



ELECTING CHAMPIONS FOR A
SOCIAL EUROPE
FREE OF POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INEQUALITIES



EAPN's MANIFESTO FOR THE 2014 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

Electing champions for a Social Europe

Electing Champions for a Social Europe is a pan-European campaign carried out by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and its members (29 national networks and 18 European organizations) representing hundreds of organizations on the ground working with thousands of European citizens as well as other partners supporting a social Europe.

WE WANT

- ✓ An effective EU Strategy to fight poverty, social exclusion, inequalities and discrimination
- ✓ A Social Pact for a Social Europe
- ✓ Strengthened democracy and civil-society participation
- ✓ An annual Hearing with People experiencing poverty in the European Parliament

SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT!

Name:

Electoral district:

Name of political party (if any):

Name of the European political party to which your party is affiliated:

ALL 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CANDIDATES' COMMITMENT WILL BE MADE VISIBLE

To know more: team@eapn.eu - www.eapn.eu

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Every Vote Counts

With levels of trust in the European Union as low as 33% and trust in National Governments even lower at 27%¹ the big loser of the 2014 European Parliament elections could be democracy itself. With the realities of growing levels of poverty, inequality and xenophobia, fuelled by the dominance in the EU and Member States of policies of competitiveness and austerity, instead of cohesion and redistribution, democracy is already in a fragile condition. Despite these realities the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) asserts that democratically elected representatives is part of the solution and calls on people to make their vote count in the European Parliament Elections.

This new Parliament should build on the achievements of previous European Parliaments such as pushing for the Youth Guarantee or ensuring a more social EU Budget 2014-2020. Thanks to the driving force of the EP in defending the minimum shares of the ESF, including the 20% earmarked for poverty reduction and the Fund for European Aid to the most deprived, Europe may be able to better deliver on the Europe 2020 poverty reduction target. Future Parliamentarians must ensure that Member States use that money properly and effectively to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Poverty is not inevitable and can be eradicated in the EU and globally

It's not a problem of scarce resources. If we avoid greed and waste and share what we have equitably and sustainably, through fairer redistribution the eradication of poverty is possible! The good news is that more equal societies perform better for almost everyone and strong Universal Welfare States achieve greater equality while preventing and eradicating poverty. It is therefore not a surprise that those countries are more resilient to the current crisis and continue to perform better than those countries with lesser social protection. International governmental institutions have an important role to play to ensure cooperation between countries to foster high level social standards and to find innovative solutions regarding distribution and redistribution of resources, goods and services, between and within countries. This role becomes even more vital in the context of a more globalised world. The European Parliament could play a vital role to ensure the European Union develops in this direction.

¹ Standard Eurobarometer 78 / Autumn 2012

3 proposals for a more Social Europe with greater participation

- **A Social Pact for a Social Europe**
- **An effective EU Strategy to fight Poverty, Social Exclusion and discrimination**
- **Strengthened democracy and civil society participation**

A Social Pact for a Social Europe

- Setting ambitious social objectives for the European Union and ensuring that economic policies contribute to these social objectives and that social rights are not subject to the follies of market freedoms.
- Safeguarding our social protection system independent of demographic changes.
- Bringing an end to the failed austerity policies with an approach based on solidarity between all the Member States.
- Giving priority to reducing inequality and poverty through ensuring tax justice and an end to tax havens.
- Supporting high universal quality social protection seen as an investment and an economic stabiliser fostering inclusive growth.
- Ensuring that the next revision of the European Treaties will allow for specific directives to achieve greater cooperation to protect and build high level social standards in Europe.

An effective EU Strategy to fight Poverty, Social Exclusion and Discrimination

- Based on access for all to Rights, Goods and Services and ensuring access to – housing, education, health, adequate social protection and minimum income as part of an effective social protection floor.
- That requires ambitious Poverty Targets and multidimensional integrated national strategies and anti-poverty programmes to achieve them, backed up with relevant thematic strategies such as strategies on child and/or elderly poverty, homelessness, Roma and inclusion of migrants.
- That addresses job creation and the positive role of the social economy.
- That backs access to quality work for all those who can and support for participation and a decent life for those who can't.
- That addresses the gender dimensions of poverty and social exclusion and ensures that anti-discrimination concerns are mainstreamed in anti-poverty policies.

- That achieves concrete progress on high EU level social standards, starting with a Directive on Adequate Minimum Income Schemes.
- That closely monitors the implementation of the earmarking of the 20% of ESF for poverty reduction by Member States through a genuine partnership principle at programming and delivery level.
- Based on clear EU and national budgets to support its implementation ensuring support for grass-roots and NGO initiatives.

Strengthened democracy and civil society participation

- European Parliament as equal partners in EU decision-making – including in the social sphere.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in EU decision-making with processes to hold elected representatives and high level officials accountable for the decisions they take including respecting commitments in agreed International Human Rights Frameworks.
- Participation and Empowerment at the heart of policy development, implementation and evaluation, including recognition and concrete support for the participation of civil society, including anti-poverty NGOs and people experiencing poverty, in meaningful dialogue at EU and national levels.
- An annual Hearing in the European Parliament with people living in Poverty building on similar processes at national level.

The agreed **Europe 2020 Strategy** with its aim of inclusive growth, its target for poverty reduction, agreed social guidelines and commitment to partnership approaches provides a basis for achieving many of the proposals outlined above. We call on candidates to commit to ensuring that such a balanced strategy replaces narrow economic governance as the driver of EU cooperation and to ensure that the spending of the EU Cohesions Funds reflect these priorities.

EAPN will promote these ideas as part of the 2014 European Parliament Election debates