**Proposals for Policy Task Forces 2016**

**Background Document and Proposal Form**

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| **Name/Title of Proposed Task Force:**  **Advocating for a human rights approach to migration, refugees and asylum seekers.** |
| **Name/ Network and Contact details of member/s proposing TF: Nicos Satsias, EAPN Cyprus**  **Nicos Satsias: nikos.satsias@sek.org.cy and Eve Geddie, Deputy Director of PICUM: eve.geddie@picum.org** |
| **Objective of the Task Force, justification and desired output**  The overall aim of the Task Force is to help EAPN deepen our understanding and build consensus on common policy demands to tackle the refugee, asylum seeker crisis and approach to migration, based on human rights and from an anti-poverty perspective.  **Main objective/s:**   1. To build capacity and a better shared understanding of the context and issues for EAPN around migration, asylum seekers and refugees; (this includes the reasons why thousands of people’s exodus to Europe is important in a Europe partially dominated by the fear of the other, populism and demagogy, despite facing demographic challenges and already existing high levels of poverty and discrimination, but also in a Europe where fortunately also solidarity remains.). 2. To build consensus around common messages for a rights-based EAPN position towards national and European institutions in order to protect human rights in the countries of origin as well as towards asylum seekers, refugees and migrants facing poverty and exclusion in the EU. 3. To develop an initial Advocacy Strategy at national and EU level base on anti-discrimination/racism as well as anti-poverty.     **Reference to Strategic Plan (2012-16):[[1]](#footnote-1)**  Objective 1.1: EAPN will work to ensure that the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Platform against Poverty and the Social Inclusion strategy (Social OMC) deliver progress to effectively mainstream social concerns and to reduce poverty and inequality.  Objective 1.2: EAPN will work to support its members to effectively engage in public debates and national and European policy making, on poverty, social exclusion and inequality.  Objective 1.3: EAPN will seek to engage and contribute to alliances for an alternative model of social and sustainable development that puts people and planet first.  Objective 2.2: EAPN will provide opportunities for mutual exchange between its members to ensure a transfer of knowledge, experience and learning on practices and policies in the fight against poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.  **Justification:**  What is happening in Europe in recent months should give EAPN and its national networks and affiliated organizations pause for thought that the exodus of thousands of people from Syria, Eritrea, Sub-Saharan Africa will not stop. Until in these countries there are no wars, persecution, dictatorships, increasing poverty and inequality, inhuman living conditions, thousands of human beings will have the right to flee and try to protect their own lives and those of their children. Although the EU is attempting to ensure more solidarity between Member States, most are rejecting their responsibilities inflicting hardship on those seeking a better life as well as threatening the stability and unity of the EU and what it stands for. Although some Member States receive more refugees than others, the EU as a whole is not being “flooded/overrun by massive amounts of refugees", (figures vary of course, 0.027 %...0.2 % ... of total population), as main stream media tend to present the current situation. Therefore, EAPN will work on this subject based on facts, not on myths.  There should be no differences over who we choose to welcome from third countries because the European Union's motto is "United in Diversity". We believe in these words and we want to continue believing in them. We do not want more wars. We do not want to export democracy through weapons. There are other solutions. EAPN will not stand by and watch passively what is happening in member states, where walls are built on the border, where the right to asylum and humanitarian protection is being questioned, and where migrants fleeing poverty are treated as criminals and live in destitution, instead of focusing on human rights and the benefits that migration and diversity can bring. EAPN will not let itself be entrapped in the populist idea that migration as such, and migrants themselves are a threat to society, wealth, social security, culture… but will attempt to build proposals how migration and migrants can be an opportunity for our societies.  The first priority is for EAPN to build a common understanding amongst its own members by exchanging experiences and building capacity. EAPN member’s knowledge and experience of refugees/migrants is very varied, and the EU policy framework constantly changing. The migration issue is complex. EAPN wants to defend the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, but also to recognize the rights for those migrants who flee from poverty and want a better life. A large number of asylum seekers end up being rejected and become undocumented migrants, so the issue is not solved by restricted definitions. From the point of view of human rights, some groups face additional challenges – eg: women seeking asylum, often travelling with young children, should feel safer in reception centres and provisional lodging, or unaccompanied minors need specific support. EAPN’s concern is particularly concern is that many face poverty and social exclusion and are set up to compete against existing groups facing poverty, particularly in terms of funding support. The 2nd step must then be to develop some common key messages and make our voice heard to the national institutions and EU institutions, responsible for decisions that are favorable to different types of migrants, based on human rights. This will not be an easy task, or solutions, but we have to make progress together to this goal.  **Main output/s:**   1. **Development of a background briefing and discussion paper** to:    * Clarify key definitions and concepts;    * Set the EU and national policy framework and latest developments;    * Highlight the overarching data/ latest trends around migration, refugees and asylum seekers and the link with poverty and discrimination, including regarding specific groups/concerns eg Gender.    * Give short case studies - examples of EAPN national and EO members engagement/positions.    * Identify key issues/challenges for EAPN as a basis for discussion.   This should draw on the EAPN report produced on migration and poverty in 2014 and coordinate with the on-line tool developed by the Membership Development Group to exchange on the current refugee/asylum seeker crisis.   1. **The preparation of a structured workshop with the EUISG/EXCO**, including a short report. This should build on the briefing/discussion paper and aim to build capacity, promote mutual exchange on current experiences and develop initial key messages at national and EU level. 2. **Draft an initial advocacy strategy and EAPN position paper** drawn from the key messages/recommendations on the workshop. This will be debated in the EUISG/EXCO before being adopted and translated by networks into their own languages and disseminated. The advocacy strategy will set key priorities, main targets and milestones, confirm key activities and decide how to monitor progress.   . |
| **Membership of Task Force:**  The Task Force will be led by Nicos Satsias/EAPN CY and Eve Geddes from PICUM supported by the EAPN Secretariat (Sian Jones), and include 4 additional members.  **Selection criteria** should include:   * proven expertise in national and preferably EU social/ migration policy and international right’s frameworks; * experience on the ground of migrants/refugees-asylum seekers, either in providing support services or as a migrant themself; * experience in developing policy positions and advocacy on these themes.   During the selection process, geographical and gender balance will be observed as much as possible, with an aim to balance representatives from Mediterranean and Balkan States/Eastern European and other countries who are on the front line, together with the target countries where most migrants want to end up in Northern and Western Europe. |
| **The Structure/Working method and Timeline for the work of the Task Force:**  The Task Force will last for (at least) nine months. As there have been delays with starting the TF, this timeline is provisional and will be confirmed at the 1st meeting. It will aim to meet twice in 2016 for face to face meetings, but will have to carry over its work into 2017. The meetings will be held in English only, no interpretation will be available. In between meetings the Task Force will carry out its work by e-mail and with other on-line tools, including skype meetings during the year. The Task Force will prepare a workshop with the EXCO/EUISG, probably early in 2017. The EUISG will confirm whether the Task Force should continue its work beyond this date.  The meetings could include:  First meeting (September)  Confirming the scope of the Task Force; agreeing deliverables, timeline and division of work; deciding the structure and main content of the Briefing; agreeing outline for workshop; agreeing next meetings.  September to end of October  Preparation of 1st draft of the briefing by Task Force members and outline for EUISG workshop. E-mail exchange with Membership Development group/EUISG steering group and Bureau.  Second meeting (end of October/November)  Finalization of 2nd draft of briefing; Preparation of workshop proposal with members in early 2017. Preparation of draft advocacy strategy and draft position paper with key messages/recommendations.  EUISG/EXCO meeting (early 2017)  Presentation of briefing, and joint capacity-building workshop experience exchange, discussion on common messages and recommendations. Preparation of report from meeting. Agreement on continuation of TF. |
| **Indicative proposal re follow up (of course this will be further developed or may change during the life of the Task Force)**  In the 2nd half of 2016, the Task Force will first develop the briefing, and proposals for capacity building workshop, aiming to build common understanding amongst EAPN members based on exchange, before attempting to build common key messages and recommendations. These will be finalized in a position paper in early 2017 and agreement reached on the follow up advocacy work. |

1. This will be replaced by the Strategic Plan 2016-20, when it is agreed by the General Assembly. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)