

IS EUROPE 2020 DELIVERING ON POVERTY?
EAPN CONFERENCE – 28/09/2012



Spain

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Changes needed for the EU to deliver



- **2010 ended with good results for EAPN Spain:**
 - increasing governance of the OMC
 - sensitization and lobbying around the 2010 European Year on Combating Poverty.
 - Also, goals accomplished at the regional level.
- **EAPN's impressive organizational development:**
 - 16 Regions (out of 17), thousands of small NGOs, and 11 national organizations were on board.
 - PEP Congress on Fundamental Rights. Attendees: 360 PEP, national and regional authorities (Ministry of Social Affairs), MPs, practitioners, volunteers.

General beliefs:

Poverty was eventually on the political agenda!

Poverty and social exclusion are rising, but social inclusion and employment policies, under the EU framework, could be implemented in order to tackle them!

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- **EAPN Spain was consulted and managed to influence Spain 2011 NRP.**
- **Spain takes aim to reduce between 1,400,000 and 1,500,000 (in the period 2009-2019) the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in accordance with an aggregate indicator that includes people living below the poverty (relative poverty), people suffering severe material deprivation, and people living in households with low employment intensity. Reducing child poverty will be in similar proportion to the reduction of poverty in general.**
- ***Certain population groups, such as people with disabilities and those who suffer from material deprivation, will benefit through concrete and specific policies, especially in the field of housing, education, training and employment.***
- ***The NRP included a Protocol aimed at getting the consultation and taking into account the contributions of the Social NGOs for future NRPs.***
- ***The NRP also mentioned that the government should engage in delivering a new Social Inclusion Plan.***

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- **SPAIN: FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL TURMOILS**
- **Generalized rumours about Spanish banks struggling for survival and falling confidence in Spanish debt bonds, corruption episodes and political distress within the Socialists (the ruling party).**
 - **Crisis had lead to the collapse of the construction sector; a chain of defaults turned into a deep recession. Unemployment rose to 23% of active population. Poverty rate above 23%. Spain risk premium (difference with German debt bonds) rocketed to more than 400 percentage points.**
- **PP's strongest electoral message: "in order to avoid the bail-out, we need to accomplish the EU guidelines, dramatically cutting off public expenditure, both national and regional, and bailing-out banks by means of a financial reform". Austerity is claimed in order to reduce budget deficit, 9% of GDP. The former administration claimed they left it at 6% of GDP, a deviation of more 30,000 MEURO.**
- **Elections in Spain: conservative Popular Party wins regional elections in May, and General elections in November.**

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TRENDS – SPAIN SOCIAL THIRD SECTOR

Increased social needs to be addressed (unemployed households; long-term unemployed people; homeless families due to evictions; downsized salaries and pensions; children and seniors suffering malnourishment, disabled people without access to dependency services, lack of flanking services to get people to work; increasing discrimination and xenophobia, et cetera)

Downward trend of their public and private income . Private donations are neither encouraged due to bias of current Patronage Law.

Changes in relationships with other social actors (trade unions are not prone to alliances with the Third Sector)

Challenge of citizen involvement and social mobilization. Third Sector's activism may be determined by the nature of their funding's origin, mostly public. NGOs do not get involved in rising movements, namely the 15M movement, the Platform of the Evicted, of the Unemployed, and other.

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2012 SPAIN BUDGET - "AUSTERITY" CUTS OF SENSITIVE ITEMS

UNEMPLOYMENT POLICIES **-5,48%**

OTHER ECONOMIC BENEFITS - MINIMUM INCOME **-11,50%**

EMPLOYMENT ACTIVATION **-21,34%**

SOCIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL PROMOTION **-15,96%**

IMMIGRATION INTEGRATION - **FROM 80 TO 5 MEURO!!!**

Budget deficit commitment to the EU: (5,3% in March and 6,3% in July 2012) and 3% in 2013, while GDP is sinking.... Unemployment rate may rise above 26-27% before December 2012 (nearly 6 million). More than 2 million households will not perceive any income!

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FROM GOOD TO BAD?

- **In EU2020 it is clearly stated the need of getting the participation of all stakeholders.**
- **EAPN Spain has been actively involved in the former NRP, on behalf the Spanish social NGOs. Revising and making comments on the different draft versions of the document, making proposals, and eventually getting a fairly good feedback of them into the final text. An agreed Protocol committed the Social NGOs with the monitoring, assessment and drafting of the new NRP process.**
- **With the new government, the cooperation and participation have stopped unilaterally, despite EAPN's major efforts otherwise.**
- **Big worries: under the current strains of financial requirements and the menace of a bail-out, the social goals of employment, fight against poverty, quality services, and education attainments could be underestimated within the NRP. National Social Reports are not compulsory either.**
- **May 2012: European Commission reacted in favour of EAPN claim, asking Spain to reintroduce the poverty goal and governance in their Recommendations. No further progress was recorded on this, despite the Council indications.**
- **October 2012: NRP was revised without consultation with EAPN and/or the Social Third Sector.**

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FROM GOOD TO BAD?

- **Social NGOs should be against the current Fiscal Compact: extreme and long-term austerity may not be the solution; more likely, it may be fuelling the fire.**
- **Why?**
 - **Social policies would be more severely reduced, while the economic recession deepens inequality. The unemployed people, sliding into poverty, develop rising basic needs; but these cannot be satisfied as there are not enough services or promotion facilities available.**
 - **Increased social exclusion jeopardizes social stability and democracy.**
 - **The implementation of effective social policies and services stabilizes the economy and narrows inequality.**
- **What should we do next?**
 - **Challenge anti-social policies**
 - **Force more civic dialogue and improve governance**
 - **Keep beside the people with needs, and open up to the new grass-root organizations**