

## National Poverty Watch Report - summary

### *Serbia*

By the end of 2017, the second year from the entry into force of the new UN Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030, the Government of the Republic of Serbia did not adopt any document that would define national specific priorities and targets, nor did make visible steps towards integrating SDGs into relevant policies or develop monitoring mechanisms. The European Network Against Poverty - Serbia (EAPN Serbia) has prepared this report in an effort to offer a picture of the baseline poverty situation as an important aspect of Serbia's development at the beginning of the period in which this development is guided by the UN Development Agenda by 2030. The report primarily relies on official UN indicators, but findings are complemented by observations, opinions and messages from representatives of EAPN Serbia member organizations.

In this report, poverty in Serbia is shown according to the goals of sustainable development. The relevance of the UN's new development agenda to reducing poverty is already evident from the fact that the first goal of sustainable development (COR) is to "end poverty everywhere and in all forms". The first goal is fully dedicated to reducing poverty, but it also appears in the other goals of sustainable development as a meta of different sub-goals. These goals include: the ending of hunger and the elimination of malnutrition as a result of poverty and hunger; improving access to health care and education services; the fight against violence against women and girls, which presents serious deprivation factors; provided access to drinking water, sanitary and hygienic conditions, as well as energy; improved access to the labor market and better protection at work, which is significant for the overall reduction of poverty, but also for reducing the poverty of employed persons; reducing inequality, facilitating access to transport and providing personal documents that are an important prerequisite for accessing different services.

The basic conclusion of the poverty watch in Serbia is that poverty levels have stagnated in the last few years. General economic conditions are marked by gradual recovery from the economic crisis and Serbia has the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion among all countries in Europe in which these indicators are measured. In addition, the absolute poverty rate is quite high and has been at an above 7% for several years.

In addition to the general problem of poverty, there are also some specific:

- Poverty risk incidence rates among single-parent families and among children are generally higher than the national average.
- The risks of poverty and social exclusion are widespread among Roma population, especially in substandard Roma settlements; in comparison to general population, they

considerably less participate in education, face more obstacles to access social services, their children are more exposed to risks of malnutrition and show lower scores on child development.

- The risk of poverty among the working population is increasing gradually. Particularly high at risk of poverty rate is found among the self-employed.
- There is a real threat from the reproduction of poverty, since children from the poorest families have lower chances to complete elementary school, and to enroll secondary school. This trend is even more drastic among the Roma population, which results in the fact that only 2% of Roma children reach university education

Based on the findings of this report, EAPN Serbia sends the following messages to policy makers and decision makers:

1. Define a coherent policy of combating poverty

- Formulate and adopt the National Strategy for the Poverty reduction
- Link the objectives of this strategy to the appropriate SDGs and targets
- Assign responsibility to governmental body (SIPRU) for coordination of that strategy and coordinate this unit with body responsible for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Serbia

2. Increase the scope and effectiveness of social protection measures and ensure their transparency and regular monitoring

3. Define measures to increase coverage and reduce dropouts in primary and secondary education, enable their funding and independent monitoring of implementation

4. Define measures to promote decent work, provide resources for their implementation

5. Further work on reducing gender differences in education, employment and decision-making; continue to work to reduce gender-based violence and the equal development of boys and girls

6. Include civil society organizations, representatives of vulnerable social groups and people with poverty experience in defining and implementing measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion