**EAPN TASK FORCE ON DECENT WORK**

***Towards an EAPN Living Wage Campaign***

Feasibility Questionnaire : **CILAP EAPN Italia – Letizia Cesarini Sforza**

Questions

1. **What level of support exists in your country for a decent/living wage approach?** Please refer to political context, but also employers’ attitudes.

***The political support for a decent/living wage approach in Italy today is extremely low, in our view. Actually we have companies trying to lower wages under the blackmailing of closing down and/or dislocating. Unemployment rates are very high (+12%), especially among the young (+35%). Trade Unions are trying to save what can be saved, there are no feasible proposals from the government side on how to exit such a situation. Italy needs to create new jobs, to renew its infrastructures (roads, airports, railway system etc.) in order to attract new businesses from abroad or encourage investments. In the last 20 years all reforms were geared towards the reduction of labor costs by “inventing” all sorts of new contracts ensuring flexibility and cancelling security. This applies to public jobs as well, keeping also in mind that local/regional authorities cannot hire people as the old ones retire. Salaries are among the lowest in Europe but having a secure job or simply a job is more and more a luxury.***

1. **What is the state of collective bargaining in your country** – what is the coverage? Are agreements binding or optional? Are they at sector or company level? Do they cover workers in traditionally low-paid sectors?

***Collective bargaining in Italy primarily takes place at two levels – industry level and company level. However, changes to the system, agreed by some union confederations but not the largest in January 2009, have altered the balance between the two and divided the Unions. Industry level negotiations should make sure that salaries keep pace with prices and inflation and take care of issues such as hours, information rights and work organization. Negotiations at company level should take into account the company’s improved productivity or the risk of job losses, or changes in the working methods.***

***in 2009 three Trade Unions (CISL, UIL and UGL) signed an agreement with the employers and the government on a new system of collective bargaining******. CGIL, the biggest Trade Union, does not recognizes the new system.***

***The definition used here of “traditionally low-paid sectors” is a bit too vague. We must keep in mind that there is no minimum wage in Italy and therefore some sectors (such as home care for the disabled, house cleaning, restaurant work, farm labouring etc.) do not fall into any specific regulations and, more often than not, they are regulated by the “laws of the black market”.***

1. What **are your ideas about how to come up with a concrete figure for a living wage?** Has work in this sense already been done in your network/country that you could build on?

***In Italy there is a statistical figure to define the poverty threshold and the wealth of the families, based upon a basket of goods defined at institutional level but, as far as we know, there are no studies or research on the issue. The Italian network has done some work in relation to this issue within its engagement to activate the participation of people experiencing poverty. More could be done under this part of our work but it would be missing the institutional side of the issue, which is fundamental. But it would be extremely hard to engage institutions, at any level, to work on this, although not impossible.***

**4. Who do you think could be useful allies in such a campaign?**

*Trade Unions, which are generally against minimum income or minimum wage, the reasons being historical and too long to describe here.*

*People experiencing poverty and others who are not living in poverty but are under heavy strain due to the economic crisis. But without a minimum income measure it’s getting harder and harder to involve people whose primary concern is “how to make ends meet”.*

*Public institutions at any level. But at this point in history they are more worried about balancing their budgets cutting wherever possible, social policies to begin with, than how people are going to survive.*

*Employers. SMI have historically played a fundamental role in the Italian economy. According to data (ISTAT) in 2009, 95% of the Italian enterprises (industry and services) had less than 10 workers. Today, they are closing down daily, by the dozen. There are not any big and healthy industry in Italy today, being under pressure because of the crisis, the lack of a decent industrial policy, the many scandals and corruption cases.*

**5. What obstacles can you already foresee** – in terms of your networks’ capacity to implement such a campaign, or other?

***The obstacles, as mentioned above, are many and probably insurmountable as of today. The only way we could start and implement such a campaign would maybe be if it picks up momentum in Europe.***

**6. Does your network have a track record in implementing campaigns, including EAPN ones?** What resources (time, staff, connections, alliances, other) does your network have?

***No, we do not have a track record but we are very much engaged, since the beginning, with the MI campaign, the ESF 20% campaign and were active in the last European campaign elections. Being a network made of volunteers it’s never easy for us to devolve time and efforts to more than one campaign at the time and therefore we choose those that can bring some results or where we believe we have the necessary alliances to build upon.***

**7. Anything else to add?**

Please return this fiche, filled-in, to [amana.ferro@eapn.eu](mailto:amana.ferro@eapn.eu), by **Friday, 21 February 2014.**