

EAPN Portugal_Annual Report 2013 Summary

1. Influencing government for policy change

One of the annual aims of the year 2013 was the reinforcement of an active role in the defense of people rights by enhancing the definition and implementation of a National Strategy to fight poverty and social exclusion. On this basis EAPN Portugal continued its work in shaping the public and political opinion through the development of technical position papers on different subjects related to poverty and social exclusion. Among these documents we highlight the following contributions:

- Light pro-active report;
- Social Investment Package;
- Technical paper on the document *Europe 2020: Portugal targets progress*;
- Public Consultation on the Assumptions of the Partnership Agreement;
- Proposals for the new period of Structural Funds concerning child poverty;
- Proposals for the national Partnership Agreement;
- Proposal of a policy measure for families in vulnerable social conditions (as a direct request of the national Secretary of State of Solidarity and Social Security, following some meetings). All these documents were disseminated at national level through our information tools.

Some of these documents were also a request of EAPN Europe and were a contribution for our lobby work. At this level it's important to highlight the work developed at European level by actively participating in:

- Bureau (assuring its Presidency) – 4 meetings (plus several Skype meetings);
- The Executive Committee, (3 meetings);
- The EU Inclusion Strategies Group, (2 meetings plus Annual Conference);
- The Task force Developing Membership Review System (3 meetings);
- Task Force on Training and Capacity Building (2 meetings plus a Seminar);
- The Task Force on Migration (1 meeting);
- The People Experiencing Poverty European coordination group (1 meeting with the national coordinators; 7 preparatory meetings at national level with the Portuguese delegation; the European meeting);
- EAPN Learning Forum – with the participation of 2 persons (one member of EAPN Portugal and one person living in poverty and social exclusion).

One of the efforts developed in 2013 was related to the (re)activation of the Non Governmental Forum for Social Inclusion (FNGIS - <http://www.fngis.pt/>). The FNGIS is a body of civil society national organizations that works as Non Governmental Platform and is an active member in political debate and in the definition of a national strategy for social inclusion. This Forum works with an inter-sectorial and inter-institutional methodology. Taking in consideration the social,

economic and political national context, it was considered that this body could be an important asset in the dialogue with the State, so in December was developed a General Assembly with 9 of the 15 members and 4 observers and it was approved the activities plan and the budget for 2014.

In order to achieve some policy change EAPN continued its active participation in some key working groups and Entities at national level. In 2013 we highlight the participation in the Inter-ministerial Group for monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy for the Homeless Inclusion. EAPN Portugal is a member of this group since it was built in 2008 and the aim is to contribute for the definition and implementation of a lobby strategy which aim is to get a real impact in the definition of social policies and in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, as well as to make sure that EAPN Portugal has a role of opinion maker on issues related to poverty and social exclusion. EAPN participated in all the 14 meetings promoted during the year and contributed to the preparation of all the documents presented in this matter. This work was also disseminated at local level through the participation of EAPN regional networks in the local centres for planning and intervention with Homeless (Faro, Lisboa, Porto, Vila Real and Setúbal).

We also highlight our participation in the Advisory group on National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities. The invitation to participate in this group came from the High Commission for the Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue; and also our participation in the Technical Committee for Standardization of social responses. In this last situation the invitation came from the Portuguese Institute for Quality and EAPN Portugal took part in the sub-committees of Children and Youth; Elderly; Family support and community.

On this item is also important to mention the development of two important national seminars on key subjects for our lobby work: Structural Funds (March) and Social Inclusion Income (November).

2. Participation of people in poverty in internal and external workings of the Network

Participation continued to be also in 2013 one of the key principles of EAPN Portugal intervention. The National and Local Councils of Citizens continued their work during 2013 and remain a mark of distinction when comparing EAPN with other entities of this sector. These groups are composed by citizens that lived or are living in situation of poverty and social exclusion and have as main aims to give them voice in the matters that are directly related to their situation. They have also an increasing role in the definition of EAPN Portugal priorities through a National Council and the National meetings of people experiencing poverty.

During the year 2013 EAPN Portugal promoted 2 national meetings with the National Council of citizens and 161 local meetings with the local councils. The national council is composed by a member of each local group, making a total of 18 participants. The composition of the local groups continued to be different, because of the great mobility of these persons, however some changes were visible in the increase of the meetings developed, and sense of belonging to EAPN Portugal and a greater involvement in the activities.

It's important to highlight the change of the name of these groups (the name people experiencing poverty and social exclusion was replaced by citizens) and the production of a leaflet to promote the dissemination of these groups and external knowledge of the work

developed by them and by EAPN Portugal. All of this work is being monitored and evaluated by an internal team.

In October the 5th National Forum of Citizens was dedicated to Fundamental Rights and Citizenship was promoted involving 80 members of local councils. This Forum debated the following subjects: how does the context of crisis affects their daily life? What is the adequate minimum income for a decent life? What resources can be used to promote a common welfare? What strategies can be developed to involve the citizens in the fight against poverty and social exclusion? All these subjects were previous debated at local level with the collaboration and facilitation of EAPN regional networks.

EAPN Portugal attended the 12th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty in October and took a delegation of 5 members (1 coordinator and 4 citizens). These citizens were members of the Local councils of the following regions: Aveiro, Guarda, Leiria and Vila Real.

Taking in consideration this subject – participation – EAPN Portugal promoted also a set of Projects that enhance the work developed with people experiencing poverty: ROMI Project – national project with Roma women which aim was to contribute for the promotion of equal opportunities of these women through increasing their citizenship. In the set of all the activities developed we highlight the make off of the movie “Ciganas”, the Theatre of the Oppressed and a photo exhibition; PEPA Project – European project promoted by Fédération Nationale des Association de Réinsertion Sociale which aim was the promotion of the participation of people experiencing poverty. One of the resources done by this project was a leaflet with some orientations to facilitate the participation of these citizens.

Taking in consideration that 2013 was the European Year of Citizenship EAPN Portugal also promoted 2 regional workshops on participation and citizenship, as well as other activities at national and local level.

3. Network development and growth (incl. training, growth etc)

During 2013 EAPN Portugal wanted to strengthen the technical and pedagogical quality of the training activities developed by the Organization. To pursuit this objective we evaluated all the training actions developed in 2012 and it was defined the training map of 2013 and guidelines for 2014. In terms of the annual training plan 875 training hours were promoted, 82 training actions, involving a total of 1426 trainees. According to the evaluation, the year 2013 had a training implementation above the average because of several requests for the promotion of training in different subjects like Individual Plans. In 2013, EAPN Portugal has finished the certification process of the Organization as Training Entity within the General Direction of Employment and Work Relations.

Looking to EAPN Portugal as a Network of organizations, at the end of the year, we had 695 collective members and 696 individual members (total of 1391). During the year, the financial department and the information department gave priority to the management of the members' database and EAPN had 136 new members (88 individuals and 48 entities).

The mobilization of EAPN PT members was also a priority during the year, but remains also as one of our greatest difficulties. In June a national meeting of EAPN members was held but only

80 members attended the event. This low participation is quite connected with the present difficulties of NGO's to pay travels to participate in this kind of events. At the same time, the emergency situation they have to face everyday makes the priorities quite different and networking and coordination of field work remains less important. Anyway the evaluation was very positive taking in consideration the subjects that were debated: child poverty / Roma communities and homeless (key priorities for EAPN PT) and political position of EAPN Portugal about the new package of social investment and structural funds.

It's also important to mention that EAPN PT team continued in 2013 to be much sought to participate, as a speaker, in different seminars and workshops at national and local level.

4. Good governance and strong internal democracy (including finances, management, statutory governance)

EAPN Portugal has a Strategic Plan that has been in place until 2015, and during the year the work of monitoring and evaluating the Plan continued through the development of working groups.

Taking in consideration that we are an entity with the status of NGO there is a Board of Directors that manages all the activities that are developed and monitors the work developed by the team at national and local levels. The Board of Directors meets once a month. At the end of each year (November) the General Assembly decides and approves the Budget and the Plan of Activities for the next year.

Following the annual aim to reinforce and continue the internal qualification process of EAPN Portugal, a quality council was created and met in the beginning of the year. It was also prepared a document with the main problems of the Organization, as well as some strategic proposals to improve the work developed and the internal organization.

In what concerns the team and in order to get a better management of all the volunteers that work with EAPN Portugal and to improve the gathering and welcoming of new volunteers, it was developed a Plan for the Management of Volunteers that was disseminated to all the members.

