**EAPN Messages on the Mid-Term Review of Europe 2020**

**Scoping Note on EAPN Action**

**Introduction**

The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU policy framework that replaced the Lisbon Strategy in 2010, setting 5 concrete targets to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These included for the first time an explicit poverty target to reduce poverty by at least 20 million by 2020, as well as other key social targets (achieving a 75% employment rate and reducing early school leaving by 10%) and 7 flagship initiatives. The process is delivered through a largely economic governance coordination cycle called the European Semester. (For more information on the Europe 2020 strategy and European Semester see EAPN tool kit 2014)

EAPN has attempted to engage actively in the strategy, through the EU Inclusion Strategies Group at national and EU level, and now through the new Joint Semester Alliance. EAPN has continually highlighted the lack of progress on poverty (with poverty increasing by 8 million since 2009), the negative impact of EU economic austerity policies and economic governance and the increasing democratic deficit, failing to involve civil society stakeholders and Parliaments in a meaningful way.

In 2015, the EU institutions will carry out **a Mid-Term Review**, which could lead to some substantial revisions of the strategy and the process. This scoping note sets out the proposed action and process that EAPN will take with its strategic bodies during 2014, in order to try to input into and influence this review in 2015.

**Current Developments**

On the 5th March 2014, the European Commission published a [Stock-Taking Communication assessment of the Europe 2020 strategy](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm) delivery on its goals and targets. This review firmly backs the priorities set during the crisis years with its focus on austerity, sustainability of public and private finances, and the stabilisation of the Eurozone, but does recognize ‘mixed progress’ on the targets, and in particular the failure on the poverty and employment targets. It underlines the importance of the targets, the flagship initiatives and an EU financial levers. The review also highlights the important of the process: the European Semester ‘providing a credible framework for policy implementation’.

Key challenges highlighted by the Commission:

* No return to the previous ‘growth model’ that bred widening inequalities
* Need to reconcile short-term urgency responses with longer-term needs
* EU Member States and EU institutions should take collective responsibility
* Vital to getting ownership of all relevant actors/stakeholders and develop a less bureaucratic process

**Next Steps**

* European Council held a first discussion in March 2014, backing the Commission’s approach.
* The EPSCO (March 10, 2014) supported the targets but stressed need for improvements in governance, and involvement of social partners and stakeholders. It pressed for more efforts to reduce poverty and assess impact of structural reforms on social/employment objectives.
* On the 5th May, the Commission [launched the public on-line consultation](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/public-consultation/index_en.htm) with a deadline of the 31st October. The replies from this consultation will be taken into account in the new Commission’s proposals for the Mid-Term Review in 2015.
* The Italian Presidency will hold a review at the October EPSCO.
* The EP has been marginally involved in Europe 2020 and has not developed so far an opinion on the Mid-Term Review. However, there is likely to be cross-party interest to develop an own-initiative report to ensure some input by the end of 2014.

**EAPN Action**

EAPN will aim to:

* Develop and promote an EAPN position which sets out its assessment of Europe 2020 so far, making concrete proposals on how it can deliver on the poverty and other social targets, in the context of a pact for a more Social Europe. (May-July)
* Use this as a basis for our contribution to the formal consultation process. (Sept, finalized after the conference in October)
* Work together with the Social Platform, the Semester and other alliances to promote our proposals through advocacy actions. (June-Dec)

**Process and Timeline**

The position and input to the consultation will be developed together with EAPN members, and particularly through the EUIS Group, the EXCO and the GA, and finally launched for debate with EU decision-makers in the EAPN Policy Conference in October. We will finalize the input to the formal consultation following the conference. Below we set out a proposed process and timeline.

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| **What** | **Who** | **When** |
| Agreement of Scoping note | EUISG | 16-17 May 2014 |
| Discussion on key questions based on scoping/ discussion note for draft position | EUISG | 16-17 May 2014 |
| Initial written inputs by EUISG and EXCO | EUISG/EXCO | 23 May 2014 |
| Draft Position based on EUISG/EXCO input | Secretariat sent to EUISG/EXCO | 8th June |
| Discussion in GA | General Assembly/EXCO | 27 June |
| Deadline for final written inputs | EXCO/EUISG | 4 July |
| Final draft | EXCO/EUISG | 20th July |
| Lay-out/copy | Communication Team | End of July |
| Photocopying | Communication Team | End of August |
| Draft Response to the consultation | EXCO/EUISG | 5th September with deadline of  26th September |
| Revised Draft | EXCO/EUIS | 29th September |
| Presentation to conference | EUISG/SEC | 3 October |
| Input to consultation sent | SEC | 10 October |
| Advocacy including press work with European Parliament, Commission, Council. | EUISG/EXCO/Policy and Communication  team | October/November/Dec |

**Position Paper: Main Messages**

Our input will include a summary of our appraisal of how Europe 2020 has functioned so far and our key messages highlighted from existing reports/ and from our recent discussions in the EXCO/EUISG:

* The dominance of the macro-economic priorities undermining poverty/social targets.
* The loss of a separate social agenda/strategy replaced by mainstreaming into the macroeconomic agenda.
* The failure to establish credible poverty targets and implement them at EU and national level
* The lack of effective integrated strategies to deliver on the target, developed with stakeholders.
* The democratic deficit and the lack of meaningful stakeholder participation, including with people experiencing poverty undermining legitimacy and ownership
* The limited use of Structural Funds to deliver on the targets.

**Our demands**

The need for a coherent social and economic strategy, which can deliver integrated, rights-based approaches to significantly reduce poverty, social exclusion and inequality, developed through democratic and participative engagement, and backed by EU funds.

**Our concrete proposals:**

***Suggested Headings/Questions that need to be answered***

1. **COHERENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRATEGY**

**Q: What is the best way to rebalance social and economic objectives and achieve a real integrated social and sustainable development strategy? Do we need to keep a separate social strategy agenda as well?**

* *What needs to change? Can social impact assessment play a more effective role, with a golden rule? Or ex-ante coordination of fiscal, economic and social policies? What about the social dimension of the EMU and its scoreboards?*
* *Does the European Semester need to be refocused on Europe 2020? How?*
* *Is subsuming the social agenda into Europe 2020 too big a risk? Should we argue for a separate social strategy and agenda?*

1. **ESTABLISHING CREDIBLE POVERTY AND OTHER SOCIAL TARGETS**

**Q: What can be done to get an effective poverty target?**

* *Should the poverty target remain the same? What about the 3 indicators? How to get national governments to use the indicators and to set ambitious targets using all 3?*
* *Any changes you would make to the other social targets? Employment and Education?*
* *What about sub-targets? Eg children, homeless; What about a target for inequality?*

1. **EFFECTIVE ANTIPOVERTY STRATEGY IN ALL POLICIES**

**Q: What are the essential policy elements for an effective strategy?**

* *Rights’ based?*
* *Social Protection, social investment and active inclusion?*
* *Quality work and fight against in-work poverty?*
* *Inclusive education, training and lifelong learning?*
* *Specific thematic strategies for groups: eg children/homeless? And to fight discrimination?*
* *Other?*

*Q:* **What changes need to be made in the governance of the strategy to achieve this? ie**

* *What about changes in the Integrated Guidelines? (currently poverty is under guideline 10 in the Employment guidelines***),**
* *What about the flagship initiatives? ie The Flagship Platform on Poverty – what changes could be made to make it more effective?*

1. **DEMOCRATIC AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE**

**Q: How to get more effective democratic control? How to improve engagement of stakeholders in the process, involving people experiencing poverty (NRPs/CSRs and delivery on the policies?) in the design, delivery and evaluation of polices? What about Parliament (EU and National?)**

* *What can the EU do? Guidelines, other mechanisms?*
* *What can national level do?*

1. **USING EU MONEY FOR POVERTY**

**Q: How can Europe 2020 ensure that EU money gets spent effectively on poverty reduction?**

* *How can we ensure that EU money is spent on effective poverty reduction actions?*
* *How to ensure that grass-root NGOs are involved in the design, delivery and evaluation?*

**Questions for Discussion: EUISG**

1. **OVERALL APPROACH**

**Q: Do you agree with the overall approach/method in the scoping note?**

1. **MAIN PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE FOR CURRENT EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY**

**Q: What should be EAPN’s main priorities for change in Europe 2020 in the context of the European Semester process to deliver on the poverty target?**

1. **KEY ISSUES/PROPOSALS**

**Q: Are the Key issues/questions highlighted above (p.4-5) the right ones, are there others?**

**Q: Have you got specific proposals to make on them?**

1. **EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY**

**Q: How can we lobby effectively at national and EU level?**

***COMMENT: EUISG and EXCO members will have the opportunity to input by writing after the meeting with a deadline of 23 May, and then opportunity for final input.***