**EU INCLUSION STRATEGIES GROUP**

**Minutes of the AM plenary session – 7 February 2014**

*Chair: Paul Ginnell, EAPN IE*

**Attending:** Elke Vandermeerschen (EAPN BE), Douhomir Minev (EAPN BG), Marina Koukou (EAPN CY), Karel Schwarz (EAPN CZ – replacing K. Klamková), Per K. Larsen (EAPN DK), Kärt Mere (EAPN EE – replacing K. Nauts), Marjatta Kaurala (EAPN FI – replacing K. Vaatamoinen), Jeanne Dietrich (EAPN FR), Sophie Schwab (EAPN DE), Thorbera Fjölnisdóttir (EAPN IC), Paul Ginnell (EAPN IE),Vito Telesca (EAPN IT), Robert Urbé (EAPN LU), Kristijan Nushkov (Macedonian EAPN), Vincent Magri (EAPN MT), Sonja Leemkuil (EAPN NL), Dag Westerheim (EAPN NO), Kamila Plowiec (EAPN PL – replacing R. Szarfenberg), Hélder Ferreira (EAPN PT), Iris Alexe (EAPN RO), Graciela Malgesini (EAPN ES), Gunvi Haggren (EAPN SE), Katherine Duffy (EAPN UK), Maciej Kucharczyk (AGE Platform), Clotilde Clark-Foulquier (EuroDiaconia – replacing C. Mallet), Liz Gosme (FEANTSA).

**External Guests:** Nicholas Costello & Maya Carr-Hill (European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion); Philippe Lamberts (European Parliament, Greens/EFA Group).

**Apologies:** Michaela Moser (EAPN AT), Johanna László (EAPN HU), Giedre Kvieskiene (EAPN LT), Marija Babovic (EAPN SR), Magdalena Gramblickova (EAPN SK), Reka Tunyogi (EuroChild – replacing Agata d’Addato).

**No answer:** Nickos Ntasios (EAPN GR), Artur Benedyktowicz (CARITAS Europa), Leonid McKay (CARITAS Malta).

**EAPN Secretariat:** Sian Jones, Amana Ferro, Vincent Caron, Rebecca Lee and Barbara Helfferich.

**Plenary: Introduction**

**Buddy system**

Paul / IE introduced the idea of the buddy system – It is a good thing that some of the substitutes here today are EXCO members, this helps foster better cooperation and links between the EU ISG and the EXCO. The buddy system means that a more experienced member connects to a newcomer, and supports them during the meeting, as well as in between. If anyone needs a buddy, please contact someone from the Steering Group or the Secretariat. Volunteers among the more experienced members? Katherine (UK), Graciela (ES), Elke (BE), Robert (LU), Vito (IT), Hélder (PT), Gunvi (SE).

**Minutes and matters arising**

* Robert / LU– This time, the minutes do not indicate attendance and apologies.
* Sonja / NL– It would also be good to indicate who chaired a particular session.
* Sian / Secretariat(Secr) – All the Action Points were done, except for one. Graciela, Vito and Jeanne were supposed to work together on national budget, but it did not go forward. We can’t follow this up as a group right now, as it’s not in the WP, but please contact any of these colleagues if you are interested in doing something about it.

**Update on EAPN’s funding position**

Barbara / Secr- The good news is that we now have an agreement with the European Commission on the final amount – both for our core budget, as well as for the joint action we proposed (the CSR alliance). All NGOs that were receiving more than a million were cut down to one million euro core budget maximum – which is a significant cut for EAPN, as we used to receive 1.6 million. We were granted 989.000 euro as core budget. We also applied for project funding, which had a maximum of 300.000, and we were granted 260.000 for the CSR Alliance. Both these amounts require 20% co-funding. Cuts include: staff; translation and interpretation; reduced General Assembly (EXCO member +2); merging meetings; no new Task Forces; no Learning Forum; only one capacity-building event; policy conference becomes a policy seminar; no more EAPN MAG.

* Katherine / UK – I just wanted to express solidarity; this is a terrible situation. It is also a very frightening sign from the European Commission, what if it is the first step towards no funding?
* Graciela / ES – Are you considering other ways of funding?
* Barbara / Secr – Fintan is Fundraising Officer, and, as you know, there is the EAPN Fund. We have also projects running and looking at more, we are talking to Foundations. Of course, there is a lot of competition, because all other NGOs are in the same situation. We have had offers of private funding, but as you know there are many risks associated to that, so we are sceptical. Regarding the joint project, the CSR Alliance, the aim is to build a cross-sectoral partnership, to produce joint reports on the CSRs and NRPs, and the European Semester process. Elements include: 6 meetings of the Steering Group; a capacity-building seminar; a Toolkit; a cross-party hearing in the European Parliament on CSRs and the European Semester; 3 national pilot projects – building such cross-sectoral alliances at national level.
* Robert Urbé / LU – What does “cross-sectoral” alliance mean? Is it like the Spring Alliance?
* Sian / Secr – It means bringing together different types of social organizations, thematic or overarching, but also green organizations, trade unions etc, it’s a broad partnership. It is less rigid than the Spring Alliance, it has a different purpose and also foresees the pilot action at the national level, which the Spring Alliance did not have.
* Kärt / EE – Is it possible to cover co-funding by voluntary work?
* Barbara / Secr – No, not at all, freebies do not count, it has to be hard cash.

**Plenary Debate: Progress on Poverty? How can Europe 2020 / the European Semester make a difference?**

**Paul / IE** – EAPN members have been involved, or have tried to be involved, in the process of drafting and implementing the National Reform Programmes, and we have also done extensive work on the Country Specific Recommendations, monitoring their implementation and producing our own shadow proposals. Every year, we produce reports on the NRPs and the CSRs. It is no news that poverty is increasing. We know these are difficult times, but there is however a commitment to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The focus on macroeconomic and activation at all costs has severely undermined the achievement of social objectives. There is a lot of positive rhetoric on stakeholder engagement, but we have seen a worsening of the situation on the ground. Even networks who manage to have some input are very sceptical regarding the impact of that input, ie, how much is it taken on board. What are your upcoming priorities? What’s next for poverty-reduction? What can you tell us about the upcoming mid-term review of Europe 2020?

**Nick Costello / DG Employment** – We are just starting the busiest phase of the Semester right now. One half of the issue is getting the right arguments and supporting facts on the right desk at the right time, and the second half is getting the right outcome. EAPN has contributed greatly to the first one. The Commission is overstretched, so your input is very valuable, as it is packaged in an easy and quick-access way. It is useful to receive input for one specific country, with several points on different policy areas (Roma, housing, adequate income etc). In many respects, it is more useful to intercede at the national level – as you know, there are commonly-established European objectives, but there are national objectives that each Government is working towards. I would also like to draw your attention to the ESF – if you look at the Social Investment Package, you will see that there are two avenues of implementation, the European Semester and the European Social Fund (for example, the Operational Programmes are being discussed right now).Regarding the Mid-Term review, your question comes a month too early. We will release a Communication about it in about a month or so. It will be only to prepare the ground, as the new Commission is better placed to tackle this, so it will be more of a stock-taking exercise. Regarding the Annual Growth Survey, this year’s document actually mentions inequality and the role of social services in tackling poverty and inequality, which I think is a useful hook. It is not just a word put in there; it reflects the rapidly increasing body of evidence about growing polarization. So hopefully, you can quote the AGS as a reference, or supporting document in your struggle. It is always useful to make economic arguments alongside the social and human decency arguments. For instance, minimum income is important in itself (to ensure dignified lives), but it is also an employment tool (supporting people to get engaged with the labour market) and an economic one (fuels consumption). I don’t think it is cynical to martial both kinds of arguments, and it will help getting the point across.

**Philippe Lamberts / European Parliament, Greens/EFA** - Is DG ECFIN still in the driving seat for the CSRs?

**Maya Carr-Hill / DG Employment** – In the initial process, each DG has different responsibilities, but then these need to be put together in a coherent way at Commission level. It is the Secretariat-General finally deciding the mix. I would like to make the link with the CSR Alliance that EAPN will be leading on. We are very happy that this is happening, we hope that this will strengthen stakeholder engagement. This is the first time we are doing joint actions, so it is a test case, and we will evaluate at the end of the year. Producing alternative CSRs is very useful for us, not just the alternative phrasing in itself, but the content and information behind them. The more ammunition we have in DG Employment, the more we can get our messages across. One option of focusing efforts could be filling the gaps – look at CSRs for the previous year and see what is missing. Of course, the availability and quality of supporting facts and figures for your CSR proposals can really make a difference, as they are very useful. Regarding the report, we need to make sure that there is an added value for this joint action. I know that several networks involved, including EAPN, will produce their own report, and then there will be a joint report. For this year, we can’t say that this is not possible, as the individual network reports are in the work programmes. But for the future, we need to ensure that there is added value to the joint report, so that it is not more of the same, just a copy-paste of individual ones. One option could be to produce one report, and append to it the specific CSRs of each of the participating networks. Another one could be to produce one mini-report per country, collecting input from different networks on that one country. You realize that the same people will be receiving all reports, so there is a risk to water down the contribution by submitting a great number of similar reports, individual and joint ones. Regarding guidelines for stakeholder involvement, it is very unlikely that it will happen, as the Commission feels that Member States are very different and have very different cultures at the national level, so it is hard to be prescriptive.

**Philippe Lamberts / EP** – We have an economic governance in place, which suffers from several structural flaws. The first one is rigid discipline and sanctions associated with it rendering everything else soft and powerless – ie, what DG ECFIN comes up with carries much more weight than what DG Employment comes up with. When the Six-Pack was negotiated, the EP wanted to introduce income inequality in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure, it was rejected, as our counterpart in the Commission was DG ECFIN, and we were told that income inequality is not an economic concept. The second structural flaw is the lack of democracy and legitimacy. The Parliament is not involved in the definition of upcoming goals which is the Annual Growth Survey. At national level, only a minority of countries debate their proposals with their national Parliaments. The dialogue in the European Semester happens behind closed doors. The European Commission is not bindingly accountable to anyone. The third flaw is the lack of accountability to the people of the European Union. The involvement of the social partners was categorically denied at the negotiation of the Two-Pack, despite its impact on employment. The off-the-record response was – “If we involve social partners, we will have a revolution, we won’t be able to pass any measure”, which in itself is an indicator of how socially unfriendly those measures were. In the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure, they look at private debt, which is a good thing, but the overarching preoccupation is reducing unit labour cost. It is not easy to get the Macroeconomic Scoreboard reviewed, but we need to keep up the pressure. We hear that we need growth in order to have social policies. But we can very easily make the case that unless you have a cohesive, healthy, well-educated society, you can’t have growth! The argument is, if you don’t support inclusive societies because of altruism, at least do it for economic reasons. As Richard Wilkinson said, more egalitarian societies almost always perform better. The European level is important, but you can’t give up on putting pressure at the national level. People have the power of the vote, and it is what politicians want and need. If they don’t comply with economic conditionality, there are sanctions at the EU level. If they don’t comply with anything else, there is no EU consequence, but we can show them that they can be sanctioned by losing popular and electoral support. When one is poor, 100% of your resources, energy and creativity goes into survival. If 25% of your population is poor, those people are not contributing to society, as they have no resources, energy and creativity left. The humane, altruistic, cohesive argument, that it is not right to have poor people, is not enough anymore. We need to hammer that it is economically stupid to have poverty. We live in a rich continent. This is not an African country. We have resources. We have deep pockets of poverty in Europe, but we are a rich continent. We won’t get anywhere without three things: taxation, taxation, and taxation. What we need is comprehensive tax reform, which means we need European cooperation on this. The Commission is doing its job, DG TAXUD has prepared a number of proposals, but there is no pressure from the citizens in the Member States to make their Governments align. The argument saying that you can’t tax the rich, because they won’t invest and won’t create jobs and growth anymore – there is absolutely no economic evidence that this is true!

**Robert / LU** –DG ECFIN is asserting influence not just on economic issues, but also on social issues, such as cutting pensions. So we should lobby at the national level, but also not give up our European lobbying, except maybe by switching from lobbying DG Employment to lobbying DG ECFIN.

**Liz Gosme / FEANTSA** – We are clearly not on target regarding poverty reduction, Barroso himself admitted it at the Annual Convention. So it seems logical for the European Commission to prioritise pushing for this through the CSRs. Every country which is not performing well on poverty reduction should be getting a CSR on poverty. The EPAP Stakeholder meetings are underused. There is a suggestion in the roadmap to work in thematic working groups. Why can’t this be organized, to prepare thematic CSRs?

**Graciela / ES** – In Spain, the NRP is pushing things like internal devaluation, labour reform which encourages flexibility in firing, budget cuts in social areas, administrative reform, which means cuts in local services, increase in indirect taxes and other similar measures. This not only increases inequality, but it is a social catastrophe. Why don’t we get a CSR on this? We are in a sandwich – we speak to our Government, they say “It is not us, it is the European Commission, which forces us in the MoU to do these things”; we speak to you, the Commission, and you send us back to our Government, saying that they have the freedom to make policy choices. So, no one is responsible?

**Maciej / AGE Platform** – It is disappointing to hear from the European Commission, who should be the champion of supporting democratic scrutiny of the European Semester, that they won’t come with clear Guidance for stakeholder involvement. In the Social OMC, this was very well enforced, and the Commission managed very well, despite the now-invoked different cultures and practices in Member States. It is precisely because of these different practices that common Guidelines are needed for democratic and meaningful stakeholder engagement. The European Commission asked us for facts, figures, analysis, suggestions, but you will not get this, unless something can be provided in return, unless we can bring something in exchange to the national level.

**Katherine Duffy / UK** – I am a little frustrated, because the Commission has asked us many things, to contribute information and facts. But what are we getting in return to use in our lobbying at the national level. You are asking us to put pressure on Governments, without giving us any ammunition to do that. Civil society can’t substitute itself to the European Commission and do everything that it should be doing!

**Marina / CY** – From my experience, coming from a Troika country, what we always hear is that what we want is not possible, because of economic circumstances.

**Sian / Secr** – The Commission needs to be more pro-active. Europe 2020 is not credible at the moment, it hardly has any place in the Semester anymore. Nobody is pointing out how the social targets are being undermined by macroeconomic measures. Nobody is supporting integrated Active Inclusion approaches. Regarding stakeholder engagement, it was clearly mentioned in the EPAP, and it was in the Commission’s work programme for the past two years, how can it just be dropped? The Commission does give Guidelines, such as the Code of Conduct in Structural Funds, DG SANCO has their own Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement, why can’t DG Employment?

**Nick Costello / DG Empl** – To Robert, I did not mean to say that engagement should *only* happen at national level, of course lobbying at the EU level is also important, and complementary. I understand Graciela’s point about consistency. I can see, though, that different Member States use different policy mixes to respond to the same requirements, so there is room for manoeuvre and for making political and economic choices at Member State level – what to cut, where, how much and for how long. So it is not simply a matter of objectives at the EU level, but also how they are translated into national policies.

**Maya Carr-Hill / DG Empl** – We can take back the points about stakeholder involvement and compare with what used to work, and integrate it in the Mid-Term Review stock-taking. I think the idea of having thematic CSRs is not for the EPAP Stakeholder meeting, but rather what is now happening in the CSR Alliance.

**Philippe Lamberts / EP** – Truth be told, DG ECFIN, national Finance Ministries and the European Central Bank are actually in agreement to implement a certain type of economic model. But the ideology behind all of them is the same one. Draghi and Renn say the same thing, that it has to get worse before it gets better, that taxes are too high in Europe. We need to leverage public anger – on low wages, but also on tax fraud. Even without public demonstrations, the fact that there is public anger makes Ministers think twice. Finance ministers must be made to feel that they are taking a steep political risk.

**Minutes of the PM plenary session – 7 February 2014**

*Chair: Liz Gosme, FEANTSA*

**Feedback from small group sessions on CSRs (see the workshop minutes for full details)**

**EE, SE, FI, IS, ES, BG, DK, UK, reported by Graciela**

Proposals:

* CSRs are not publically debated: need for transparency on the process
* No strong social content - this should be changed
* CRSs should address real challenges – inequality performance - level of social expenditures – which part of social expenditures go to the poor, assess access to social and health services – effective social impact assessment

**LU, CZ, Eurodiaconia, AGE, IT, FR, Feantsa, reported by Jeanne**

The positive:

* Improvement of long-life learning schemes (FR, LU)
* Raise of the employment rate for young people and seniors (LU, FR, Age) but jobs are lacking
* A stronger focus on prevention (but this should be nuanced)

The negative:

* Reduce the health-related costs (LU, FR)
* Uniform raise of the pension age without making the distinction between hard jobs and others
* No social approach on housing

Gaps:

* Need a clearer mention of a social approach regarding housing policies
* More inclusive education policies better targeting disadvantaged and non-qualified young people (including Roma)
* Wider coverage of the youth guarantees
* An age-friendly working environment to better suit the needs of an ageing population
* More CSRs on poverty
* Civil society should be more closely involved in the European Semester process

**PT, MT, IE, DE, NL, BE, CY, MK, RO, PL, reported by Elke**

Lot of countries can see that poverty is decreasing according to the figures (i.e. PT, PL) but there is something wrong – indicators are not the right ones – poverty is on the rise – many countries mentioned impacts of cuts in social spending. Social protection systems attacked and not protected to the detriment of those who are the most vulnerable - Europe 2020 indicators: in some countries, it seems that they are fulfilling their goals (like PT), but what we see is the contrary. Real face of unemployment is not really captured. We need a reality check. Figures only show people who are registered as unemployed. Issue of employment and unemployment – how CRSs respond to this reality - precarious jobs, employment is scarce. Answers in CSRs: not quality jobs but more activation.

* CSRs addressing some aspects of realities but very partial
* Common problems: attacks on the welfare systems
* What are really missing in CSRs: inequalities, taxes and justice (CSRs on redistribution)

**General debate:**

* In Nordic block – growing inequalities and growing difficulty accessing health – dismantlement of services in troika countries
* Stakeholder engagement: ES, DK some improvement but what’s the impact? Only positive example is DK
* Little confusion between CRSs and NRPs in stakeholder engagement – general EAPN statement needed
* We really have to question indicators but we should not make ourselves ridiculous – Europe 2020 has 3 parts: very low work intensity in households (nothing to do with unemployment)

Sian / secr -

* The aim of our work on CSRs now is to influence the EC while drafting the CSRs
* The link with the CSR Alliance will be done. EAPN will make its own alternative CSRs plus the ones of the Alliance slightly later – it will be brought together as a package
* EAPN is the coordinator in the Alliance as well as an organization feeding into the joint action with its own input

**ACTION POINTS:**

**- EUISG Members to either tweak their written inputs (for those who have already sent them) or to send them to Sian (for those who still have not done it especially the Nordic countries) by February 17. For EOs, they can send their priorities.**

**- A template Document will be sent to EC as well as complete fiches by the end of February, with a Press Release and public document by the beginning of March. Members should also publicise this document at national level and use the CSR proposals in their work on the NRPs.**

**Plenary: Key Messages on AGS-JER Response and Mid-Term Review**

**AGS – JER Response**

* Sian outlined the draft EAPN AGS – JER Response. Core document to refer to for EAPN and National Networks. We should finish it very quickly.
* Possibility for members to quote it.
* Missed opportunity: business as usual – low profile given to Europe 2020 and targets – no appraisal – Poverty increasing by 8,7% - missing the social investment approach – impact of austerity – JER not having impact indicators – no quality jobs, no in-work poverty mentioned – active inclusion there but talk about activation and one-stop-shop (MI and activation: more surveillance for people receiving unemployment benefits/ without the flanking services). Role of European Social Fund (ESF): good on youth unemployment but no clarity about how ESF is going to deliver on the poverty target – very unclear about stakeholder engagement – instrumental way for stakeholders to sell it to the public.

**Discussion on the key recommendations:**

* Nothing in the recommendations about access to affordable housing.
* In JER: reporting on homelessness, very poor, inaccurate – better monitoring needed. AGS needs to be more socially ambitious. Services Pillar of Active Inclusion should be more highlighted. Link with homelessness and ESIF to be a bit stronger.
* Kart / EE - In countries like EE many good things happened thanks to EU but conditions to upholding this are put on MSs explain why things are being stopped like Youth Guarantee in EE.
* Recommendation 5. should be put higher up.
* Discrimination issue to be better flagged up.
* Helder / PT - All the Portuguese Recommendations are here. Not enough time to make comments by this meeting.
* What’s this Response for? AGS: SPC, EMCO discussing the AGS, and it will be approved by the Spring Council so it is a key Reference doc – chance for EAPN to have its concerns/ proposals heard.
* We should make our voice heard at the highest level – having a reference - we need to be more visible – bring it to the press – very useful exercise.
* This should be seen as a way to re-evaluate our consensus – reality check – have we got our messages right?

**ACTION POINTS:**

**- EU ISG Members to send to Sian their track changes by next Friday 14th February**

**- The secretariat will send the AGS response to the Commission and for dissemination to EU decision-makers and other stakeholders.**

**- The AGS response and the CSR report will be referenced in a letter to the Spring Council.**

**- EUISG members are reminded that this will be a key moment to try to engage with the NRPs at national level. The Tool Kit will be finalized and sent to members by the end of February.**

**Mid-term review of Europe 2020**

* Key moment to voice our concerns/ proposals about the review of the poverty target.
* EC Communication reviewing what’s happening – Secretariat General-driven. Need to work together in alliance – today 1st discussion. Then, draft proposal discussed in May – Policy Seminar in October will be about the mid-term review.
* Brainstorming session – what would people change about Europe 2020? About targets, process and content? What priorities to make them better embedded into Europe 2020?

**Discussion:**

* Per / DK - Report coming from Social Minister: specific target for specific groups like homeless, will be integrated into the forthcoming NRP (draft ready in March).
* Issue of statistics – actions planned based on statistics – if we take child poverty – real poor people never reached – we need to find out the real figures about how big is the poverty – things are going so fast.
* Role of the Social Protection monitoring Scoreboard – it is an area to be looked at.
* On the targets – do we think that the 3 indicators are the right ones?
* The 3 indicators are OK but not enough – in-work poverty and inequalities. Youth unemployment –share of NEETs.
* Gunvi / SE - one of the problems in SE is the cherry-picking – focus on material deprivation because it’s not high.
* Paul / IE - old poverty target has been reviewed in IE - issue about the process – new poverty target without any strategy. Then what? Proper strategy is needed.
* Reviewing the legal basis for SILC – possible review of deprivation indicators at EU level? They are looking at indicators on access to services – children in poverty.
* 1st time we had poverty target – do not give up – we should prepare something evidence-based. To see what has worked or not – we have to defend it or go back to the past with the mid-term review of Lisbon Strategy which was not good for the social OMC.
* What’s the involvement of the sub-group on indicators of the SPC?
* Do not be too critical on the target. Need to be assessed though.
* Europe 2020 headline targets should get more visibility in NRPs.
* Elke / BE - Discussion in 2009 – 2010 – We should remember how PeP were critical about the poverty target – poverty is a violation of human rights. We should be honest with our members. Have a long-term vision.
* Something is already under way. If we’ve got the poverty target and indicators, then we can track it to see how to make progress (but not in favour of them) - % target on poverty would be better.
* Kart / EE - 100.000 young Estonians left the country not to be poor.
* Emigration is a really strong point – people leaving their country with all the social problems. It is destabilizing from social policy point of view.
* Our proposal must be clear enough and challenging enough – not just about poverty – but also about working conditions – underemployment. We need to capture that to better track in-work poverty.
* Graciela / ES - Tricky management of statistics – unemployment rate has gone down but decrease of active population with 1 million people leaving the country – but more and more people looking for jobs.
* To look at what we are paying out of our pockets – who’s working on it?
* Access indicators (health data – lack of access to health – see drivers project). Ad hoc group on indicators: Eric Marlier has been pushing for these indicators for a long time – any new indicator takes a long time to come. We know nothing about the EC Communication.

**ACTION POINTS**

* **EAPN will prepare an input to the Mid-Term Review and this will form the basis for our policy conference in October.**
* **Timeline: following from the Communication on the Mid-term Review in early March announcing the timeline for the consultation, EAPN secretariat will propose a scoping note and timeline for the preparation of the draft and the conference. Ideally the draft will be discussed the EU ISG May meeting but it will all depend on the EC timeline.**

**Plenary: Building alliances to get more impact at national level**

**Sian introduced the session:**

* This is a follow-up of the session with Tanya, at the Feb 2012 meeting, on the basis of ideas of Working together better, in order to get better working at national level by the networks on their Europe 2020 work.
* Aim to try to move on from existing practices.
* Will hear about the Belgian anti-poverty platform – promising example - and a short input on the Belgian Peer Review.
* Second part on alliances – what are you doing at national level in alliance-building type of initiatives – both with other social organisations and other sectors. This links to the EAPN Alliance work on Europe 2020 and the European Semester.

**Presentation of the Belgian anti-poverty platform by Elke/BAPN**

* Belgian platform: dialogue platform – open structure – members are not fixed - open to NGOs, Government, interested individuals. But it’s mainly the Government, Presidency of Platform Administration of Secretary of State on the fight against poverty – 10 PEP.
* More inspiring practice – it is very valuable in terms of exchanging info but very poor impact on the policies. That’s the thing we wanted to discuss during the Peer Review.
* It has been showcased as a good practice – our recommendation -more impact through a more formal status.
* Policy makers not really involved (sometimes cabinet from State Secretariat in charge of fight against poverty only).

**Presentation of the Belgian Peer review by Elke/BAPN**

* During the Belgian Peer review: very good papers on stakeholder engagement, also from Hugh Frazer who shared most of our comments/concerns – even the paper of the Belgian paper mentioned some of the weaknesses.
* Demands/ questions/ remarks noted down during the Peer review. PEP Participated – evaluation made – PEP were quite positive.
* In the conclusions: openness from the Admin, Government – yesterday informal meeting with the Administration.

**Discussion:**

Paul / IE (represented EAPN at the EU Peer Review of the Belgian Platform Against Poverty) -

* Countries represented in the Belgian peer review: AT, IE, BG, CY, FR, CZ, GR…
* Discussion paper from Hugh Frazer: lots of comments taken on board our concerns
* Experience: not that positive on real stakeholders’ engagement. Member States presenting their positive practices.
* Stakeholders’ engagement not only about the social side but also economic one.
* Not much progress on EC Guidelines on stakeholders’ engagement. But EAPN still pushing for them.
* Resources at local, national and EU level have been cut. From a grass-root level, it makes things really difficult. Some networks need to ensure capacity building – Capacity building of officials needs also to be developed.
* Katherine / UK - It is very frustrating – we did have lot of impact (social policy TF) – but when the Government changed it was dropped - how much impact do you expect now?
* We should keep on fighting for improving impacts – to have a direct dialogue and feedback from Government representatives.
* Educational training about policy effect – maybe we should be clear about what we mean by policy impact.
* Very interesting discussion with FR – FR thought they did better than BE with a more top down model – PEP elected as representatives – They tend to be co-opted through this system.
* How do we measure success? Be clear about our demands – to have our messages annexed - agenda setting – sign-posting.
* What we want in terms of stakeholders’ engagement has to be seen in addition to representative democracy.

**Feedback on new developments on Semester work by members**

* Graciela / ES - Last year: meeting with Desk Officer in charge of drafting the NRP: strange meeting – they were new – we asked for the continuation of good relations with us. This year: process was different – they took it more seriously – the NGO input was drafted by Graciela and backed by 3rd sector platform. We are trying to prevent the worst aspects of NRP (like rise of retirement age). We are going to get feedback from them – will keep you posted – In addition to that, a meeting with Ministry for Finances and EAPN ES, UNICEF ES and OXFAM was organised: according to Carlos – very good interview –they accepted to work together on tax reforms – a special policy for NGOs to give grants has been reformed – fear of being bankrupted – but the problem was solved. Regarding Structural Funds, EAPN ES has been very active – Sali had lots of meetings with Regional managing authorities – very focused on getting 20% of ESF at regional level. We have been offered to be technical adviser but we cannot evaluate ourselves.
* Helder / PT - We are not involved in the process because it does not exist. We have been very active in our work with PEP, lobbying with trade-unions, political parties, State officials to reinforce our positions either in the media or elsewhere. On Structural Funds, we contributed to proposals on the partnership agreement – possible proposed arrangements – thematic Operating Programme on social inclusion. Second one on competitiveness. It is good as a hook – it means that the rhetoric is in there. For us, end decision in the hands of the Minister for finances but hard to get connected.
* Eurodiaconia – Austria members: quite negative.
* Vincent / MT - New Government – Ministry for family/ social solidarity tried to meet with PEP – she wanted to hear from them – Government issued a green paper on how to combat social exclusion and poverty – Sub Committee on child poverty – EAPN invited to get involved in shaping policies/strategies. Invitation to other NGOs to join forces to be more effective towards the Government.
* Sophie / DE - Lots going on in Germany – addressing problems of poverty – alliance where all members involved in anti-poverty issues – redistribution of wealth – demonstrations – press release together with other alliances (tax on financial transaction) to try to influence the new Government contract. Decent MI alliance to get the MI – it is also in the Government contract – it involves EAPN and other actors.
* Kart / EE - Hard to know – Social Ministry in charge of drafting the Report-invited to feed into it
* Paul / IE - EAPN IE met Troika Representatives (in EC Representation in Dublin) 3 times – we did it with another organization.

**Buzz groups’ feedback on Alliance building at the national level.**

**MT, IE, UK, RO**

* NGOs big part of service delivery: UK more delivered by municipalities.
* Malta: NGOs cannot be really independent – must be registered – so hard to really build alliances.
* Romania: case of lot of services delivered by NGOs – so big NGOs getting paper product – but not implemented – attitude in Romania – let us help you to meet the target – more positive approach.
* Alliance on Europe 2020: very effective in designing shadow NRP Report.
* Scottish Poverty Alliance – took approach to build up grass-root alliance organization to organization at middle level. UK very poor on alliance-building.

**IS, FI, EE, SE**

* Necessity to clarify advantages and disadvantages of alliances.
* Disadvantages: risk of decreasing diversity and watering down of our voice.
* Alliance-building should be out of choice and need. It is important – alliance within EAPN is already big. Alliance could give a lot but it is very costly – functioning of an alliance costs a lot – you need a place to meet.
* 29 networks behind EAPN FI with big organizations.

**ES, CZ, BG**

* We need more clever knowledge, grounded, good analytic behind to counter arguments that are in the NRP. New publication from EC on new development on social inclusion/employment really disturbing – status quo of social research – Important to work on this matter – we cannot make argument just being naïve – we need facts – strong evidence – alternative social research.
* Good relationship with media to change mentalities.

**NL, DE, BE**

* Evidence and argumentation on macroeconomic level should be improved. There is a lack on that side.
* Importance to have a good relationship with media – issue about migrants – to influence through the media.

**PT, CY, MK**

* How to engage with Government on the fight against poverty.
* Macedonia and Cyprus: Minimum income schemes – Problem to reach the highest level and get them to deliver on what they agreed. Importance to work with media.
* Relations with political parties need to be carefully managed – In PT, there has been some openness – open session regarding the following European elections – EAPN PT also has its own strategy on European elections – work with media/ academics – time to present clear proposals on strategy to fight against poverty and social exclusion. Work with number of academics to get something to discuss about. Very interesting social movements (against precarious work) – about alternatives – discussion more qualified, more rich – we always need to come up with a draft proposal of common actions when we want to build alliances.
* Scientific advisory board of EC – how many NGOs participate? They don’t pay for useful social researches.

**ACTION POINTS**

* **Members should continue to look at how they are working on Europe 2020 at the national level and learn from other’s experience.**
* **In terms of the EAPN EU Alliance on Europe 2020 and the Semester – money will be available for 3 national pilots: This will be an open call – and not limited to EAPN but other organisations on the Alliance.. The money is to support building alliances outside current NGOs involved (ie other social or green NGOs, trade-unions, others…) - linked to EU processes but not only.**
* **Sian will circulate the call at the beginning of March with a deadline of the end of March. Any network or national member from a European organisation can apply..**

**Minutes of the AM plenary session – 8 February 2014**

*Chair: Sonja Leemkuil, EAPN NL*

Sonja reviewed yesterday’s meeting and introduced today’s agenda.

Elke / BE - Would like to discuss the campaign now. Discussed in the EXCO and there was the conference in October but need to take it up in the Networks.

Sonja suggested a change to discuss the elections campaign more the morning plenary and take half an hour off the subgroups’ time. **Agenda change** accepted.

**Steering group election voting procedure**

Amana / Secr - 4 candidates, and 2 spots are free to complement the current team of Sonja Leemkuil (NL) and Paul Ginnell (IE), with Sebastian Nastuta (RO) having left the network & Liz Gosme (Feantsa) stepping down:

1. Hélder Ferreira, EAPN Portugal
2. Vito Telesca, EAPN Italy
3. Graciela Malgesini, EAPN Spain
4. Catherine Mallet, Eurodiaconia
* Helder / PT - We withdraw our candidacy as a network, as all 3 national networks put forward are from the South and we favour Graciela from Spain.
* Vito / IT - We likewise withdraw, for the same reasons.

Graciela Malgesini & Catherine Mallet are unanimously elected.

**EP Elections Campaign – Electing Champions for a Social Europe**

Barbara / Secr -

* 4 March, launch date with a Press Release and press breakfast in Brussels, with the Bureau and European Organisations present. We need national press coverage also.
* Blog – space for the networks to spread what they’re doing. Please translate the blog, announce it on your site, and send us your activities.
* Postcard with a pledge – a set of generic goals for MEPs to commit to.
* Manifesto – started before she began her role as director, circulated in the EXCO, not finalized together, but as time was late we published it. Apologised that this was not a clear process. We hope that the manifesto defends the basic EAPN concerns. Please translate it if you can.
* A day of common action: 8 May, to get press on the following day (Schuman day). Idea came from the conference on 1 October 2013 – Do whatever you want but under the EAPN banner. We can present this at EU level then.
* Coordinators problem. People busy; candidates not out. We’ve been late. Urge to put names forward. He/She will be responsible for the campaign in the country and liaise with the secretariat, join in Brussels activities possibly, contribute to the blog etc.

Brussels actions:

* Post-election event, in the 2 weeks after elections - good chance to have a hearing and have meetings with the candidates. Especially those who signed our pledge.
* Possible video, inspired by the Spanish one you saw in Mallorca. Silent with slogans for use all over Europe.
* Bureau has been asked to do an own video we can use for the launch.
* All info plus templates and materials are on the Members’ Room -> Campaigns – please look and ask us if any problems.

**Discussion**

* Graciela / ES – We’re using manifesto but we’re campaigning in our bigger alliance, not only as EAPN. We have a document on campaign and the candidates; positions of other platforms in Europe; 10 proposals that can be shared by all. Will be finalized at the last minute. Also have a new video - also have the language issue in Spain so it’s prepared for them to translate the lines, and find a child to speak the text. We can all use this. Concept - surprise element of choosing a child to speak about a social model we can chose for their future, then go to EAPN for more info...
* Sophie / DE - Have a meeting on 3 March, so can’t say what the plan is. We did a postcard in Germany before and it wasn’t so successful. But we want to do it.
* Barbara / Secr - Called for coordinators in Nov. Needs to be seen as important in the member states. We can only coordinate. We know it’s a problem. We are also trying to reach out to other EU NGOs. There is a problem in some countries that do not see it as a priority, because of the political context. We can only support members at the national level who wish to take action, with tools, and facilitate exchange so we can learn. We need to know what you need of course and of course you adapt to what works nationally. EOs have manifestos – AGE, etc, EAPN is trying to bring together some other NGOs, to support each other; no common manifesto however.
* Sometimes ambiguous to get involved as getting involved in party politics.
* Marina / CY - Meeting MEPS before is to inform them about EAPN and make the link. Easier to speak to them before. Last time we met with all of them and saw how they saw poverty.. They had strange views and it was interesting.
* Liz / FEANTSA - Important for getting allies. Crucial elections and for the next 5 years.. Trialogue negotiations that she’s followed have actually been more social. EP is more powerful now. Important for general lobbying strategies.
* Paul / IE – We will engage with candidates. Will develop the manifesto for Ireland. Do a briefing for groups about the role of parliament &with statements from the MEPs. Awareness-raising element. An event in each of the 3 constituencies to discuss the parliament and meet them maybe to develop relationships.
* Katherine / UK - Can build bridges with London MPs who already support us. Outside of London & Scotland, a waste of time to lobby them, and unhelpful for us even. Only the liberals are pro-Europe. EU institutions are seen as anti-democratic. The 6-pack is hated though the government is just as bad. We can’t do much. We have local elections and the Scottish referendum.
* Per / DK - Try to be more aware of the connections of the policies. Much anti-feeling in DK also. Similar situation as Malta, but important still to do what little we can.
* Robert / LU - MEPs want us to sign up to their manifestos! We can take a photo but can’t say what they’ll say & do. Can commit to vague things but not all the things in the list of the manifesto. Gap between talking with them and getting them to sign up to our thing!! Need details eg on universal social protection. We will have discussions with candidates, and try to get them on a track to a more Social Europe, but big gap to the manifesto.
* Barbara / Secr - Manifesto can indeed not fit for all. Guide is to have clear messages to MPs simply, and you see how. It is crucial. We wouldn’t have got the 20% earmarking of the ESF without meeting them.
* Fintan / Secr - Only asking them to sign the card and not the manifesto. Would be good to have some MEPs signed up from among our friends, before the launch on the 4th. From all parties - we’re not political - but need to give them visibility as that’s how they operate too. Other MEPs will look at who’s signed up to it.
* Graciela / ES - What’s happening with the Greek network?? Platform of social NGOs visited Greek NGOs and found them v active.
* Fintan / Secr - Greece is represented well in the EXCO, but they struggle beyond that. They’ll get a small grant from the EAPN fund. Might help. They need to be in the EUISG.

**ACTION POINTS:**

**- Members should check with their networks and make sure the secretariat has national coordinators’ names by 24 February.**

**- A formal message from the steering group will be sent to EAPN Greece saying that we need to support Greece, and that they need to be represented here in the EU ISG.**

**Lunch-time spots**

Sian / Secr – These are to enable a more informal exchange between members working on different topics. **Proposals: 1)** indebtedness (Clotilde). Clotilde/Eurodiaconia: A theme we see growing. And would like to know how you see it and what legislation we can try and develop. 2) elections campaign (Barbara and Rebecca)

Sonja / Chair - People should say what they want on the agenda for this year. We have great publications but we don’t talk about the messages.

**Sub Group sessions (see your group’s full minutes)**

**Feedback from the sub groups**

**Active Inclusion Sub Group, reported by Jeanne**

**Attending:** Robert Urbe (LU), Jeanne Dietrich (FR), Elke Vandermeerschen (BE), Kart Mere (EE), Gunvi Haggren (SE), Dag Westerheim (NO), Kristijan Nushkov (MK) + Sian Jones & Fintan Farrell (Secr)

Follow up on decisions and deliverables:

* Letter on Active Inclusion is finalized. It is a product to use by your network. It will be sent to you with the minutes and put on the Members’ Room.
* 12 arguments for Active Inclusion – Deadline: 10/2 for comments from the SG. Then it will be sent to full group for final comments.
* EMIN project was presented by Fintan and full discussion on the follow up: Members should follow the blog. Give him feedback on the European roadmap by the end of March. Fintan will send it around. 6 November will be the final conference. Reports are due end May.
* Good discussion on national developments, growing concerns about health and access to health, discussion on use of reference budgets in Sweden, and some concerns about objectives and general developments regarding reform on Minimum Income in different countries, with increasing conditionality. Luxembourg has a reform ongoing on MI.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* **Active inclusion letter template to be used by networks, sent out with the minutes**
* **12 Arguments leaflet to be circulated for comments by the SG by the end of February, then finalized.**
* **Fintan to circulate EU Roadmap on EMIN comments – session at May EUISG meeting.**

**Employment Sub Group, reported by Helder**

**Attending:** Marina Koukou (CY), Katherine Duffy (UK), Hélder Ferreira (PT), Iris Alexe (RO), Kärt Mere (EE), Sonja Leemkuil (NL), Kamila Płowiec (PL), Maciej Kucharczyk (AGE) + Amana Ferro & Rebecca Lee (Secr)

* Quality Work Explainer summary. Content is all required. Katherine suggested taking adverbs out to shorten it so Amana will brush it up then send it to the full group. Endorsed by the SG. Translation by all networks (not just the SG). Please send translations to the secretariat.
* Maciej / AGE made the point that the anti-discrimination directive isn’t there but we can’t put it in as not in the full explainer which was already endorsed.
* Idea of updating online versions posited.
* How to use the explainer was discussed: Seminars, elections campaign, Decent Work/Living Wage campaign TF campaign, overall lobbying on the concept in our CSRs/mid-term review etc. Use the objectives which are clearly in the EU strategy but not enforced. Letter to be sent to Commissioner Andor.
* Decent Work/Living Wage campaign TF: questionnaire to networks via the EXCO to assess their campaigning potential and this will be presented in our October meeting.
* In-Work Poverty paper: used at a successful Annual Convention event and a good spotlight.
* No time to discuss further work.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* **Send translations of quality work explainer to secretariat.**
* **EXCO to answer questionnaire about living wage campaign.**
* **Letter to be drafted to send to Commissioner Andor.**

**Structural Funds Sub Group, reported by Liz**

**Attending:** Sophie Schwab (DE), Graciela Malgesini (ES), Liz Gosme (Feantsa), Karel Schwarz (CZ), Douhomir Minev (BG) + Vincent Caron (Secr)

* Countries in process of adopting partnership agreements – commission and managing authorities – so now is the ultimate last weeks to influence. Some countries have a foot in the door, others not. Our mapping document can still be used to see what other countries doing.
* Bulgaria has the issue of Corruption, and not sure about SFs’ use.
* Spain has a National action plan on use of SFs. Idea to get reference to this plan in the partnership agreement.
* German entry point is the long-term unemployed. V focused.
* Czech NGOs have a foot in process, but frustrating as social dimension is new and lots of different voices from employment etc.
* Next steps: Find the partnership agreement and send it to Vincent to see how the social is covered in it. Talk to your desk officer and report back to us. They agreements determine how regional programmes are made. Provides us with arguments.
* Vincent / Secr - On the partnership agreements he will send an email with some useful links, to help you to check about them at national level and bullet points on key issues. CLLD letter and scoping note is an entry-point. On the scope of the handbook, the discussion was not so clear - it’s difficult to have a handbook helping members to access funding from national level, because realities are different. Will develop a checklist with general tips for those who want to get involved. EAPN has done its work in lobbying, now it’s up to the national level.

**ACTION POINTS**

**- Send your national partnership agreement and send to Vincent, talk to desk officers about extent of social inclusion in the priorities.**

**- Vincent will send email with useful links.**

* Liz / FEANTSA - We didn’t discuss the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) so we can have a lunch-spot for those interested.

**BH gave more info on the CSR Alliance budget lines available for the national pilots (see document).**

**[Lunch spot on the Elections Campaign**

* Gunvi / SE - Problem of 2 other elections & our GA in May. Trying to do common actions on democratic process & fighting social exclusion. Candidates are named in Sweden. Is it too early though to contact them? Barbara / Secr - No, get them starting to talk about poverty..
* Kamila / PL - Also have other elections. Problem last time of having a seminar where only right-wing politicians came. We had our Exco last week of January and discussed about having a debate.
* Barbara / Secr - Maybe we can take a risk on who think *might* be elected?**]**

**Minutes of the PM plenary session – 8 February 2014**

*Chair: Paul Ginnell, EAPN IE*

**Youth Inclusion paper**

Amana /Secr -

* Broader than only Youth *Active* Inclusion – broadened to inclusion, through the 3 pillars. Had 14 answers + Feantsa. The fiches are on the Members Room.
* Guidance for buzz groups: short exchanges: Where are the problems, causes, solutions? regions? What about the youth guarantee?
* Marina / CY & Vincent / MT said they had sent answers that have not been picked up. Apologies.

**Buzz groups’ feedback**

**RO, MT, IE, NL, UK, reported by Katherine**

* All have sent responses. Not 2 countries with the same definition of ‘youth’ – different ages and ‘young’ for different things, ie housing, ..!
* All over 20% unemployment and IE, RO, ES have high enough rates for extra money. Don’t trust figures as figures dropped in Ireland but because youth has left. In NL, you can’t get benefits til 27 years old.
* 3 countries have the guarantee. UK won’t take it up. Scottish government wants it so in disagreement.
* Are funds going up or down for youth? Sanctions are worsening everywhere.
* Trafficking problem in Romania.

**PT, CY, MK, IT, PL, NO, BE, DE, reported by Helder**

* Unemployment all over. Bad quality jobs for youth in Germany: Schools are fractioned and strongly condition chances.
* Specific gaps eg for Roma.
* Transition phases are hard – internships for the young. How to get quality jobs? But youth is becoming until age 40 now!
* Youth migration in Portugal. Understandable that they move.

**LU, DK, FR, Feantsa, Eurodiaconia, reported by Per**

* Short questions but complex. Advise that things are mentioned as examples and not a full analysis.
* Concentrate on pt 5 and relate to youth guarantee of the EU - Evaluation of how it’s implemented.
* The paper is too ambitious how it’s framed at the moment.

**FI, EE, SE, reported by Gunvi**

* Similar problems & causes in our countries. Labour market & education; lacking jobs due to failing education system to give full competencies. And lack of services & housing keeping youth at home til they’re 35.

**CZ, ES, BU, reported by Graciela**

* EAPN-ES isn’t following youth. Trade Unions and corporations deal with it. NGOs only get social projects. No cooperation. Youth Guarantee and strategy are to put money in the hands of the employers. 3bill euros and nothing comes to NGOs.
* Liberal-critical split between Karel & Douhomir. Karel / CZ believes the problem is mis-adjustment of training - Economy can’t absorb new workers. And Douhomir / BU in the need for an unconditional basic income for all the young.

**ACTION POINT:**

**- All members to send inputs to the mapping and check if your information is accurate to Amana by the end of February.**

**Policy presentation on Social Investment Package/European Platform against Poverty, and Structural Funds and FEAD**

See powerpoint.

**Follow up on Tackling Homelessness**

Liz / FEANTSA - Just start a discussion on whether homelessness can be taken up in EAPN. EC – *nothing* apart from poor monitoring and reporting. EP pushing for a homelessness strategy on the other hand. FEANTSA addresses the Commission as heard they do want to do guidelines as follow-up to the SIP. There’s a National Social Report guidance note to the SPC too. Things are happening but it’s always combined with other priorities. Needs a general framework or the SIP recommendations will just be lost and ineffective.

She lists the FEANTSA recommendations for EAPN, see document 17.

**Discussion**

* Sophie / DE – There’s a federal Task Force and we were invited to input to national plan but an aside issue and can push for more on this.
* Elke / BE - Working Group on references addressed in BAPN, together with Belgian organisations. The Belgian Platform has a meeting with the government on this next week. Specific focus on homelessness in the draft opinion on the NRP. I will keep you informed.
* Helder / PT - We work with local organisations and the group of homeless people is always mentioned. We have networks with an EAPN member and a technical person working in teams. Renting was revised under Troika and people are losing houses. We follow this evolution.
* Gunvi / SE - Taken up in broader discussion looking at how people get to that stage, eg supply, access, debts. Who is homeless? Shouldn’t be reduced to only those on the streets. Eg insecure housing, domestic abuse. Fighting the conditional approach - idea of earning your way back to a house.
* Marina / CY - No homeless in Cyprus. 90% are home owners but there’s a danger now of a law taking people’s first house away, so this may become a problem.
* Graciela / ES - Spain is v much in Feantsa. Issue with statistics. Survey counts people on streets. We follow the ETHOS method as developed by Feantsa though, so it undervalues the problem. 55,000 people claim to live rough (red cross info). NAPSI, homeless strategy is work in progress.
* Paul / IE – We make an alternative social plan. PEP delegations always include someone homeless.
* Dag / NO - People on streets sometimes have an address in another country.
* Liz / FEANTSA - EU free movement is a massive area. And why an EU strategy is needed. There should be a minimum access to shelter regardless of your housing situation in a home country.
* Kart / EE - Estonia works with homelessness with a policy paper, mainly in the big cities. There are only 2000, but we have learned that you have to be preventive, not just reactive. This is our connection point.
* Katherine / UK - EAPN UK doesn’t work with homeless organisations. Poverty alliance in Scotland, yes. Homeless NGOs are bigger than social, so maybe Liz could ask her members to ask them to contact EAPN.
* Vincent / MT - Refugees are surely countable. How do you define it for them?
* Liz / FEANTSA - Prevention and statistics seemed to emerge. How to link to wider social inclusion strategies. Not ready yet in EAPN, but maybe on the longer term. Feantsa has a typology of types of homelessness - Ethos typology. EAPN can reference things at least. Eurodiaconia/Caritas do take it up.
* Sian / Secr - NRP replies often don’t cover homelessness and gives the impression that we’re not working on it so much, so please send the info. We can take steps towards capacity building on this issue and building a consensus.

**ACTION POINT:**

**- Liz to circulate the link with the ETHOS definitions, and steering group will discuss the follow up.**

**Plenary: EAPN’s key events in 2014**

Barbara / Secr presented the next key meetings coming up:

**PEP meeting:**

Commission will help with the building and money. 22-24 September. Most probably 4 people per delegation. Theme was structural funds but the room at the national coordinators meeting was split in half over this, so re-wording it. It will be on EU funding for poverty with 1 of the 5 workshops on Structural Funds. Others on wealth and inequalities, minimum income, migration.

* Robert / LU - Seems a very difficult theme for a PEP meeting.
* Liz / FEANTSA – Who’s in the organising committee?
* Barbara / Secr - Feantsa was invited to the coordinators meeting but didn’t attend.

**ACTION POINT:**

**- Fintan to circulate the draft agenda to EUIS members.**

**Next Meetings**

**EXCO:**

Warsaw, 14-15 March. EUISG-EXCO – no full joint meeting but the steering group will join an EXCO meeting after June, once it’s established.

**EUISG:**

Will be in Prague and organised by the Czech Network, with thanks to Karel. 16-17 May, with the possibility of a Czech seminar on 15 May in the afternoon (tbc).

**GA:**

90% sure it will be on 28 June, with an EXCO meeting the day before 27 June EXCO, and in Naples.

**Policy seminar:**

Policy seminar, reduced annual conference, will be during the EUISG meeting 3-4 October. Topic will be to do with the mid-term review but a scoping note and timeline will be done to for the next meeting..

**New Task Forces outputs**

**Stakeholder Engagement TF, presented by Elke**

See powerpoint.

* Elke presented the Handbook. The HOW? Need concrete examples from you the members beyond the TF members. Good practices, less good practices, inspiring practices. And general feedback: please replace text only as it’s already long! DL: end February. Elke will send an email herself to the group.
* What kind of action note we will produce is not so clear but is what we proposed useful to you? Yes.....
* There will be a capacity building around it in the May meeting.

**Discussion**

* Helder / PT - Very useful. Usually round 17 October we announce our work for a year but it’s also continuous as need to find other activities to get things through without exaggerating demands on peoples, time. It’s a dilemma. How to balance should be discussed.
* The action points are useful and highlight capacity building for decision’ makers.
* Handbook is aimed at decision-makers so less internal. Capacity-building for officials more, and for us to use with them.
* Need to use for pressure on EC regarding the stakeholder guidelines which they promised.

Elke -

* Reminds us that participation was used in the TF and it’s been great.
* Timeline for the end: launch linked to a TF meeting in April. Finalise end March. Will do something in the EP. Looked at launching it at the PEP meeting but not appropriate.

**ACTION POINT:**

**- Send concrete examples of good practices and less good to be put in the draft and to send general feedback on the document by the end of February.**

**Migration and impact of the crisis Task Force, present by Vincent**

* 2nd meeting was at the end of January. Draft report raising awareness on the impact of the crisis on migrants and the rhetoric used around this group. Also, aim to promote more positive idea of migrants with a kind of myth-buster. To train and build capacity within EAPN. You will be sent this.
* Country fiches from all members just before the meeting. Will be a synthesis report like the Troika report. Key findings and illustrated with key data, with the fiches annexed.
* Launch at the EU integration forum around mid-June is an idea. And maybe we’ll have a capacity building at the October EUISG.
* Good to have other examples like Greece and countries from which people are leaving.
* Nazek from Migrants Voice, UK, is leading the TF and drafting the report.

**Living Wage campaign Task Force, presented by Amana**

* Based on a UK campaign – Definition of a wage higher than the minimum wage. Tactic – approaching workplaces directly.
* 2012 GA had a workshop and Networks were interested in coordinating such a campaign. TF will look at what can be used from the model across the EU, asking for info from Networks via the EXCO. It will produce a toolkit on how to run such a campaign.
* 2nd meeting at end of February to decide on the content and then a longer stretch to do the writing.
* Will launch the Quality Work Explainer at the last TF meeting as it ties in.

**Discussion:**

* How can you quantify dignity across the EU? And creates confusion with our work around minimum income and messages about low minimum wage. Is minimum income not a living wage or should be (need to be over the 60%)?
* Each are important though. It is technical but we need positions on all this. This is why we work on reference budgets to test this. MI is social assistance and a living wage is about salaries.
* There is no common definition it’s true, and work to be done also in the TF.
* MI is for the whole family but wages are different as can’t pay those who have more kids more. MI comes in when wages don’t cover the whole family.
* It needs to be v objective and quantifiable though and not subjective.
* Why not address Trade Unions?

Amana / Secr –

* TF does have 2 members from a Trade Union background. All this was discussed. It’s not the point to come up with model of finding a wage in each country. It will be more possible models of what you can do in your countries. To target employers and ideas around this. Questionnaire will just get baseline knowledge of the resources and experience networks have (via the exco). The aim is to raise the right questions, but the TF will not have all the answers.
* The short questionnaire on campaign capacity, will go to the EXCO was sent on Monday 10 February with a deadline of 21 February.
* Will come back to EUISG, with finished product in October.
* ACTION POINTS
* Questionnaire on campaign capacity to EXCO with deadline of 21 February.
* Final draft will be discussed in the EUISG in October.

**Final words from the chair**

Lot’s to do this year! Paul thanks Liz and Sebastian who are stepping down from the steering group for their work.

Kristijan / MK invites us to some Macedonian wine!!