

6 December 2017

Mr Tusk
President of the European Council
Rue de la Loi 175
1048 Bruxelles, Belgique

Dear President Tusk

Re: EAPN recommendations for European Council conclusions: 14 and 15 December

We are writing to you on behalf of the **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)**, the largest platform of anti-poverty organizations in Europe, representing more than 6000 organisations across 31 countries, working with and for people with direct experience of poverty.

Following the adoption of the inter-institutional proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), we understand that the upcoming European Council meeting will adopt conclusions on social issues, as well as on education and culture, building on the discussions held in Gothenburg. We urge you to work with Heads of State to ensure that these conclusions include:

1. **Commitment to create a ‘Council Road Map’** to progressively implement the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) at the national level, and to meaningfully engage civil society organisations and experts with experience of poverty in the implementation. This road map should include the creation of adequately resourced and participative multi-stakeholder platforms at the national and EU level, to drive implementation and annual monitoring.
2. **Recognition of the importance of Social Summits.** We should not have to wait another 20 years for Heads of State to discuss social issues together – Social Summits should be organised at a minimum every three years, and civil society organisations and experts with experience of poverty must be meaningfully involved in these Summits.
3. **Commitment to rebalance economic and social priorities through the European Semester, using the Social Pillar as a ‘compass’¹ to ensure social rights are prioritised.** This will need an agreement that social spending is considered an investment, not a cost, so that Member States receive adequate fiscal space to guarantee social rights.
4. **Strong support for the development of EU legislation to guarantee social rights,** specifically the right to social protection for all, as initiated in the Commissions current consultation for EU action². The next steps should be an ambitious proposal for an EU framework to ensure an adequate minimum income for all.³

¹ [Annual Growth Survey 2018](#) (22.11.2017)

² [EC Consultation on possible EU action addressing the challenges of access to social protection for people in all forms of employment in the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

³ See [EMIN Road Map](#)



EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK

5. Recognition of the need for the next Multiannual Financial Framework to allocate sufficient resources for effective delivery on the Europe 2020 target to reduce poverty by at least 20 million by 2020, the implementation of the EPSR and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The **Social Pillar** sends a strong signal of the EU's determination to deliver a **Social Triple A**, supporting upward economic and social convergence by building a **European Social Standards Union** as the basis for a more **social, inclusive and sustainable** Europe.⁴ However, the EU cannot be complacent. With **poverty levels still at 118 million**, nearly **1 in 4 of the population**, still **700.000** more than when the Council agreed the **Europe 2020 strategy** target to reduce poverty by at least 20 million back in 2010. These unacceptable levels of poverty and inequality are key drivers of the current political climate of insecurity, populism and Euroscepticism. Urgent action to close the gap, based on social rights must be taken. We urge you to take this action on 14-15 December, and hope that you, and Heads of State, will give full consideration to our proposals in your deliberations in the European Council.

Yours sincerely,

Sergio Aires
President, EAPN

Leo Williams
Director, EAPN

⁴ [EC \(13092017\) State of the Union Address, Road Map and Letter of intent.](#)