

EAPN Germany Annual Report 2012

The political talks that started in 2011 with representatives from the Green Party (Markus Kurth) and The Left (Sabine Zimmermann) were continued with the Social Democratic Party (Hilde Mattheis) and the Christian Democratic Union (Karl Schiewerling) in 2012. The discussions were led on the basis of the 2011 adopted position paper on basic social care from EAPN Germany.

From the start of the "Government Pension Dialogue" in 2011 EAPN Germany was a permanent member of the working group in the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. In this context, EAPN Germany made many critical inputs on the poverty issues especially on the implementation of a new kind of pension called contribution pension. In 2012, EAPN Germany was invited to the "Old-age Poverty Dialogue" of the Green Party. Here, EAPN Germany participated in the discussion about the Green Parties new concept for pensions.

In 2012, EAPN Germany has become a member of two coalitions: As one of the first signatories of the "Alliance for a Decent Margin of Subsistence" EAPN Germany participated in the preparation of a position paper calling for an increase of the basic social care. In addition, EAPN Germany joined the alliance "UmFairteilen" (redistribute) which calls for a permanent property tax and a one-time capital levy for the funding of the community.

EAPN Germany was represented in the board that consulted the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs for the conception of the "4th Poverty and Wealth Report". Although, EAPN Germany made lots of suggestions to the content and the selection of indicators for poverty measurement its impact on the report was rather limited. As a consequence of this – especially the non-consideration of people living in poverty – EAPN Germany decided to publish a shadow report with the title "Those in the shadow are not seen". The report was elaborated in cooperation with the Berlin street magazine called "Straßenfeger" and released on October 17 (being the International Day against Poverty and Social Exclusion). The shadow report was written by the delegates of EAPN Germany together with people experiencing poverty. In addition to statistics and figures, opinions and experiences of people experiencing poverty were incorporated which provides a more realistic insight into life in poverty than the government report. The media coverage on the shadow report was exceptional and made it a success story for EAPN Germany.

In December, EAPN Germany was invited by the Federal Press Conference to present the shadow report in a press conference. On the very same day, EAPN Germany organized a workshop about the "4th Poverty and Wealth Report" in cooperation with a group of poverty researchers from Frankfurt. In addition to delegates of EAPN Germany staff from the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, members of parliament, journalists and experts were participating in the event. Under the title "Those in the shadow are not seen" the latest developments in income poverty, questions of old-age poverty and the "production of poverty" in a rich society were discussed.

In 2012, the "Poverty Network" became a new member of EAPN Germany. This is a network that was established exclusively by people experience poverty.

Engagement within EAPN

In 2012, the German EAPN delegates participated in the development of a toolkit for child poverty and a handout for the lobbying of non-governmental organizations in negotiations about the EU Structural Funds. In addition, the participation in the annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion was realised. On November 16-17, EAPN Germany hosted the meeting of the EU Inclusion Strategies Group (EUISG) in Berlin. Holger Winkler, in charge of European Affairs in the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, was invited to present the German strategy for poverty reduction and to discuss it with the representatives from EAPN. Six people experiencing Poverty from Germany participated in the European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty in Brussels. They discussed and exchanged with the Danish Presidency and other stakeholders from EU Member States. Therefore, a presentation of the social situation in German was prepared, which was presented at the meeting.

Press Relations

In 2012, EAPN Germany published 53 press releases. All press releases can be read on the website www.nationalearmutskonferenz.de. In total, around 240 media reports by print, TV, radio and online media were archived. By far the biggest media coverage was achieved with the press conference in the house of the Federal Press Conference. Not only was the quantity of reports impressive but also the quality. It was striking how many media dedicated a comment to the issue being an elaborate presentation. A new component: According to media reports at the Federal Press Conference various scientists, citizens, politicians etc. contacted EAPN Germany to get the shadow report for their own work.