Ludo	EAPN President
LAMBERT Jean	MEP - Greens
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FARRELL Fintan	EAPN Director
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NAGY Katalin	Hungarian Permanent Rep
VAJDA Gyorgyi	Hungarian Permanent Rep
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BOJE NIELSEN Mikkel	Ministry of Social Affairs
NIELSEN Peter Truels	Danish Perm. Rep
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DE KERF Nele	Cabinet of the State Secretary for Social Integration & Combating Poverty, Belgium
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SAINT DENIS Antoine	EMPL/D4
DENCH Kevin	EMPL/D2
VANYOLOS Istvan	EMPL/D2
OPLAND Oyvind	EMPL/D1
DEGRAND-GUILLAU Anne	
HOLTHUIS Egbert	
SPC/EMCO/EU Institutions	
ANDERSON Robert	EuroFound
BEVERS Tom	Employment Committee EMCO
KVEDARAITE Daiva	EESC
MATO Juan Carlos	Ministry of Health, Social Policy & Equality, Spain
GODINA Janja	Ministry of Labour, Family & Social Affairs, Slovenia
CIERNA Maria	Permanent Representation. Slovakia
KEIRLE Marie	Ministère des Solidarités, France
SULTANA George	Ministry of Education, Employment & Family, Malta
SVOJSE Jiri	Ministry of labour & social Affairs, Czech Republic
CULIK Stefan	Ministry of labour & social Affairs, Czech Republic
ELLISAARI Jaakko	Ministry of Social Affairs, Finland
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KELLY Paul	Department of Social Protection, Ireland
RUIZ BAUTISTA M. Dolores	Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, Spain
EU Parliament	
JANQUIN Denis	Replacing Frédéric DAERDEN, MEP
Karima DELLI	Greens
ANTAL Dora	Parlementary Assistant, Mr. ORY.
Academic Community	
Eric MARLIER	Instead
Hugh FRAZER	University, Ireland
Trade Unions	
MAUCHER Mathias	European Public Service Union - EPSU
NGO's	
CARACCIOLO Barbara	Solidar
JONES Sian	EAPN Policy Coordinator
FERRO Amana	EAPN Policy Officer
CARON Vincent	EAPN Policy Officer
VILKAMAA Susanna	EAPN stagaire
BASARAB Tanya	EAPN
RENOUX Marie-Cécile	ATD Quart Monde
VERZAT Elisabeth	ATD Quart Monde
DROZD Anna	Eurocities
GREEN Caroline	Eurocities
GANZERLA Sylvia	Eurocities
BAUSSAND Pierre	Social Platform
NANKIEWICZ Agata	ATD Fourth World Poland
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HERMANS Marja	T'huiszorg - Belgium
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MARTON Izabella	EAPN - Hungary
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Coordinator	
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Rapporteur	
GEOGHEGAN Pauline	
EAPN Team	
FLEMAL Coralie	
DAHMEN Sigrid	
GOMEZ Leticia	
LEE Rebecca	
LEMMENS Philippe	









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