

**ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

***Side Event: In Work Poverty
The Contribution of Employment to Poverty Reduction and Inclusion***

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Danka Orobej, expert by experience, EAPN Hungary

My name is Danka, I live in the countryside, about 200 km away from Budapest.

There are scientific ways to calculate how much it costs for each person to live, to have a decent life. In my country, Hungary, they recommend about 300 euro per month. However, the minimum salary that you can take home is about 200 euro. My family is composed of three adults and three children, and I calculated that we are entitled to 1200 euro monthly. But over the past months, our combined income was barely 900 euro per month.

The only way to survive is to work on the black or grey labour market, I don't know anyone in my country who doesn't do this to survive. My last job was very low paid, and we are forced to accept this kind of jobs, because otherwise someone else will do it, and there are no other opportunities. I worked only 6 hours on paper, but much more in reality. What is the saddest is that we are happy to have such a bad job.

My situation is that I have three children, and we all live on the same amount of money, which makes us officially poor. I registered with the Unemployment Office, but I found out that I am not entitled to unemployment benefits, because I receive benefits for my children.

I am not an expert, but I follow the news, and I know that the Commission gives Member States a lot of advice, which many of them follow it, and there are consequences if they don't for instance. I am wondering why the European Union doesn't also give rules about minimum standards for decent lives. That way, salaries across the European Union would ensure that people live in dignity. Otherwise, we will just have people working 40 hours a week, for a salary that does not allow us basic living standards. You say these discussions start at the national level, but why? Can't we change this somehow?

There are regulations on how to raise a chicken, and how big should a cucumber be. I know cucumbers are important, chicken-raising is even more important, but human beings and their dignified lives are not? I am not suggesting that the Commission decides that everybody should be making a certain salary per month, this would be stupid. But the European Union can say, as a starting point, that everybody should make enough to meet basic living costs.