

## **Annual Report 2011 of EAPN Germany**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011, Dr. Thomas Beyer (Workers' Welfare Association) took office as the new speaker of the German National Poverty Conference (EAPN Germany). With him, three more vice speakers began their mandate: the deputy spokeswoman Michaela Hofmann (Caritas), Prof. Dr. Gerhard Trabert (Poverty and Health in Germany) and Kurt Klose (Federal Working Group Debt Counselling).

In May 2011, the assembly of delegates of EAPN Germany adopted the report "Germany's farewell to the fight against poverty and social exclusion" of Prof. Dr. Walter Hanesch dealing with the German National Reform Programme in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This included a critical review of the poverty objectives of the Federal German Government as well as the lack of involvement of civil society. Furthermore, the position paper of the working group concerning basic social benefits "Basic Social Benefits for Job Seekers: Administration of Poverty or Fight against Poverty?" was adopted by the delegates. Among other things, expectations for a basic social security were expressed in the paper.

In July 2011, the speakers of EAPN Germany met State Secretary Andreas Storm from the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. The conversation centred on current developments in European and national labour and social policy and objectives in the fight against poverty. In October 2011, a meeting with State Secretary Thomas Ilka from the Federal Ministry of Health was arranged that focused on the health policy demands of EAPN Germany.

In September 2011, right from the start of the Government Pension Dialogue EAPN Germany became a permanent member of the responsible working group in the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. In this context, EAPN Germany drew attention to the poverty issues in the debate about pensions and gave its input to the development of a new social benefit for people who worked a lifetime but didn't earn enough to get a pension that is sufficient to make a living.

On 14-15 September, the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty with some 100 participants from all over Germany took place in Berlin. The event was strongly influenced by the thematic focus on the Europe 2020 Strategy. Together with Gabriele Schmidt (Ministry of Labour, Integration and Social Affairs, North Rhine-Westphalia), Gabi Zimmer (Member of European Parliament) and Holger Winkler (Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs) the European, federal and state poverty objectives and implementation possibilities were discussed with the participants. In addition, the results from the European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty and their impacts for the national level were debated, as well.

EAPN Germany was represented in the board that assisted the development of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Report on Poverty and Wealth, and thus, had the opportunity to comment on the concept of the report. This has been the case in the making of the prior three reports. EAPN Germany made alternative suggestions for the selection of indicators for measuring poverty and the participation of people experiencing poverty.

Throughout the year, the five permanent working groups dealing with participation of people experiencing poverty, policy strategies, basic social benefits, poverty and

health as well as structures of EAPN Germany met at regular intervals to execute the orders of the assembly of delegates and to develop new strategies.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011, the second assembly of delegates of EAPN Germany was held in Berlin. Amongst others, delegates discussed the involvement of EAPN Germany in shaping the German Federal Operational Programme of the ESF in the field of fighting poverty.

Following the assembly of delegates, EAPN Germany celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary organizing a conference with the title "20 Years of EAPN Germany – an/no Occasion to Celebrate?" in Berlin the next day. Several well-known politicians reflected on this issue in audio spots that were produced beforehand and played at the beginning. Prof. Dr. Walter Hanesch, a founding member of EAPN Germany, compared in his speech the Lisbon Strategy and the Strategy Europe 2020 and made reference to the history of EAPN Germany and its impact on the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Until December 2011, EAPN Germany published around 50 press releases about recent study results in relation to poverty and general issues of social policy and its societal context. Moreover, facilities and dedicated self-help initiatives were visited on site and reported on their engagement in the fight against poverty. Media coverage on EAPN Germany was raised in 2011, especially radio and newspaper interviews as well as TV broadcasting.