

From the Delors White Paper (1993) to the EU Pillar of Social Rights (2016), what future for the fight against poverty in Europe?

EAPN CONFERENCE

Thursday 16 June 2016 – Brussels



Developing an EU response to the Commission Proposal
on our reflections of what is needed coming
from our experience on the ground



Workshop 1: Building on EAPN's past experience

Sérgio Aires (President EAPN)

Some historical context: when and why EAPN?



- 3 EU Anti-Poverty Programmes (1975-1993)
- 1989 (June) – Provisional working group to set up EAPN
- 1990 (December) – Constituent GA
- 1990 – EU Commission recommendation to support national networks and national anti-poverty programmes
- 1993 (Copenhagen) – Jacques Delors “specific social consultation”
- 1996 – European court blocks the 4th EU Anti-Poverty Programme
- 2000 – Lisbon Strategy and the National Action Plans
- 2001 – 1st People experiencing poverty EU meeting
- 2009 – End of the European Community Initiatives
- 2010 – Europe 2020

The impact of EAPN – recognising our achievements



- Linking anti-poverty NGOs from the member states into a dynamic European network;
- Highlighting the knowledge and expertise of people experiencing poverty and the value of their direct participation;
- Achieving a wide production and dissemination of information about poverty and social exclusion in the EU;
- Contribute decisively to the existence of Minimum Income Schemes in the EU;
- Contributed to new articles in the EU treaties (Article 13, 136 and 137 in the Amsterdam treaty, Articles 3 and 11 in the treaty of the EU and articles 9 and 14 in the treaty of the functioning of the EU);
- The development of the EU Inclusion Strategy (OMC on Social protection and social inclusion) and the development of the EU programme to support this strategy (PROGRESS);

The impact of EAPN - recognising our achievements



- The EAPN guidelines for positive activation policies to assist people into decent work;
- The adoption of an EU recommendation on Active Inclusion (adequacy of income, access to quality services and inclusive labour markets);
- The adoption of the partnership principle in structural funds and the follow up of the implementation of this principle;
- The designation of 2010 as the EU Year for combating Poverty and Social Exclusion;
- The increased direct participation of PEP in the monitoring and evaluation of the EU policies recognised by the processes associated to the Annual European meetings (2001-2015);

The impact of EAPN - recognising our achievements



- The adoption of a European headline target to reduce poverty in the Europe 2020 strategy;
- The strong (and recognised) monitoring of the National Reform Programs and their impact in the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
- The “ring-fencing” of 20% of the the European Social Fund for the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
- Contribution to the important resolution of the European Parliament (14 April 2016) on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs (2015/2223(INI)).

EAPN's main challenges (medium and long term)



- What we can learn from the past is that, at least in the last 20 years, we're permanently facing a back and forward movement... But that our existence was enough important to recognise that we can - and must! - play a strong role. After all our mission is part of the European Union project: more and better Democracy!
- Still – and always! – to keep poverty on the top of the political agendas at all levels. The message is still the same: we want an EU integrated anti-poverty strategy (bottom-up built and driven).
- We must insist that the Europe 2020 evaluation should be finished (we're waiting since December 2015) and assure that important compromises will continue to drive it (poverty target).

EAPN's main challenges (medium and long term)



- We must continue to monitor, as close as possible (nationally and locally) the implementation of the 20% minimum of the European Social Fund for fight against poverty (2014-2020).
- Hopefully we'll be able to implement a second phase of the EMIN project which could drive us to the existence of a European Directive.
- Contribute very actively – as we are doing here – to the discussion about what the Pillar of Social Rights should be, within the framework of the European Semester and the European Monetary Union discussions.

EAPN's main challenges (medium and long term)



- Continue to follow and participate actively in the discussions about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)
- Contribute by all means to positive solutions for the dramatic and shameful situation of the refugees in the EU.
- Use in a very proactive way the resolution of the European Parliament (mentioned previously).
- To prepare ourselves for a revision of the EU Treaties.
- Last, but not least AT ALL, ensure by all means the continuation of the PEP European meetings and their objectives.

Concretely on the Pillar of Social Rights: our ambitions



- As publically affirmed EAPN welcomes that the time given for consultation should allow a meaningful engagement.
- But EAPN should insist that we cannot wait for action to be taken to address the growing levels of poverty, exclusion and inequalities.
- No matter what the Pillar will be it is crucial that the EU leaders and institutions should press ahead and ensure greater attention to the follow up of the adopted poverty reduction target as part of the present round of implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.

- The Pillar should be an opportunity for a renewed engagement between anti-poverty and social NGOs and the EU Institutions:
 - that it promotes the engagement of people experiencing poverty as essential for the development of participatory democracy;
 - that it helps to put the fight against poverty, exclusion and inequalities back central in the EU Agenda;
 - that it does this by setting an agenda that would be delivered very concrete results, such as:

Concretely on the Pillar of Social Rights: our ambitions



- A) There is a clear Integrated EU Strategy to fight poverty and Social Exclusion,
- B) The launch of a large scale EU Inclusion Program that allows for trans-national learning on the basis of demonstration projects to fight poverty and social exclusion,
- C) That the future Financial Framework goes further in ear marking funds for social Inclusion and (re)introduces Community Initiatives that allows for exchange between diverse actors involved in combating poverty and social exclusion,

- D) That the future EU Research Agenda is strengthened with budgets that can include and are more accessible for civil society organizations
- E) That the future overarching EU Strategy builds on the approach of Europe 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure coherence between, economic, social and environmental policies.



The European Anti-Poverty Network

Thank you for you attention.

And now let's DO IT!