**EU INCLUSION STATEGIES GROUP**

***17-18 March 2017, Valladolid***

*Minutes*

**Attending:** David Sourdeau (EAPN BE), Aleksandra Selak-Živković (EAPN HR), Eleni Karaoli (EAPN CY), Stanislav Mrozek (EAPN CZ), Jürgen Schneider (EAPN DE), Marjatta Kaurala (EAPN FI), Jeanne Dietrich (EAPN FR), Dina Vardaramatou (EAPN GR), Johanna László (EAPN HU), Magnea Sverrisdóttir (EAPN IC), Paul Ginnell (EAPN IE), Letizia Cesarini-Sforza (EAPN IT), Aidas Gedminas (EAPN LT), Robert Urbé (EAPN LU), Norberts Snarskis (EAPN LV), Maja Staleska (EAPN MK), Joseph Bartolo (EAPN MT), Sonja Leemkuil (EAPN NL), Dag Westerheim (EAPN NO), Paula Cruz (EAPN PT), Iris Alexe (EAPN RO), Marija Babović (EAPN SR), Graciela Malgesini (EAPN ES), Gunvi Haggren (EAPN SE), Katherine Duffy (EAPN UK), Philippe Seidel (AGE Platform Europe), Stephan Burger (Eurodiaconia), Kadri Soova (PICUM)

**EAPN Europe:** Sian Jones, Leo Williams, Amana Ferro, Elke Vandermeerschen, Rebecca Lee

**Apologies:** Martina Brandstätter (EAPN AT), Douhomir Minev (EAPN BG), Per K. Larsen (EAPN DK), Mart-Peeter Erss (EAPN EE), Ryszard Szarfenberg (EAPN PL), Slavomíra Mareková (EAPN SK)

**Welcome from our hosts, EAPN Spain / EAPN Castilla y León**

**Daniel Duque, President of EAPN Castilla y León** welcomed EAPN members of the EU ISG to Valladolid. He stressed the importance of EAPN at the national level, as it is one of the big networks in the country. He also highlighted the rural poverty seminar that took place the previous day (see below), which was attended by some EU ISG members, who made input. He concluded by wishing members a productive meeting.

**Carlos Raúl de Pablos, Manager of Social Services for the Council of Family and Equal Opportunities, member of Regional Government** welcomed EU ISG members and pointed out to a context that needs change at the EU level. Inequality poverty and social inclusion are not sufficiently tackled by European agenda, he said, while new funding instruments to fight poverty are needed. He stressed that the best way to fight poverty was to establish partnership between local governments and NGOs, and gave the example of the partnership between EAPN and the Government in Spain. The speaker also highlighted the importance of innovation projects, and new public-private partnerships on social investment, bringing about a new way of getting organised. He highlighted that the target audience is people experiencing social exclusion, those who receive minimum income from the Government, and they are running a test project now with people in the rural area. Results will be shared in in due course.

**Graciela / EAPN ES** highlighted that decentralisation is important and it is key to host more meetings outside of Brussels, this is what EAPN is about.

1. **Capacity Building on Migration / Asylum Seekers and Poverty**

**Eleni / EAPN CY** introduced EAPN’s Task Force on Migration and Poverty (see PowerPoint presentation).

The EU ISG decided to work on this in 2015 – to help build knowledge and understanding of challenges and realities faced by migrants. Members of the Task Force are a mix of NNs and EOs (see list). The aim is to build capacity within EAPN, and then to develop common messages – a rights-based position to national and European institutions. The main work to date is the briefing paper, which contains key issues and challenges to be discussed today. The plan is to take messages, use them and create an advocacy strategy on migration, which will come back to this Group.

**Kadri Soova / PICUM** introduced the draft Briefing prepared by the Task Force (see PowerPoint presentation).

The big question is, what is the angle which EAPN will take? Try not to just follow the logic of the policy makers and compartmentalise migration…

Context

* Migration is on top of the agenda of Member States, and it is very politicised. Even the Netherlands is pushing a hard line on migration (Rutte). Pushing the Commission to appear tough, so Member States can say that Europe is taking hard line. Netherlands, Germany, and France are now taking this hard-line stance. Question – Germany was good in 2015 what has happened?
* The Commission is now pushing their migration deterrence policies – they are mainstreaming, but not in a positive way…
* The Lisbon Treaty demands we focus on regular migration, but tackle irregular migration – but this is a false dichotomy. Most come ‘regularly’, but then visas run out and they become ‘irregular’. Safeguards seen by the Commission and Member States as problems to solve, as they are trying to hit their policy targets of deporting XX numbers of migrants. We are not clear on how we should handle this, because it is new – we have been pushing them to put these safeguards in place, but now the Commission is pushing Member States to do worse at the national level!

Initial discussion on EAPN perspective

* Voice missing about the risks of poverty faced by migrants. EAPN strong on inclusion, non-discrimination, pushing back against compartmentalisation, and looking at the bigger picture. EAPN can be a ‘joining actor’ in this debate?
* Can EAPN bring the positive narrative about the value migrants can bring to our society?
* We could focus on bringing the voices of migrants to the front of the debate. We have big, important networks at the national level. Can we mobilise topline messages or things on which we agree, things we integrate into our work, this could really help change the debate at the national level.

Key issues

* Overview to be taken from power point.
* Interesting emphasis on the criminalisation of service provision for members – not just the legality, but the effects of this on service providers and how they are less willing to work with undocumented migrants.
* Detention and deportation seen as the magic bullets, ironically. Harmful and expensive. The Commission is pushing to detail more children, even when MS have decided this is a violation of children’s rights.

Suggestions for EAPN

* Key messages could focus on the benefits migrants bring. We could have more outreach to migrant voices, we could bring them in more. Should we align with others to support / push their messages, will we have our own messages or our own take on things? Where do we place ourselves? This is key!

**Buzz groups discussion on the draft Briefing**

* How relevant are the issues raised, in your country? Which are the most important ones?
* Are there things you would change or that are missing?

*Netherlands, Romania, Croatia, Greece and Hungary*

Media role in info dissemination. Are they just amplifying fears? Should be in the text. Politicians – should harmonize implementation of human rights protection of health services, access to education, housing etc… How local communities react and coexist with migrants is key. Greece - need real protection of human rights, everyone has to be clear that what is provided to migrants is not taking away what would be given to Greeks…. Should be in text.

*Portugal, Finland, Italy, and Cyprus*

“Smuggler” / “trafficker” should be clarified. Should lament that Europe can’t receive these people. Highlight resettlement, connect demands for resettlement to economics, as you have a deduction from the EU fee for number of refugees you accept. Highlight that saving lives is not enough, have to help people make a safe life! Decouple the narrative – too closely linked to safety and security at the moment.

*Spain, Serbia, Ireland*

Academic paper, good starting analysis, but lacks some of the reality of people’s feelings – the fear of the local population re: migration, and where EAPN will focus, what we will do with the paper?

*Macedonia, Latvia, Malta, Lithuania, Belgium, AGE Platfom*

Elderly asylum seekers don’t get any financial support – pension rights based on years in the country. Lithuania / Malta – undocumented migrants make up 3% of the population. People don’t want them, but can’t do without them because they take all the low skilled jobs that locals don’t do. Macedonia – few issues with migrants as most have left. They actually struggle with migration out of the country. Integration and social benefits for migrants is key. In different countries the integration systems are very different – can we use this paper to focus on integration / reception systems? People deserve better treatment from the start.

*France, Czech Republic, Iceland, Norway, UK, Eurodiaconia*

Learned a lot from the paper. It may be useful to split the document into information sharing and the actual position paper (which will be written in the next phase). Tension inside society on this is not reflected – reinforces what the Spain-Serbia-Ireland group said. Need to admit people’s fears, not shy away from them. Internal migration could be more of a focus. Highlight how people of the country can benefit from migrants, not very clear. Feeling of unlimited responsibility - not clear. Religious issue – Christianity often used as an excuse to not address issues. Confusion between Islamism and terrorism is an issue!

**Kadri Soova / PICUM**

It is important to acknowledge what is driving these policies, but it is sensible to fuel the fears? Should we really highlight all of the fears? We should be careful, and focus on the fact that the fears are misconceived, and migrants do actually bring benefits. The paper is focusing on third country migrants, not mobile EU citizens. There is an important role of service providers, there are inclusive ways of providing services – this could be a focus of EAPN (decriminalisation). Transferability of social security rights for migrants is an important issue, we don’t see other network doing this. There are bilateral agreements on this, but nothing structured, and these agreements are rare. This is an internal capacity building paper, to help networks understand the issues, the challenges. It is not an all-encompassing paper – next step is to narrow down into a position paper perhaps? The Task Force will decide what is most useful. Key Messages are often more effective than long position papers which no-one reads. There are no plans to do a public campaign for migration, we are not going to change public opinion and we don’t need to restate the right of state to control borders.

**Sian / EAPN Europe**

We need to get a strategy for how we work on this at the European and national level. The aim is to get consensus, but if not, then by majority vote. We need to clarify EAPN’s stance on this.

**Katherine / EAPN UK** –There are fundamental differences between people and networks present – some people here don’t want to see any migration, some people view Islam as terrorism and thus don’t want any Muslim migrants. Worries that we are papering over cracks in the network here.

**Dina / EAPN GR** – We should all understand our international obligations (for instance, the Geneva Convention).

**Sian/EAPN Secretariat –** EAPN will need to start from its values and mission. We believe that poverty is a violation of human rights. Rights are not negotiable, and this will need to be our starting point.

**Buzz groups discussion on the way forward**

* Do you agree with the principles / messages proposed?
* What should be EAPN’s 3 key messages?

*Netherlands, Romania, Croatia, Greece and Hungary*

Be clearer and less politically correct. Want principles to be more doable, more on the ground? Principles which reflect decent standards of living in the EU. Cultural differences between groups of migrants (EU and non-EU) – address this as effectively as we can. As such we should address the most vulnerable groups, children and women. Key principles first and then get more concrete.

*Portugal, Finland, Italy, and Cyprus*

Suggest adding ‘ensure migrants integration’ to second bullet point. 3rd bullet point – change to ‘vast majority of people’. 4th bullet point is ok. Recommendation: participation hindered by different laws, so we need more participatory models which can include migrants. Recommendation: EAPN NNs does need some capacity building on this (more than this?). Recommendation: Recognise that asylum seekers are simply poor people, we want to help all poor people (but reality means we can’t use same funds to help everyone – but it is a question of mentality).

*Spain, Serbia, Ireland*

Government to provide better reception and accommodation. Respect Geneva Convention. Decriminalisation of people and service providers for undocumented migrants. Question – status of economic migrants within all of this (Spain feels is shouldn’t be included because economic migrants do have different rights) Last year EAPN decided that we would work with undocumented migrants who may have come to escape poverty as well, who are now left out of the system. Our starting people should be the needs of the human being – we should not be doing detailed policy analysis of the legislation, this is not our value add. Participation of migrants – maybe EAPN should strive to increase this participation internally. Spain also focused on getting nationality for migrants.

*France, Czech Republic, Iceland, Norway, UK, Eurodiaconia*

Some feel that migration is a threat – different cultural and religious beliefs. Lack of consensus in the group around threat or opportunity. Big important differences of opinion exist here. Some feel HR obligations are too restrictive on Member States who should have the freedom to circumnavigate them.

*Macedonia, Latvia, Malta, Lithuania, Belgium, AGE Platfom*

Respect of diversity in the community.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Please send the staff team*** (***sian.jones@eapn.eu***) ***any written comments on the briefing by next Monday 27th March, preferably in track changes. A revised draft will undergo a final discussion with the Task Force on Monday the 3rd April.***
1. **Mutual Learning Session on Rural Poverty**

See separate document will full report.

1. **Introduction**

The **Agenda** was approved. The **Minutes** were approved, and the **Agenda** agreed. The **Action Points** were mostly done. Everything in the **EU ISG Work Programme** has either been delivered, or is on track, and all links can be found in the updated document, which is available on the [Members’ Room](http://www.eapn.eu/login/).

**Work Programme 2017**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** – We produce a Work Programme every year, on which our funding is directly dependent. EAPN is like a project-funded network for the moment, we commit ourselves to do specific work, and we have to deliver on that. The idea was the EXCO taking over some of the policy deliverables burden from the EU ISG, which is the rationale behind the division between EU ISG deliverables and EXCO deliverables, but this needs to be further clarified. The EU ISG Steering Group was going to send a letter to the EXCO about the Work Programme. There was a strong feeling from the EU ISG about the policy work that the EXCO would do, fear of cross over. We assume that the EXCO member and the EU ISG member are in contact, so often information is sent to both national members, but it should not undermine your role. Regarding the work on 20% of ESF, Paula (EAPN PT) did a fantastic response, but only got 6 inputs, so it’s a short report, and the next EXCO meeting will discuss how to go forward. For the EU ISG, we are also introducing a new area, which is mutual learning, trying to get national network to host exchanges on key issues that they are working on. Another new area is compiling national *Poverty Watch* – style reports. See the document.

New areas of work for the EXCO

\* Monitoring of 20% of ESF dedicated to the fight against poverty and social exclusion

\* The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

\* Multi Annual Financial Framework (MAFF)

\* The post-Brexit debate

\* The funding of social protection systems

\* 2 other areas to be agreed

**Paul / EAPN IE** – We will have to see how this division of policy work between the EXCO and the EU ISG will work in practice.

**Katherine / EAPN UK –** The funding of social protection is a policy area, we thought that the EXCO would take up the work only on funding of EAPN. We hope that there will be sufficient resources in the future for the EU ISG to do this work.

**Leo / EAPN Europe** - The Bureau has discussed this issue a little, but are now starting to see how to do this work. We made it clear on many occasions that the EAPN Europe policy staff does not have the capacity to do this work, so that the EXCO will have to be leading on this. We need to reapply for funding in a Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 2018-2020, so we are now starting the process to have a look at previous strategies and applications and review them. In due course, I hope that we can move away from the 95% funding from the European Commission.

**Graciela / EAPN ES** - We did some work on FEAD in the past, but we would like to know what is the current state of play and if there is a new budget. We managed to convince the Spanish Government that FEAD cannot go on being used as it is today, and the link to ESF is inexistent as well. EAPN Spain achieved this, but lost the momentum, because there was no financial support to participate in the meetings organised by the European Commission.

**Letizia / EAPN IT** – We are part of the discussion group in the Italian FEAD Network, and it’s the ministry that takes up the costs.

**Leo / EAPN Europe** - We are a partner to two projects, experts on FEAD and ESF transnational learning. In the staff team, Magda Tancău is working on the FEAD project, and Fintan Farrell on the ESF project. There’s a small amount of money in the FEAD project to cover Magda’s time, but not enough to have the National Networks participate, though we will try to push ECORYS to fund National Networks to participate, which is all we can do.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***If you haven’t created your personal profile for the Members’ Room on the EAPN website, please do so, and contact Rebecca Lee in the EAPN Europe staff team if anything is unclear (******rebecca.lee@eapn.eu******).***
* ***Please get in touch with Magda Tancău (******magda.tancau@eapn.eu******) in the EAPN Europe staff team if you would like more information about the FEAD project EAPN is involved in and with Fintan Farrell (******fintan.farrell@eapn.eu******) regarding the ESF Transnational learning.***
1. **Europe 2020 and the European Semester**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** introduced the topic and recent developments, as well as EAPN action (see PowerPoint presentation).

**Gunvi / EAPN SE** - The Swedish experience is that targeting social protection is more expensive than a universal system.

**Dag / EAPN NO** - When you are targeting your welfare system, you need to build up a bureaucratic system which is costly and resource-consuming.

**Katherine / EAPN UK** – Modernising social protection systems really means to shift the burden to the individuals.

**Feedback on action at national level**

**Graciela / EAPN ES** – We have been working with the economic responsible from the Government, we received a letter asking for our proposals for the NRP, I made a document and included the review of the CSRs 2016, NRP 2016, and the proposal. It was sent yesterday to the Third Sector Platform, and members of the Government. The next step is to receive the draft NRP to make comments, and we expect to have our proposals included in the document (alongside proposals from social partners). The degree of commitment to our proposals is very small. But there are some important changes (for examples in the field of minimum income, a raise and more beneficiaries).

**Paula / EAPN PT** – We did not receive a question from the Commission, but we are preparing a paper, a review of the Country Report and NRP, and proposals for the next one. The Government is organising a set of workshop to prepare the NRP, for example also on poverty, and they invite the civil society organisations. Another one on education, and others on social and economic issues. It’s interesting that they organise this on the local level.

**Gunvi / EAPN SE** – We had our stakeholder meeting, we can see some improvements, now they have included the NGO input in the main report (before it was added as annex), also we made recommendations on the dialogue. There’s also a discussion on the next period. We are not happy about the Social Inclusion bill in Sweden. Now we have a left wing Government, we think we will have opportunities for the next round.

**Norberts / EAPN LV** - We try to influence the Government, we saw results 2-3 weeks ago, when a very controversial policy was changed, linked to a budgetary problem last year. Two weeks ago there was a new strategy, income tax will be 20% instead of 23% at the moment, and they are also promising us to raise minimum income from 300 to 500 euros. They promised new policies in March – April.

**Aidas / EAPN LT** – The Minister for Social Affairs is the former CARITAS leader, so they know what we are doing, from the inside. One of the main priorities of the Government is the fight against poverty. We have a new Board and the Ministry met with them, so they involve us in all discussions.

**Marjatta / EAPN FI** – Two weeks ago we had our seminar, and we will speak with the Minister of Social Affairs, we gave input.

**Sonja / EAPN NL** – We had general elections, it was a relief that Geert Wilders did not win, though he obtained 20 seats and it’s still worrying that a lot of people in the Netherlands voted for him. A good thing is that young people voted a lot, a great loss that the Labour party lost, and the balance between left and right is gone. We met with the Minister of Social Affairs from the Labour party, EAPN had two projects financed, one about participation. The Ministry was very interested in the report.

**Jeanne / EAPN FR** – The NRP is being discussed today, right now as we speak, the consultation of civil society goes on. What’s new for us is that we attended a meeting on the Country Report, which was quite worrying because they only spoke about competitiveness. The Report was presented by the French representation of the European Commission.

***Networks who had a chance to see a draft NRP***: FR, IE, SE, NL.

***Networks who were invited to discuss the Country Report***: IE, FR, FI, BE, CY.

**Philippe / AGE Platform** - We’re also working on the Semester, but have a hard time getting our members engaged. It’s interesting to see that the experiences of our members are similar, our French members are in exchange with the ministry, the Netherlands have the opportunity to make comments. The process is there. In terms of the analysis of the Country Reports, we’re at the very beginning of that. One thing that’s important to us is long term care. Fiscal responsibility (cutting budgets) is threatening, they see care as a budgetary cost, which is worrying. It’s becoming very expensive. With an average pension you’re not able to afford it, to fulfil your basic needs.

**Break-Out Groups on the Country Reports**

* General assessment - What’s positive? What’s negative?
* What 3 Recommendations?
* 3 overall key messages from group

See full separate notes on the discussions held in the break-out groups.

**Feedback to plenary on Key Messages**

*Group 1 – UK, FI, IC, HU, HR, DE, ES, RO, MK, AGE Platform*

EU Recommendations:

* The Country Reports are quite comprehensive and contain the right analysis of the situations, but things are missing:
* Include references to Minimum Income schemes
* Include references to the provision of services

Finnish Basic Income experiment: it works like unemployment benefits that would be maintained if people find a job. It is being trialled on only 2000 people. It is no-means tested, and people can continue to work, and it amounts to 560 euros a month. It is a pilot for 2 years. The pension adequacy report will be drafted for 2018, they are looking at different scenarios. Pension reforms are not mentioned a lot in the Country Reports this year, the European Commission says they want the reforms to continue, they want to see more progress.

*Group 2 – BE, CZ, IT, SR, CY, FR, NL, MT, LV*

General discussion: social policies not mentioned enough, and not enough participation.

EU Recommendations:

* Mainstream poverty in all other policies (but not watering it down!), ensure social impact assessment and poverty-proofing, deliver policy coherence to reach social objectives.
* Embed meaningful participation of civil society organisations in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of policies – beyond empty information session.
* It is our role as civil society to prepare shadow reports that counter this official version of facts and tells the truth about poverty and social exclusion on the ground.

*Group 3 – LU, NO, PT, LT, SE, GR, SE, IE, Eurodiaconia*

EU Recommendations:

* The Country Reports fail to mention integrated anti-poverty strategies, they focus on specific forms on poverty
* The European Commission continues to disregard importance of civil dialogue, and the general communication fails to mention civil society as a stakeholder
* The Country Reports are not strong enough as it comes to universal and adequate access to services (housing, school drop outs), specific mention of migrants is not there

**Paul / EAPN IE** – There is a new Briefing from the European Commission, for the first time they gave the draft to the Government to give comments on. So, to what extent do the countries/Governments have an influence on the Report? In Ireland for example, the Report was less critical than before.

**Robert / EAPN LU** – Sometimes, when the European Commission Reports are criticizing the Government, you can use them to confront the Government, but not the Report as a whole, so it can become a weak argument, because they answer you’re very selective.

**Katherine / EAPN UK** – Our Report has more on public services than there used to be.

**Sian / EAPN Europe** – Exchanging with the desk officers for your country can be very interesting. On Latvia they agree on everything we said in the Semester Alliance report we produced, but they asked “What can we do about the Latvian government?” Contacting the desk officers can really feed into the Country Reports.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Please fill in the Country Reports fiche and return to the EAPN Europe staff team (******sian.jones@eapn.eu******) by the 7th******April.***
* ***Use the*** [***template letter***](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/EAPN-4b-EAPN-Template-Letter-for-ESOs-1036.docx) ***prepared by the EAPN Europe staff team to contact your European Semester Officer and feed into the process.***
* ***Consult the*** [***Toolkit on Stakeholder Engagement 2017***](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/EAPN-1-EAPN-Toolkit-Stakeholder-Involvement-2017-1054.docx)***, which contains detailed information about the processes, timeline, useful policy hooks, best practices, tips for engagement, as well as key contacts (desk officers, European Semester Officers etc).***
1. **EU Policy Update and Advocacy**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** presented the most recent EU policy updates and EAPN advocacy action (see PowerPoint presentation).

**Discussion**

**Dina / EAPN GR** - On the point of migration border agencies: people will change the routes and there will be more problems of operational security & terrorism.

**Letizia / EAPN IT** – Our Government just signed agreement with Libya which is v dangerous.

**Leo / EAPN Europe** - Feedback received from the Red Cross, who attended a meeting on the European Solidarity Corps, is that there might be grant calls also, so we’ll circulate this information.

**Graciela / EAPN ES** – The December Eurobarometer report on visions of the EU yielded that 82% of Europeans agree that f**ree-market economy should go hand-in-hand with a high level of social protection**. We should use this data and the factsheets with comparable data. We’ll circulate it.

**European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)**

* It is divisive, because the European Commission does want some hard law elements, while Member States afraid of populist backlash.
* On employment rights, there will be legal guidance on the working time directive, coming from the lost maternity leave directive.
* Will the Pillar be only applied to the Eurozone, or the whole of the EU? Remains to be seen.
* EAPN’s social media campaign: concern that messages are too negative given Thyssen’s focus on poverty now, but they are based on our key position messages and actors may welcome the support in fact.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Please continue to send the EAPN Europe staff team (******sian.jones@eapn.eu******) information about your involvement with national level consultations and advocacy around the European Pillar of Social Rights.***
* ***Support the social media campaign on the EPSR - See email sent by Elke from EAPN Europe and join in. Please let Elke (******elke.vandermeerschen@eapn.eu******) know your feedback on these tools, so they can be incorporated in the second stage of the campaign.***

**Future Of Europe**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** - Recent summit feedback said that no one wanted scenario 3. And scenario 5 implies Treaty changes, which Member States don’t want either.

**Graciela / EAPN ES** – The paper is opportunistic with key elections foreseen, and a poor attempt to stop populism. If they used the data on what Europeans want (social protection), they would have done better. That the 3rd scenario is from IT, ES, DE, NL, is also significant. All this is unclear: showing strong shared principles despite what’s happening? We’ve done a lot of awareness raising. 1000 answers to the questionnaire, and now they start from zero which is only understandable in the Trump/Le Pen context. We talked about Brexit and some said that Europe can’t deepen any further now, like on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, so maybe Brexit is also a motivation for the White Paper. We need to use our Policy Conference to produce something before the State of the Union address in September.

**Jeanne / EAPN FR** - We talked about it and reaction was very flat (nothing new / yet again we start from scratch!). EAPN FR will react in April when the EPSR proposal comes out. We don’t understand the content of the future of Europe paper and EPSR. Can we say we want scenario 5, but depending on the content?

**Sian / EAPN Europe** – The EPSR package will include a soft part (communication on principles/benchmarking) and a hard part (legislative), but nothing on frameworks for unemployment benefits or minimum income. How the Future Of Europe paper will influence the EPSR, we wait and see what Member States will go for.

**Paul / EAPN IE** – Disappointing, as if stripping things right back. The first line is interesting: the Commission says that if we they anything well no one recognises it, so almost as if they’re throwing their hands up. It’s as if any social dimension is seen as a threat rather than an opportunity. Putting everything off for another year and kicking down the line to the new EP again.

**Letizia / EAPN IT** - It feels that they don’t know where they‘re going. The Commission can’t be more ambitious or the Council would just reject it. We already have 2-speeds: Europe & Schengen. We have to use the EPSR as much as can as a transversal tool, though unfortunate that it doesn’t include immigration. I am against scenario 3, but isn’t scenario 5 wishful thinking as we cannot cooperate now? Perhaps a scenario 6 is best.

**Stephan / Eurodiaconia** - Members are encouraged to work on it as outcomes will be at national level and decisions will be taken there. We want a clear preference of scenario. Option 3 might be the most feasible (strong Member States are in favour) and we’re telling members to have clear arguments if against that scenario.

**Iris / EAPN RO** - We feel no real choice, as scenario 3 is the only realistic option (non-core states can only react). The actual debate in Romania will be around this scenario, as it’s already the case – the debate will be on how it would be implemented.

**Letizia / EAPN IT** - The Anniversary of 60 years since the Treaty of Rome will take place on 25/03 with Heads of State in Rome. Civil society is mobilising around this. On the 23rd, EAPN Director Leo Williams will be there with the Italian SDG Watch alliance at a high-level meeting. On the 24th, the University of Rome will be taken over by civil society: event on women & equal opportunities; 2000 places for an event with the slogan ‘Let’s re-orientate Europe’, on a day which is being called ‘Happy birthday Europe’, with music, actors, speeches, mayors, authorities, including EAPN Vice President Carlos Susias from EAPN ES, and at least 10 workshops. On the 25th, two demonstrations will take place, which will merge.

***EU ISG members working on this*:**ES, AGE, FR, PT perhaps, IT, ES, BE. DE will discuss in April. FI, IE, HR, EL, NL, LI, LV, MK (discuss)

**ACTION POINTS:**

***Try to find out what your Member States are thinking about the Future of Europe, and which scenario they might be likely to push for, and let the EAPN Europe staff know (******sian.jones@eapn.eu******).***

**Annual Convention**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** – We are currently trying to get speaking slots for EAPN members. It seems we won’t be able to have a speaker in plenary, nor a person in poverty who can deliver the Key Messages of last year’s European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty. Only two speakers confirmed so far for workshops (Sophie Schwab from Germany and Sara Ferraioli from Italy). We were also invited to be *rapporteur* in a third workshop. EAPN was only granted 6 places, out of which 2 reimbursed (Sérgio Aires, EAPN President, and Jasmina Krunic, EAPN Vice President, will get these two). Members need to try to attend through their national Governments. The Commission is late in their planning, so it is still worth following up with your Government.

**Amana / EAPN Europe** - EAPN has proposed a side-event on the topic of The Rights of Young People to Adequate Income (from wages and/or social protection). The topic of this year’s Convention is Youth Inclusion, which is good as it is not only labour market focussed, and EAPN has a position paper on this already. There is, however, no mention of access to income in the programme, whereas statutory minimum wage & minimum income schemes in some countries have inbuilt age restrictions, which is de facto age discrimination, and raise the risk of poverty for young people. The European Youth Forum is a partner, as well as the European Trade Union Confederation (youth section), and Equinet – the European Network of Equality Bodies. We propose 4 speakers, one from each organisation. If you have any example or testimonies – positive or negative – please let me know, and please propose speakers, ideally a young person in poverty.

***EAPN members invitations:*** ES, FI, Eurodiaconia, AGE Platform. CY, NO, MK probably. PT, IT, IE, SE, NL, CY asked for a place, while FR will ask.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Get in touch with your Government and ask for places in your national delegation to the Annual Convention – it is not too late to try. Please keep the EAPN Europe staff team informed (******sian.jones@eapn.eu******).***
* ***If you have any suggestions of good/bad practices or testimonies or speakers for the side-event on the right to adequate income for young people, please let the EAPN Europe staff team know (******amana.ferro@eapn.eu******)***
1. **New Ways Of Work**

**Amana / EAPN Europe** presented the Background Note on this work, which had been sent in advance.

**Graciela / EAPN ES** – We did extensive work on this during 2016, including a video with key messages. We are happy to share this with the Group, but it is all in Spanish.

**Dag / EAPN NO** – We worked on this with public offices last year, with work planned until 2030. We have a structure including demographics, labour market, conditional living, politics etc, perhaps we can build on this work.

**Feedback from buzz groups**

*Sweden, Finland*

Positive impacts: Autonomous provision is quicker so products/services can be cheaper. This can be an opportunity for rural areas. Levels of services can improve the health context without taking jobs away, eg robots to take someone to the toilet all day; can communicate with workers throughout the day who can give guidance on medication etc. Negative: difficulty to find work for low-skilled workers and low-educated. People have to have a lot of knowhow. People can’t choose if they want to use computers and often services are only accessible online, which can be a problem. Globalisation: low wages affect new jobs but negative for countries that lose jobs & communications can suffer.

*Italy, France, Portugal*

We risk moving from being citizens to being consumers (of services). ‘Fake’ jobs may help people be slightly less poor but will not help a lot as people build their identity through their jobs. Trade unions are not managing this area. Short-term problem: people have no insurance/contract. Long-term: no social protection for those who’ll retire soon. Robots take work away but maybe they should be taxed. Positive that costs of care can be alleviated but isolation still a problem. 1 idea of food-delivery by drones but really hard for us to see good points.

*Spain, Belgium*

Overall, a video could be a good output for this work. Should include the participation of uberdrive etc. ES: we see it as not just a national issue as related to multinationals. No real link to the black economy from the collaborative economy. BE – robotisation could replace 45% of activities of some jobs. Also high-skilled jobs (brain surgery etc). Airbnb now being taxed with Flanders/Brussels looking at regulating Uber, and a lot of pressure. UK – Zero-hour contracts a big issue; interesting work with Deliveroo drivers self-organsing and pushing discussion w government/employer. Need to tread carefully here – risk of hurting poor people in short term as poorer people may use these services. Need to tax the companies & not the users. Regulation needs to take care. ES: Primark effect: poor buy here but production is oversees and jobs in textile are reduced. An opportunity around online learning platforms & courses. ES: Trade unions have no members so think robots should pay social security. Basic income presented from either right/left side because of this: how to address loss of jobs. New jobs in technology are not going to go to poor adults in Spain today. EU level research predicts 40-70% unemployment and what happens then? Basic income? What’s the real objectives and who gains? This work can help us to get a handle on the issues.

*Iceland, Czech Republic, Norway*

CZ has 1 positive legislation: home work could solve the big problem of lack of childcare. Negative: industrial country with low unemployment rate so pressure on increasing salaries but not enough workers & forced to replace them with machines – dangerous for wages. NO: 3D printed houses (9000e) puts entrepreneurial work at risk. Skills needed to operate these machines – labour opportunity. Demand of public services: can stay more at home and demand more assistance – can decide much more yourself, but social contact is needed. Much more specialisation on labour market. IS: mental health awareness (danger); lack of education in Iceland so need low-skilled work. Stanislav read article that in ES sex workers can be replaced by robots.

*Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, AGE Platform*

Opportunity to develop industries (distribution of goods eg) but others destroyed. Gambling/transport. Self-driving cars. Farming (opportunity to connect consumers with farms), telemedicine, long-term care – help to provide services which aren’t yet there. Education systems will have to adapt. MT: Education focuses on technical skills and not enough on general skills (may be different in other countries). Opportunities: flexitime; flexible location. Project in LI where farmers share their farms w younger people (not for profit). AGE; challenge is education – industries w older workers will be most affected as skills cycles move quickly (lifelong learning systems and career-change).

*Cyprus, Romania, Greece, Netherlands*

Diff situations. We cannot go backwards. Risk of working 2-3 jobs. Social securities need to be safeguarded. Collective agreement may disappear. EL: how to combine needing to deal with realities with ability to pay bills (10000 euros in unpaid electricity bills in Greece). Innovation is good but what when people cannot afford to send their children to study. Protection of workers’ rights is a joke. Wage/maternity rights are not protected.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Please fill in the short fiche that will be sent shortly (see upcoming follow-up email) and return it to the EAPN Europe staff (******amana.ferro@eapn.eu******) by 25 April.***
1. **Updates on Task Forces and Other Business**

**Task Force on Poverty and Social Exclusion as a Violation of Human Rights**

**Amana / EAPN Europe** –The Task Force was proposed, and is led by, EAPN Denmark, and it additionally includes representatives from EAPN Ireland, EAPN Finland, EAPN Macedonia, and the International Federation of Social Workers (European Organisation in membership of EAPN). The mandate of the Task Force is to prepare a Toolkit with two aims: to help EAPN members conceptualise poverty as a breach of human rights, and to support them in understanding how to take legal action under the main European and international human rights frameworks. Two meetings for Task Forces took place in 2016 (July 8th and November 7th). A draft Toolkit is currently undergoing internal revision and will be further discussed and finalised at the next Task Force meeting, on May 15. The October 2017 EU ISG meeting will include a capacity-building session, based on the Toolkit. The EAPN Belgium representative had to leave the Task Force and could not be replaced. EAPN will work closely with FEANTSA, who have a good track record on homelessness legal cases. To make the Toolkit attractive and useful, it would ideally include practical examples from as many members as possible.

**ACTION POINTS:**

* ***Please send the EAPN staff team (******amana.ferro@eapn.eu******) any useful examples to illustrate the Toolkit on Poverty and Social Exclusion as a Violation of Human Rights, currently prepared by the Task Force, by 10 May – see upcoming follow-up email.***

**EAPN Annual Policy Conference**

**Sian / EAPN Europe** presented the Policy Conference Scoping Note, which has been sent in advance.

**Information on projects - EMIN**

**Elke / EAPN Europe** - Two buses will travel through Europe to support National Networks to promote Minimum Income schemes. The idea is to create momentum for a visible campaign and stimulate discussion. Kick off on 27 March!

**Any Other Business**

**Leo / EAPN Europe** – The Key Messages from the European Meeting of People experiencing Poverty 2016 will go to the National Coordinators at the end of the month, and then will be disseminated.

**Elke / EAPN Europe** - We made videos at the meeting but will publish with the messages in April and more info will be sent.

**Magnea / EAPN IC** – The Icelandic initiative on closing their gender pay-gap by 2020 (13-16% now) is not yet accepted, but if it is passed, companies with over 25 people will have to prove they apply the law.

**Evaluation of the meeting**

**Letizia / EAPN IT** - Only one capacity-building or mutual learning session, but possibly taking more time to go in depth.

**Dag / EAPN NO** - Keep this model of a light agenda with fewer priorities.

**Dina / EAPN GR** – Reporting back from group work needs to be quicker and more structured.

**Dates of next meeting**

The next meeting will combine a Policy Conference, an EXCO meeting, and an EU ISG meeting, and will take place in Brussels on 15-17 June. Please block the dates, but don’t book your travel before receiving the invitation to register for the meeting from the EAPN Europe staff.