



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

EAPN's Key Messages

4th Annual Convention on Poverty and Social Exclusion

BRUSSELS, 20-21 NOVEMBER, 2014

Bringing New Hope: Participation is key to progress on poverty!

Put the voice of people experiencing poverty at the heart of a Social Europe 2020 and use EU funds to invest in quality jobs, services + social protection!

The first objective of the Convention must be **to review progress on the Europe 2020 poverty target together with stakeholders, including people experiencing poverty, and propose solutions**. The growth of poverty by 8 million since 2008 to 122.6 million (2013), despite a slight decrease from 2012, still puts at risk the social cohesion of the EU, as well as a sustainable recovery and the credibility of an EU that is supposed to care for people rather than only markets and economic growth.

The new Commission and Parliament, has now a key opportunity to support a new **EU Social Face**. This must be demonstrated through the **Mid-Term Review of Europe 2020**, and in the EU Structural and Investment funds: **implementation of 20% of ESF** on social inclusion and poverty reduction and in the 300bn investment package. These initiatives must be used to 'close the gap', and restore a rights-based approach, as part of an **integrated anti-poverty strategy** based on quality jobs, services, social protection and promotion of EU social standards.

Above all – **people must be put at the heart of the strategy**. Participation and empowerment is not about 'making people in poverty responsible for getting themselves out of poverty' which they did not create. Participation starts with giving people a voice and developing a governance system in Europe 2020 based on regular, respectful stakeholder dialogue at national and EU level that takes on on board their concerns and their solutions. **This approach must start here in the Annual Convention!**

THREE KEY MESSAGES

1. **People experiencing poverty are an essential part of the solution**
2. **Make Europe 2020 accountable to people and parliament**
3. **Prioritize the social dimension and ensure EU funds deliver on poverty with social investment in quality jobs, services, and social protection**



The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is the largest European network of national, regional and local networks, involving anti-poverty NGOs and grassroots groups as well as European Organisations, active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It was established in 1990.

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People experiencing poverty are an essential part of the solution

The EU is committed to 'evidence-based' policies. However, many question what evidence was used to justify the current 'austerity' approach, which is generating more poverty and inequality, as it undermines economic recovery. The real 'experts' on poverty are the people themselves: who experience at first hand the impact of policy, and can see what works best. We welcome the Commission's continuing support for the Annual Meeting of People experiencing poverty¹ but underline the need to put participation at the heart:

- **Give a direct role to people with experience of poverty in the Annual Convention and debate their key messages from the European Meeting.**
- **Support national meetings, systematic engagement and follow up in the European Platform Against Poverty and Europe 2020.**

Make Europe 2020 accountable to people and parliament

The current 'Europe 2020 and Semester mechanisms' increasingly lack transparency. Many people increasingly question who is really deciding on their lives? And for what goals?

A revised Europe 2020, will not succeed unless it achieves 'ownership'. But this does not mean 'selling' policies better and 'convincing' people that the EU is right. It means transparent decision-making and accountability to Parliaments and to citizens.

- **Develop an inter-institutional agreement with the European Parliament to deliver Europe 2020 through the Semester, requiring agreement of national parliaments.**
- **Design and implement obligatory EU guidelines for stakeholder engagement including civil society and people in poverty, in the design, delivery and evaluation of all policies, giving the European Semester Officers a role and budget to support engagement.**

Prioritize the social dimension and ensure EU funds deliver on poverty with social investment in quality jobs, services and social protection

No progress will be made on poverty in the Mid-Term Review, unless the EU policy frame is made social as well as economic, ensuring that macroeconomic goals contribute to social objectives, rather than undermining them. But more pro-active measures are also needed, the Convention must call for a concrete integrated strategy to deliver on the target, developed with stakeholders and effective mobilisation and monitoring of EU Funds on poverty through European Structural And Investment Funds and including the 300 bn Euro investment package proposed by President Juncker.

- **Mainstream the social scoreboard into economic governance decisions with Social Impact Assessment.**
- **Monitor delivery on the 20% of ESF for poverty reduction and FEAD, mobilising new investment funds to ensure access to quality jobs, services and social protection.**
- **Develop an integrated EU rights-based antipoverty strategy including progress on EU social standards, starting with a Minimum Income Directive, based on Art 153h (TFEU).**

See key related EAPN documents: ⇒ [EAPN Input to the Mid-Term Review of Europe 2020 Strategy](#)
⇒ [EAPN Assessment of NRPs 2014: From Austerity to Inclusive Growth](#)
⇒ [10 Key Messages from the 13th European Meeting of People experiencing Poverty # 2014PEP](#)

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This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission may be held responsible for use of any information contained in this publication. For any use or reproduction of photos which are not under European Union copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holder(s).

¹ Key Messages from PEP meeting September 2014.