

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

INTERNAL REFLECTION

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Introduction: a European Pillar of Social Rights

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Outline of the presentation



- **What is the European Pillar of Social Rights?**
- **Proposals for EAPN Action and Timeline**
- **Questions for discussion**

What is the European Pillar of Social Rights?



- The European and Monetary Union (EMU) is in constant deepening – what about the social aspects?
- 2013 – previous Commission proposal on [Strengthening the Social Dimension of the EMU](#)
- 2015 – Juncker Commission produces the [Five Presidents' Report on Completing Europe's EMU](#), which includes commitments to a 'Social Triple A' for Europe
- **8 March 2016 – Commission launches a public consultation package on a [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).**
- **Aims:** ensure social upward convergence between Member States, better integrate social objectives, define common social standards + benchmarking

What is the European Pillar of Social Rights? (2)



- **General approach:**
 - It will set out “essential principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems”
 - Poverty and social exclusion perceived rather as “bottlenecks to growth”, endangering economic resilience -> social policies seen as “productive factor”
- **Target:** aimed at Eurozone, but other Member States are welcome to join
- **Legal nature:** to be defined, different instruments considered, according to subsidiarity and legal base
- **Link to other processes:** currently unclear how it would fit with Europe 2020 and European Semester + others

What is the European Pillar of Social Rights? (3)



- **The 3 chapters covered by the EPSR are:**
 - 1) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market
 - 2) Fair working conditions
 - 3) *Adequate and sustainable social protection and access to high quality essential services.*
(**See:** [Communication launching the consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights](#))
- Under these headings **20 different policy domains** are identified, summarized in key principles underpinned by EU legislative base
(**See:** [Annex 1 – First Preliminary Outline of a EPSR](#)).

What is the Pillar of Social Rights?

(4)



1. Equal Opportunities and access to the labour market

1. Skills, Education and life-learning
2. Flexible and secure labour contracts
3. Secure professional transitions
4. Active support for employment
5. Gender Equality and work-life balance
6. Equal Opportunities

2. Fair Working Conditions

1. Conditions of Employment
2. Wages
3. Health and Safety at work
4. Social Dialogue and involvement of workers

3. Adequate and sustainable social protection

- Integrated social benefits and services
- Healthcare and sickness benefits
- Pensions
- Unemployment benefits
- Minimum Income
- Disability
- Long-term care
- Childcare
- Housing
- Essential to essential services

What is the European Pillar of Social Rights? (6)



- **The public consultation** ([online questionnaire](#)) will run till December 31st, 2016, and will be accompanied by a series of events aimed to better involve stakeholders, including at national level through Commission representations.
- **3 Work Streams** of structured dialogue – EU and national
- **The aims of the consultation:**
 1. To assess the EU social *aquis*
 2. To reflect on new trends in work patterns and societies
 3. To gather views and feedback on the outline of the Social Pillar itself (scope, content, role...)
- **Next steps:** a White Paper, building on the results of the consultation, will be launched by the Commission in early 2017

Opportunities?

- **Sets out a framework on social rights** with the aim of ensuring upward convergence for better functioning fair labour markets and welfare systems.
- **Poverty and inequality** are acknowledged, although no specific link or proposals are made.
- The **link between economic, social and environmental** is underlined – recognizing that social impact on economic growth and vica versa
- **Social protection and access to services finally** included as 3rd key priority, as well as employment focus
- Stakeholder dialogue is seen to be a crucial element for coherent, accountable policy making

Threats

- **Invisibility of poverty/integrated strategy.** How will the EPSR contribute to poverty and inequality reduction.
- **Overwhelming aim is macroeconomic**, underpinning the deepening of the EMU aimed at Eurozone.
- **Social rights underlined as important in their contribution to growth**, and not in their own right.
- **2 Priorities on 'modernizing labour market with only 1** on social protection/services - missing focus: adequacy, universality and quality.
- **Unclear implementation** – lack of concrete proposals and link to Europe 2020, social OMC and European Semester
- **Social Partners** given preferential role with Treaty base, but what about civil society?

Proposals for EAPN Action



- **Aim**

Ensure the social pillar deliver concrete outcomes that impact on poverty and inequalities, and that benefit people experiencing poverty.

- **Objectives**

- 1) Inform and raise awareness of EAPN Members
- 2) Build consensus on common analysis and recommendations to inform our input/response
- 3) Carry out specific advocacy/communication actions at EU and national level

Proposals for EAPN Action (1)



■ Main Activities

| Main Actions | Timeline |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. PEP Meeting – key messages | November 2015 |
| 2. Letter to Juncker and Council | October 2015 |
| 3. Messages to Annual Convention | March 2016 |
| 4. EAPN Policy Conference | June 2016 |

Proposals for EAPN Action (2)



■ Main Activities

| Main Actions | Timeline |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Common EAPN consultation response and individual responses by members | June to September |
| 2. EAPN Pro-active position paper | June to September |
| 3. Engagement in structured dialogues at national EU level | On-going |
| 4. Advocacy and Communication activities – EU and national level | On-going |

Questions for Discussion

- **Is the Social Pillar an opportunity for the fight against poverty or a threat?**
- **How can we strengthen it and make it more effective?**
- **How can members engage and use it to get better policies on poverty reduction at national level?**

Thank you for your attention!



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