**EAPN’s Pilot Actions on Europe 2020 and European Semester**

**Summary of Activities and Outcomes**

**Background**

In 2015, EAPN supported its National Networks in launching ‘Europe 2020’ national pilot projects aiming to raise awareness at national level on the Europe 2020 Strategy and European Semester process. The pilot projects came out of a need to find new ways to engage EAPN members and increase impact, as they felt increasingly side-lined from decision-making and policy-shaping arenas, with the European Semester apparently being driven by economic governance goals. The pilot projects offered small amounts of funding creating opportunities for EAPN members to raise awareness and build capacity, enabling civil society organizations to provide better quality input to decision-makers and get more impact on policies in Europe 2020 and the Semester. A priority was given to joint projects encouraging mutual learning amongst the national networks.

**Objectives**

1) **Raise public awareness about Europe 2020.**

2) **Organize capacity building events for members to engage in Europe 2020.**

3) **Develop instruments to effectively monitor the social situation.**

**The 5 National pilots: Summary of Actions and Outcomes**

*5 National Pilots were carried out*:

1. **EAPN Portugal with EAPN Bulgaria**
2. **EAPN Serbia with EAPN Macedonia**
3. **EAPN Spain with EAPN Italy**
4. **EAPN Hungary with EAPN Croatia**
5. **EAPN Ireland**

A brief summary of the main activities and outcomes are summarized below:

1. **EAPN Portugal, with EAPN Bulgaria**

The main aim of the project was to promote better governance in Europe 2020 through empowerment and participation of civil society, involving awareness-raising and capacity building actions. Portugal was the lead project, with Bulgaria in support. In both countries, the project was led by a large group / partnership of national organisations – in Portugal, the Non-Governmental Forum for Social Inclusion (Fórum Não Governmental para a Inclusão Social – FNGIS), including EAPN-member Caritas Portugal. And in Bulgaria: the national Semester Alliance.

**Project Coordinators** were:

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**Main Activities**

**Portugal:**

1. **A Europe 2020 Explainer**: highlighting governance, status of targets and main priorities.
2. **2 Training Workshops on Europe 2020**: 1) in Oporto on 29th June and 2) in Lisbon on 20th October. See here on Oporto: <http://www.fngis.pt/programa-workshop-europa-2020-mais-participacao-melhor-governacao-porto/> and in Lisbon: <http://www.fngis.pt/programa-workshop-europa-2020-maisparticipacao-melhor-governacao-lisboa/>
3. **Joint Transnational Seminar involving EAPN Bulgaria:** monitoring Europe 2020 held on the 16th December: involving 22 participants including, NGOs, European Commission and ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics and Management.
4. **Video**: “More participation, better governance’ was produced, capturing testimonies of people experiencing poverty and CSO representative on the importance of participation in Europe 2020. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUbNHOkvAIQ&feature=youtu.be>),

**See here to access more information**: <http://www.fngis.pt/campanhas-e-projectos/europa-2020-mais-participacao-melhor-governacao/>

**Bulgaria**:

EAPN BG worked to strengthen the National Semester Alliance, presenting its report: *Civil Monitoring of the European Semester aiming at assessment of the quality of EU annual Political cycles,* at a series of national events and national articles. At a transnational level with EAPN PT, it exchanged information, participated and presented inputs to the transnational seminar above, including paper on ‘the Bigger Picture’.

**Evaluation and main outcomes**

**Portugal**

* 2 major impacts were achieved – increased awareness and information about Europe 2020 and the Semester amongst civil society and better capacity to engage.
* A strong relationship with the Portuguese representation of the European Commission was also established.
* A momentum has been built towards the creation of a national alliance of NGOs to engage in the European Semester, including people with direct experience of poverty.
* However, the project highlighted the difficulty to mobilize people around this process, particularly within the context of political instability eg Portugal

See the project report from EAPN Portugal [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Portugal.pdf).

**Bulgaria**

* The project enabled the national Semester Alliance to strengthen its work. The transnational work with EAPN PT stimulated EAPN BG to look for new opportunities**.**

See the project report from EAPN Bulgaria [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Bulgaria.pdf).

1. **EAPN Macedonia, in cooperation with EAPN Serbia**

The project aimed to increase the visibility of Europe 2020 and the European Semester and its link with the *South East European Strategy (SEE) for development: SEE 2020 – Jobs and prosperity in a European Perspective*, and to get insights into the design of regional level social inclusion policies, and potential for engagement. The specific objectives were to produce and disseminate a shadow report on the implementation and achievements of the Europe 2020 strategy at national level and achievement in reaching targets.

**Project Coordinators**:

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**Main Activities of the pilot**

1. Development of **a common monitoring methodology/ reporting mechanism** including desk review and interviews with decision-makers and stakeholders
2. Development of a **shadow report of SEE 2020**
3. **Delivery of a workshop to present the shadow report on 23 December in Serbia and 24th December in Macedonia.**

**Evaluation and Main Outcomes**

* It is too early to make a full evaluation, but project enabled EAPN to get a comprehensive picture of the SEE 2020 strategy and its implementation process.
* It helped to build capacity amongst MAPP and EAPN Serbia to engage better in this ‘light’ Semester process, at national and regional level and to define their recommendations for the next mid-term phase.
* The project highlighted the neoliberal approach of the strategy, with priority to trade liberalization and competitiveness, with its inclusive pillar reduced to employment**.** This raised issues of how national social inclusion policies will be delivered.

See the project report from EAPN Macedonia [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Macedonia.pdf). And from EAPN Serbia [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Serbia.pdf).

1. **EAPN Spain, in cooperation with EAPN Italy**

This Pilot Action consisted of a research study and advocacy about the impact on women of Europe 2020 and the Semester. It particularly focused on the lack of visibility of the problems faced by women in poverty, in the framework of the Mediterranean welfare state.

**Project Coordinators:**

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**Main Activities of the pilot:**

1. **Research:** 
   * **Desk Analysis**: of A) EU and national comparable data, highlighting the lack of statistics relating to the gender dimension of poverty and social exclusion in order to follow the EU2020 headline targets. B) Analysis of Italian and Spanish NRPs and CSRs in relation to the gender dimension of poverty and social exclusion.
   * **Field Research:** 19 interviews in Italy and 18 in Spain, through a ‘snowball’ methodology, across age-groups, origin and territory.
2. **Report** available in English, being translated in Italian and Spanish. See English report here: <http://www.academia.edu/20076692/Inivisibility_of_Women_in_Poverty_in_Europe_2020>
3. **Seminars**
   * **in Madrid:** on 27th November – presented as a part of Seminar on Gender in the 3rd Sector. See here: <http://practicasinclusion.org/index.php/noticias-a-eventos/221-xiii-seminario-de-buenas-practicas-en-inclusion-social>
   * **Seminar in Italy:** Report was presented in Seminar in Rome on 14th December; More information at: <http://www.cilap.eu/index.php/notizie-e-comunicati/9-comunicati/81-il-volto-femminile-della-poverta>
4. **Advocacy and Dissemination activities,** to start a dialogue with political parties and/or members of the respective Congress around the main Report’s findings and proposals.

**Evaluation and Main Outcomes**

* It was a very important start to work on women and poverty and link to Gender. An immediate outcome was the constitution of 2 EAPN working groups on Gender and Poverty in Spain and Italy.
* There has been a positive interaction with local, regional and state authorities dealing with gender affairs in Italy, with a presentation foreseen in Madrid in 2016.
* The report will be disseminated to NGOs working on ESF and Europe 2020/Semester.
* A core recommendation is the need for EAPN to get involved in the gender analysis of poverty, in the context of the EU strategy on Equality.

See the project report [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Spain-and-Italy.pdf).

**4). EAPN Hungary, in cooperation with Croatia**

The pilot project aims to spread information and raise awareness on the European Semester and Europe 2020 and their impact on poverty, through a media campaign and through different events, as well as building capacity to engage and influence the strategy, strengthening the partnership between EAPN Hungary and EAPN Croatia.

**Project coordinators:**

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**Main Activities of the Pilot**

* Bilateral interactive **practice-sharing training** on Europe 2020 through a joint preparation methodology meeting in Hungary (08.07.2015) and a training in Croatia, involving 22 people including people experiencing poverty (17.09.2015).
* **‘Days of Games to raise Social Awareness’ (Hungary) –** an event where participants could play 4 different games which highlighted the struggles of people experiencing poverty, in the context of Europe 2020. This was followed by a **forum theatre**, followed by a discussion. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1677058622539809/>
* **Symposia Event** (Croatia) on (28.10.2015) related to poverty and the poverty target involving 70 participants, including political parties, press, professionals and NGOs.
* **Media campaign** to raise public awareness of Europe 2020 and the Semester, through traditional and social media. See here :<http://tatk.elte.hu/karihir?id=NW-1063> ; [http://civilhirugynokseg.hu/event/tarsadalmi-jatekok-napja](http://civilhirugynokseg.hu/event/tarsadalmi-jatekok-napja/), <http://www.bpgo.hu/30445/tarsadalmi-jatekok-napja---a-magyar-szegenysegellenes-halozat-szervezeseben>; <http://www.bpgo.hu/30445/tarsadalmi-jatekok-napja---a-magyar-szegenysegellenes-halozat-szervezeseben>, <http://www.wherevent.com/detail/Magyar-Szegenysegellenes-Halozat-Tarsadalmi-Jatekok-Napja-a-Magyar-Szegenysegellenes-Halozat-szervezeseben>
* **Evaluation methodology** meeting (Hungary) where learning of the activities were exchanged and report of the project was drafted.

**Evaluation and Main Outcomes**

* The pilot action reached its goals – drawing attention to the poverty target in Europe 2020 through direct and indirect means and underlining the need to build strong alliance to get impact (people experiencing poverty, experts, NGOs) and to use the media.
* The capacity of the 2 networks was broadened, through methodology exchange and learning eg on arts and games and organizing with people experiencing poverty
* The professional cooperation between EAPN Hungary and Croatia was strengthened, from very different experience and starting points.

See the project report from Hungary [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-HAPN.pdf). And Croatia [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-CAPN.pdf).

1. **EAPN Ireland**

The pilot project aimed to increase awareness among politicians, media and civil society of the commitments in Europe 2020 and the Platform against Poverty, at EU and Irish levels, as they relate to poverty in Ireland, the current issues for people in poverty and the measures needed to impact on them. This will be achieved through though briefings on the Poverty Target at EU and Irish levels among politicians and civil society, discussing with political parties, and briefing Irish anti-poverty NGOs about the National Reform Programmes, Country-Specific Recommendations and Mid-Term review of Europe 2020 and the Semester more generally.

**Project coordinator:**

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**Main Activities of the Pilot**

1. **Briefing** **on Poverty, 2015 and proposals for 2016-2021**, published in December 2015, outlined Ireland’s and EU poverty reduction targets, and charted progress to meeting them. It calls for a new 5-year strategy, aiming to influence priorities of political parties in national elections. It was disseminated to members of Parliament, key advisors, local councillors and civil society. The briefing is available at: <http://www.eapn.ie/eapn/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EAPN-Ireland-brieifng-on-poverty-2015.pdf>
2. **Meetings** **with all parties** about their election manifestos. The first meeting took place in November and will be completed in 2016.
3. **Short Briefing on Europe 2020 and the Semester** for EAPN Ireland members and other civil-society groups on understanding and engaging with Europe 2020 and the Semester. See: <http://www.eapn.ie/eapn/briefing-on-poverty-targets-european-semester-and-europe-2020>;
4. **Building on the work of the Better Europe (Semester) Alliance**: In 2014, Ireland received support from the Commission through the EU Semester Alliance to coordinate a national cross-sectoral Alliance to work on the Semester. The following activities were carried out in 2015:

* **July**: Response to 2015 Country-specific Recommendations;
* **October**: Meeting with European Commission’s European Semester Officers to present the response; Meeting with the Parliament’s Joint Committee on EU Affairs to present the response;
* **November**: Meeting with European Commission’s fact-finding mission to Ireland on the European Semester.

The Alliance Response to the 2015 Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland is available here: <http://www.eapn.ie/eapn/response-to-2015-country-specific-recommendations-for-ireland>

**Evaluation and Main Outcomes**

* **Provision of accessible information on the European Semester, Europe 2020 and Poverty –** the project went some way to addressing this deficit, by briefing members and allies with accessible information that can inform our advocacy**.**
* **Influencing the political priorities of political parties and next Government** – it is still too early to evaluate the impact on manifesto’s and political priorities of the next government. EAPN Ireland will continue to engage and to review impact. The impact however is multiplied, as the briefings act as a resource for members to use.
* **Developing visible communication materials is crucial to try to impact on policy,** but needs sustainable resourcing.

See the project report from Ireland [here](http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/projects/Pilot-Report-Ireland.pdf).