

## PRESS RELEASE

### End Poverty in Europe? Yes, we can! Ensuring we can all participate in society is the first *Social Right*

Brussels, 17 October 2017 - On 17 October 2017, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) calls on the EU to End Poverty! Tackling poverty is about ensuring we can all participate in society on equal terms and have decent living conditions. To not do so, is a violation of human rights – we call on all people and political institutions to take up their duty to work for the realisation of a world free of poverty and social exclusion.

*“I spent 30 years as a rough sleeper, and nobody said to me where will you lay your head.. In 2007, I got confidence... got a chance as a delegate in EAPN... It was a turning point for me... All poor people want is to be included in decisions which have an impact on their lives”* said Michael Mackey, Board member of EAPN Ireland.

**3 weeks ago saw the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals when nations took action to end poverty** in all its forms and **today is our turn to take a stand** alongside those living in poverty. Ending poverty is a political choice!

*“Some hope is in the horizon. The discussions about the future of Europe are an opportunity for the EU to show we care about the 25% of citizens living at risk of poverty. That’s the scenario that should drive the overall discussions. It is an opportunity to show we recognize our mistakes and restart the European project towards its original objective: peace and social cohesion. In November this year an important step towards poverty eradication can be concretized. The Gothenburg Social Summit must be able to show the political determination to make a definitive step forward in this direction by agreeing on a mandatory implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights – and not only for the Eurozone”* says Sérgio Aires, President of EAPN.

**The Pillar must be implemented with good participative governance** including civil society and those who are most affected by the current lack of social rights. It must be **backed by adequate financing, enabling governments to invest in adequate social protection systems, quality services and jobs and a stop to austerity cuts**. Above all it must lead to concrete positive improvements in the real lives of people experiencing poverty across the EU!

*“Raising the level of social benefits would be most important in reducing poverty. After the payment of housing costs, a small pension does not leave enough money for food and medicines. Now I have to choose whether to buy food or medicines”* said a member of EAPN Finland.

This year we are excited to unite with our member **ATD Fourth World’s #StopPoverty campaign** and offer a new way to follow anti-poverty initiatives online on this International Day. [www.poverty-stop.org](http://www.poverty-stop.org).

*“For once, people in poverty can be sure that they do not stand alone. Their unrelenting resistance to injustice continues in the shadows every day. On this international day, when they step into the spotlight, they can be encouraged when they see that people from all walks of life have chosen to stand together with them,”* says Isabelle Pypaert Perrin, Director General of ATD Fourth World International.

**#StopPoverty**



## Notes for editors

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is the largest European network of national, regional and local networks, involving anti-poverty NGOs and grassroots groups as well as European Organisations, active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It was established in 1990.

See details of **our members activities** for the 17<sup>th</sup> October in Portugal, Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Scotland & Belgium [here](#).

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