# **A close up of a sign  Description generated with very high confidence**

Notes of EAPN Executive Committee

20 - 21 October 2017

Dublin, Ireland

**Participants: (members):** Eugen (Austria), David (Belgium), Maria (Bulgaria), Nino (Croatia), Karel (Czech Republic), Per (Denmark), Kärt (Estonia), Tiina (Finland), Richard (France), Jens (Germany), Krisztina (Hungary), Vilborg (Iceland), Tess (Ireland), Vito (Italy), Laila (Latvia), Elena (Lithuania), Nadia (Luxembourg), Meri (Macedonia), Saviour (Malta), Quinta (Netherlands), Honoratte (Norway), Kamila (Poland), Sergio (Portugal), Raluca (Romania), Jasmina (Serbia), Ana (Slovakia), Carlos (Spain), Lena (Sweden), Victor (UK), Luigi (SMES), Fran (IFSW)

**Participants (staff**): Fintan, Philippe, Sigrid, Elke, Leo

**Apologies:**Ninetta (Cyprus), Olga (Greece), Freek (FEANTSA), Mike (Salvation Army)

**Analysis of progress against objectives of the meeting**

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| **Objective** | **Analysis of progress** |
| To develop a sense of collective understanding and ownership of the FPA and the 2018 Work Programme | 😐 Clear decision taken on thematic focus (D9), less clarity / consensus on the ‘place’ of the PeP Committee (D8).  |
| To reflect on the Membership Survey and take strategic decisions | 😐 Clear decision taken on fundraising and financial diversification (D2), less clarity on campaigning (D4, D5) and European Organisations (D6). |
| To decide on whether EAPN takes a credit line at Triodos to manage our cash flow issues | 😊 Clear decision taken to take out a credit line (D1) |
| To prepare for the General Assembly | ☹ Lack of time meant the Ex Co didn’t meaningfully discuss the draft declaration, the Dutch resolution or other matters. |
| To make progress on certain deliverables in the 2017 Work Plan | 😐 Some progress made on the Future of Europe and the Multiannual Financial Framework. Time constraints meant that not enough time was available for these discussions.  |

# **Notes**

Session 1: Agenda, Minutes

The agenda was approved unanimously

The minutes of June 2017 were approved unanimously

Session 2: Management & Administration

**Activity report of Bureau and Director (presentation on Members Room)**

**Financial Management**

* There is a need to take a decision on the credit-line in view of potential cash flow issues
* Debit notes will soon be sent for **voluntary membership contributions**

**Management of Staff Team**

* Negotiations with staff about the 1.5% automatic increase are ongoing
* The staff team will undertake collective training on **non-violent communication methods** and organisational **conflict management**.
* **The Bureau agreed a new salary grid in July 2017**. Staff have concerns about the new grids, though there has been no proposal from staff on this yet. Scales are not considerably different from previous ones - however, these didn’t reflect the reality in EAPN, nor the recruitment practises.
* There is a **small risk that we don’t receive the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) from the Commission.** We do not have enough reserves or other sources of funding to keep EAPN functioning in the same way, without this money. As such, **notice letters have been issued to all the staf**f, with an agreement that if we receive the FPA then the letters will be considered ‘null and void’

**Strategic Planning**

* The Ex Co will be kept informed of the **risk management process** which has been started recently.

**Representation**

* Sergio and Leo had a good meeting with the Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Thyssen, where we discussed the possibility of a letter of support from the Commission, encouraging MS to meaningfully engage anti-poverty organisations like EAPN in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

**Organisational and Membership Development**

* Deadline for MASS - networks should confirm their interest in undertaking a MASS process to Magda by 15 November.

**Action**

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| A1. Circulate the membership contributions for the last years. | **Philippe** |
| A2. Share a clear explanation of what the voluntary contributions are - in writing and on a webinar | **Leo** |
| A3. Members interested in undertaking a MASS process to contact Magda by 15 November | **Members** |

**Credit line (See Doc2d, on Members Room)**

**Recommendation 1: The Ex Co should authorise EAPN to open a credit line of 100 000 euros to draw on, in case of cash flow problems.**

**Recommendation 2: Ex Co members sign the relevant document to enable to staff team to put this credit line in place in 2018.**

Ex Co members welcomed the fact that under Belgian law, administrators are **not individually responsible for the debts of the organisation for which they are an administrator** – unless there are serious cases of mismanagement from the Ex Co. Such a credit line is a way of protecting both EAPN and the administrators, as it allows EAPN to fulfil its legal obligations even in times of short term cash flow difficulties. EAPN is also looking into civic insurance for administrators, to cover any legal costs for eventual legal procedures against administrators. (Note – the EAPN Slovakia Ex Co representative was not present for this discussion.)

**Decision**

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| D1. Following a vote, the Ex Co agreed to establish a ‘credit line’ of 100 000 euros to deal with short term cash flow problems in the future, and to sign a document attesting that the Ex Co took this decision today.**The vote**For: 20Abstentions: 6Against: 1 (Finland) |

**Actions**

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| A4. Ensure that we have all signatures necessary | Philippe |
| A5. Ensure that the bank account and credit line are opened at Triodos. | Philippe |

Session 3: Membership Survey

**Overview**

The Director gave a presentation about the survey results (see powerpoint on members room). The group then split into three groups: **Campaigning, fundraising, European organisations**. Groups were asked 2 key questions, and requested to bring recommendations to the Ex Co, to stimulate discussions and decisions.

**Fundraising / Financial diversification**

**Recommendation 1. That EAPN makes efforts to diversifying its funding by 20% in the next 3 years (end of 2020). In practise this would mean that, if we receive 1 million from our core grant with the European Commission, we should aim to raise 200 000 from other sources.**

**Recommendation 2. We should hire a part time (potential volunteer) fundraiser, based in a national network, to support this process.**

**Key points from discussion**

* The Commission is moving away from ‘operational grants’ - thus our current dependency on Commission funds puts us at risk. This has been identified during the risk management process.
* We should aim to retain our core funding from the Commission, but to increase our funding from other sources in order to ensure our sustainability.
* There is a feeling that the Commission is using their money to drive their agenda
* Managing Commission funds has become a very bureaucratic task
* We still need to keep making the case that EAPN should be funded by the Commission, given our history and our position vis-a-vis the Commission. We could also diversify within the Commission, to other DGs.

**Decisions**

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| D2. Recommendation 1 was unanimously accepted - EAPN will strive to diversify its funding by 20% over the next 3 years. |
| D3. Recommendation 2 was accepted - EAPN will base a part time fundraiser in the office of a national network, supporting this diversification work. |

**Action**

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| A6. Establish the Fundraising and Financial Diversification Team, think about who could be on it, what it will do, and how | Leo and Raluca |

**Campaigning**

**Recommendation 1. We should establish an EAPN campaign day, where all campaign together on fighting poverty. 17 October and 9 May are considered good for some members, difficult for others.**

**Recommendation 2. 4-5 members should lead on our campaigning work, supported by the EAPN Comms Officer.**

**Decisions**

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| D4. Recommendation 1 was accepted - EAPN will look to find a common campaigning day which can work for as many members as possible. |
| D5. Recommendation 2 was accepted - campaigns work should be member led, supported by the Comms Officer.  |

**Action**

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| A7. Look to structure this work within the staff team | **Leo** |
| A8. Establish which networks will lead on this work | **TBC** |

**European Organisations**

There were no clear recommendations coming from the group, but the following decisions were taken after the full group discussion:

**Decisions**

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| D6. EAPN must clarify the nature of the membership of EOs in EAPN, with clear methodology, engagement mechanisms and support.  |

**Action**

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| A9. Draft a document outlining the methodology, engagement options and support available, for the next Ex Co discussion. | Magda to draftEOs to provide input |

Session 4: Framework Partnership Agreement

**Overview**

The Director gave a brief presentation about the Framework Partnership Agreement (available on members room). Ex Co members then split into buzz groups to discuss two key questions:

**Where does the PeP committee ‘fit’ structurally?**

**Key points from discussion**

This is a committee consisting of 4-5 networks and 4-5 experts with experience of poverty, who should lead on developing and implementing a strategy to meaningfully include the voices of experts with experience of poverty in our external communications work.

Two main options were discussed, notably:

1. Reporting directly to the Executive Committee
2. Reporting directly to the group of PeP National Coordinators

**Decisions**

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| D7. This Committee should sit ‘under’ the PeP National Coordinators, report back to this group, and this group should report back to the Ex Co. |
| D8. The next Ex Co meeting will include a full discussion about various PeP issues, including the terminology we use, translation, sensitivities around visibility actions, the links between Ex Co and PeP national coordinators, the stability / staff we need to make the PeP meetings a success. |

**Action**

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| A10. Discuss with the National Coordinators Group | Director with staff team |

**What theme should EAPN focus on in 2018?**

**Key points from discussion**

* Whichever theme is chosen, we should use a human rights based approach to tackle the theme, recognising the work of the HRBA Task Force.
* We should aim to be positive in our thematic work in 2018, proposing solutions.
* Not all EAPN members will be able to contribute to the work, and we should thus not expect all to do so - but the Ex Co recognises the need to provide strategic leadership.
* Potential topics came from the analysis of the Membership Survey, which highlighted both the themes which our members are planning on focusing on, and the themes which members propose for EAPN to work on as a network.

**Decision**

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| D9. The theme EAPN should focus on under 1.5 of the Framework Partnership Agreement (which would engage the European Organisations as well) should be **Working poor / labour markets.** |

The votes were as follows:

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| Labour markets / Working poor | 12 |
| Homelessness | 5 |
| Migration | 8 |
| Child poverty | 4 |

**Action**

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| A11. Consider how best to implement this decision, reporting to the Ex Co electronically | Director with staff team |

Session 5: Ex Co Work Programme

**Overview**

The aim was to make progress on various work strands, notably The Future of Europe, the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the European Social Fund (ESF), Financing for Social Protection. However, due to time limitations, discussions focused on Future of Europe, MFF and ESF.

**Future of Europe**

**Key points**

* Carlos presented the thinking from the group working on this (available on members room)
* For the Future of Europe paper, it needs to to show more clearly it supports the 6th scenario as developed by SDG Watch, but goes deeper from the perspective of the fight against poverty. It also needs to be clear that it is not calling for another Social Pillar but highlights what we expect to be delivered by the Social Pillar.
* There needs to be more consideration given to the list of what we expect the Social Pillar to deliver for example: universal health care needs a point of its own and not just a sub point on decent pensions.

**Decisions**

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| D10. SMES, EAPN France and Netherlandswill join the group working on this. |

 **Action**

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| A12. Spanish paper to be distributed and a deadline for comments will be included in this mail. |

**Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF)**

**Key points**

* Vito presented feedback from the group’s thinking on MFF (see presentation on Members Room)
* Need to reach out and cooperate with EOs who are working on the Future of Europe and the MFF. We should also work in and through our alliances at the Brussels level on this, to ensure we have impact.
* If we are to have any influence we need to move fast, so we should aim to finalise our key positions in the next few weeks.

**Actions**

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| A13. Paper to be circulated to the Ex Co (and key EOs) for comments, with deadline | Vito with the support of Leo |
| A14. Incorporate comments | Vito with the support of Leo |
| A15. Clarify how our position should be used | MFF sub-group |
| A16. Attempt to incorporate our positions into those of our Brussels allies who focus on MFF | Magda / Leo |

**European Social Fund**

**Key points**

* Sergio and Fintan gave updated information on ESF work.

**Action points**

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| A17. Send revised ESF questionnaire with deadline for completion.   | EAPN Portugal, by end of October |
| A18. Complete the questionnaire | EAPN members  |
| A19. Send names and email addresses of people from their Networks who follow and have expertise on use of Structural Funds for the EAPN email list on this topic.  | EAPN members |
| A20. Distribute paper developed on Social Indicators for the ESF project to the email contact groups and information on the work that will be done on the theme of Active Inclusion.  | Fintan  |

Session 6. Evaluation of the meeting

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| **What worked well 😊 😊 😊**  | **What worked less well ☹ ☹ ☹** | **What we should improve next time** |
| **Leadership** |
| The Director consulting and challenging the Ex Co on different matters. He ‘responsibilizes’ the Ex Co, putting trust in each member and knowing their capacities. We can trust him. | Moderating should be better shared across the Bureau and perhaps the Ex Co. Enough time needs to be provided for the discussions. | The moderator needs to have the courage to say stop, we have to move on. |
|  | Not putting a stop to discussions which veered off topic meant that it was hard to deal with items and to take decisions. | Give trust and mandate to the staff, instead of wanting to discuss everything |
| **Ways of Working** |
| Better ways of working - though we need practise! | More time needed for discussions – too little time was given for issues which are not important, and not enough for important issues. | Go deeper during the site visits, meeting beneficiaries |
| Clear recommendations for decisions are useful |  | Discussions need to stick to the point – mixing up different topics complicates the discussions. However, some feel more time could be left for ‘emotional discussions’  |
| The meeting was inclusive – everyone gets a voice, and Ex Co members are thus starting to contribute more. This led to a better working climate, and thus more goodwill in the Ex Co. |  | More work in smaller groups, with more thinking about how to constitute small groups (geographical balance, not necessarily just numbering off or discussing with your neighbour) |
| Working in smaller groups, buzz groups, subgroups. |  | The majority decision is outdated, we should try to reach consensus  |
| Good mix - some content, some decisions |  | We need clear decision-making procedures which allow us to accept decisions and to stop revisiting recent decisions. We should flag up more clearly where decisions are required, hear voices before voting. |
|  |  | Allow spare time / an open session to raise any problems, and big issues emerging from the meeting. |
| **Logistics** |
| Site visits | Too many documents, too late.  | All documents should be sent at least one week in advance, with clearer numbering. Only one email should be sent with all the attachments. |
| Having it in a community centre was ‘grounding’ | Hard to access members room - alternative solutions like google drive exist. | Think about how to constitute small groups (geographical balance, not necessarily just numbering off or discussing with your neighbour) |
|  | Screen was too small | People should read the documents, come better prepared |
|  |  | The agenda should be clearer for topics to vote, there should be more back-ground information on these important topics, with time for discussion. |
| **Themes** |
| The discussion on the PEP quality. | People should read documents, come better prepared. |  |
| The Spanish report on the Future of Europe. |  |  |
| **Miscellaneous** |
|  | There should be support for development in return for the voluntary work done. |  |

**Director’s Commitments for next Ex Co**

1. Continue to organise work in small groups
2. Clearly flag up all decisions and attempt to clarify the issues as well as possible
3. Work with the Bureau to ensure share the moderation
4. Draft the Ex Co decision making procedures
5. Provide an ‘open session’ for issues which have emerged during the meeting
6. Send documents a week in advance of the meeting

**Director’s request of Ex Co members**

1. Ensure you can access Members’ Room
2. Take the time to read the background documents
3. Be clear on where decisions are needed and be prepared to vote, if necessary!
4. Accept the decisions of the group, recognising that it a group of over 30 people, consensus is not easy to find, given the diversity within civil society