



8 November 2013

To: Mr Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament
Mr Joseph Daul, President of the EPP Group
Mr Hannes Swoboda, President of the S&D Group
Mr Guy Verhofstadt, President of the ALDE Group
Mrs Rebecca Harms & Mr Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Co-Presidents of the Greens/ EFA Group
Mrs Gabriele Zimmer, President of the GUE/ NGL Group

***Make a Difference, combat poverty
Back the 20% ESF earmarked on poverty with a strong ESF of at least 25% of
the Cohesion Policy budget***

Dear President of the European Parliament, Dear Presidents of the Political Groups,

In times of economic crisis with a rising number of women and men experiencing/ or at risk of poverty and social exclusion (i.e. 120 million people) and a very disappointing shortfall in the national poverty reduction targets, the European Social Fund is more than ever needed to invest in people with a special focus on those who are furthest from the labour market through long-term pathways to social inclusion and employment.

For the last year and a half, EAPN has been running the campaign **EU Money for Poverty Reduction NOW!** (click on the webpage [here](#)), together with 19 other social NGOs¹. This Campaign has been defending the minimum shares of the European Social Fund - i.e. at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy's budget for the ESF and, at least, 20% of the ESF earmarked for social inclusion/ poverty reduction- as a concrete and effective means to deliver on the Europe 2020 poverty reduction target.

¹This campaign is being run by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) with its members the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), Caritas Europa, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), Eurochild, Eurodiaconia, AGE Platform, Salvation Army, Mental Health Social Exclusion Europa (SMES Europa), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Europe, as well as the Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform), SOLIDAR, the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) Europe, Mental Health Europe, Workability Europe, PICUM and Inclusion Europe

We have been very grateful for the constant support given by the European Parliament to the issue of defending the ESF minimum shares from the beginning of the negotiation process.

We consider the agreement reached during the trialogue meeting on 1st October as an encouraging sign supporting the delivery on the poverty target through Structural Funds, with the clear backing given to the 20% ESF earmarked for social inclusion/ poverty reduction. However, this will not be ambitious enough nor sufficiently people-focused if it is not accompanied with a strong ESF budget, corresponding to at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy's budget (as supported both by the European Commission and the EMPL Committee). The 20% ESF earmarked for social inclusion and poverty reduction should provide a powerful leverage effect, combined with the ex-ante conditionality requiring national anti-poverty strategies, particularly if underpinned by a common EU anti-poverty strategy.

A few months before the European Parliamentary elections and in the context of a growing skepticism of European citizens towards the European Union and the way the political system seems to be away from people's realities, the European Parliament has a unique opportunity to make a difference and play a key role. In view of the plenary vote on the ESF regulation, scheduled on 19th November, we would therefore urge the Parliament to show its support to people/ human capital as well as its renewed commitments to fight against poverty and social exclusion by supporting a strong ESF budget of at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy's Budget.

On behalf of the dramatically increasing number of women and men experiencing poverty and social exclusion across the European Union, we trust that you will seriously consider these aforementioned points during your deliberation,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sérgio Aires". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sérgio Aires
EAPN President

On behalf of the EU Money for Poverty Reduction Now Campaign!