



European Anti Poverty Network Ireland

## Press statement, immediate release

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***Response to the publication of the CSO poverty figures (SILC) for 2015***

**The small drop in poverty figures is welcome, but there is no sign that we will make a serious dent in the figures or reach agreed targets.**

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland, a network of over two hundred national and local organisations working against poverty, reacted to the latest poverty statistics (for 2015) from the CSO and called for a serious commitment by the Government to fighting poverty.

While the figures are a small improvement on those for 2014, particularly in those experiencing enforced deprivation, they show that economic recovery has not made a serious dent in the numbers whose lives are blighted by poverty. The numbers in deprivation are still twice those in 2008.

The report shows that in 2015:

- More than one in 6 (16.9%) of the population were at risk of poverty, that is falling below the internationally recognised measure of 60% of median national income.
- over one quarter lived in enforced deprivation, that is unable to afford two from a list of very basic requirements like a warm waterproof coat or heating your home and
- 8.7% experienced both of these and are therefore described by the Government as living in consistent poverty. The Government's target is to reduce this to 4% by 2016 and to 2% or less by 2020 but numbers have been going in the wrong direction for a long time.

Poverty continues to be particularly high for those who are unemployed, those not in work due to illness or a disability, single adults under 65 years and those living in one parent families. It is particularly notable that while the deprivation rate of those living above the poverty line has reduced, the deprivation experienced by those below the line has not.

Speaking for the network, Director Robin Hanan said:

*'Twenty years ago, Taoiseach John Bruton, along with the Tánaiste and the Minister for Social Welfare, committed the Government to a strategy to focus all areas of Government policy on the urgent task of reducing or eliminating poverty. This commitment was repeated and strengthened by subsequent Governments.*

*""The Government has committed itself to reducing the levels of those people living in consistent poverty to 2% or less by 2020 but there are now 8.7% of the population in consistent poverty, double the numbers in 2008, and there is little sign of the serious all-Government commitment needed to eliminate this disgrace to our society*

*"The figures for 'enforced deprivation' – i.e. being unable to afford basics like a warm coat, a substantial meal every second day or heating your home - are even worse, at (a quarter of the population, more than one third of children and even 16% of those at work. These figures still almost double those at the start of the recession in 2008, although down from the height of over 30% in 2013.*

*“We need to ask ourselves seriously what type of society says that this is OK.*

*“We repeat our call for the Government to implement its commitment to develop an integrated framework for social Inclusion, to tackle inequality and poverty, starting with an all-Government five year plan with effective policies and budgets.*

*“We are particularly worried by suggestions by the Minister for Social Protection in November last year that poverty targets be revised yet again. We need a serious effort to achieve the existing targets, not more time wasted on revising targets. The last social inclusion plan failed so this time we need to ensure we have an effective one which tackles issues of adequate income and quality services for everyone and decent jobs for those who can work ”.*

The full CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions for 2015 is available at <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditions2015/>

### **Note: official ways of measuring poverty**

- **At Risk of Poverty** or relative income poverty, is having an income that is less than what is regarded as the norm in society, giving a lower than normal standard of living. This is the share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below a given percentage (usually 60%) of the national median income. It is also calculated at 40%, 50% and 70% for comparison. The rate is calculated by ranking persons by equivalised income from smallest to largest and then extracting the median or middle value. Anyone with an equivalised income of less than 60% of the median is considered *at risk of poverty at a 60% level*.
- **Material Deprivation:** Those in material or enforced deprivation in Ireland are those who cannot afford at least two of the eleven goods or services considered essential for a basic standard of living. The current 11 indicators are:
  1. Two pairs of strong shoes
  2. A warm waterproof overcoat
  3. Buy new not second-hand clothes
  4. Eat meals with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day
  5. Have a roast joint or its equivalent once a week
  6. Had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money
  7. Keep the home adequately warm
  8. Buy presents for family or friends at least once a year
  9. Replace any worn out furniture
  10. Have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month
  11. Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight, for entertainment
- **Consistent Poverty** is the measurement preferred by the Irish Government and developed independently by the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). This measure identifies the proportion of people who are both at-risk of poverty (less than 60% of median income) and who are materially deprived because they cannot afford two of the eleven agreed items.

Some statistics form today's release for 2015:

(full release at

<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditions2015/>)

A table of selected relative, deprivation and consistent poverty statistics for 2008, 2014 and 2015

		Relative Poverty			Living in Deprivation			Consistent Poverty		
		2008	2014	2015	2008	2014	2015	2008	2014	2015
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
		All	14.4	17.2	16.9	13.8	29.0	25.5	4.2	8.8
Gender	Males	14.0	17.0	16.9	13.3	27.9	24.4	4.0	8.6	8.3
	Females	14.9	17.4	16.9	14.3	30.1	26.7	4.5	9.0	9.1
Age	0-17 years	18.0	20.3	19.5	18.1	36.1	31.4	6.3	12.7	11.5
	18-64 years	13.5	17.2	17.1	12.8	28.9	25.1	3.9	8.5	8.7
	65 years +		10.9	10.7		14.3	15.4	1.7	2.1	2.7
Economic Status	At work	6.7	6.0	5.8	6.6	19.9	16.4	1.1	2.6	2.1
	Unemployed	23.0	38.0	43.5	37.0	53.4	45.5	9.7	24.2	26.2
	Home Duties	21.7	26.4	24.9	17.5	32.5	30.2	6.9	13.2	12.5
	Not at work due to illness or disability	25.5	25.2	34.8	36.4	51.3	53.2	13.2	14.4	22.4
Household Composition	1 adult aged 65+	11.0	14.7	14.7	11.7	20.3	15.9	0.9	2.7	3.8
	1 adult aged <65	25.7	26.6	34.8	20.6	32.1	31.9	9.8	14.9	17.7
	1 adult with children aged under 18	36.4	36.5	36.2	35.9	58.7	57.9	17.8	25.0	26.2
Number of persons at work in the household	0	32.7	38.2	39.6	30.5	40.6	42.3	13.2	20.5	23.6
	2	5.1	4.3	0.5	5.9	16.8	14.0	0.9	0.4	1.0
Tenure status	Rented at below the market rate or rent free	29.6	38.5	39.0	40.1	54.5	52.5	16.4	23.6	24.9
Urban/rural location	Urban	11.9	15.9	16.3	14.3	29.3	26.3	4.2	8.7	8.9
	Rural	18.7	19.5	18.2	13.0	28.6	24.1	4.3	9.1	8.3
Region	Border, Midland and Western		22.0	20.8		32.4	27.3		11.9	9.9
	Southern and Eastern		15.5	15.5		27.8	24.9		7.7	8.3