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**Planning document for EAPN Strategic Thinking process**

**Background**

The EAPN 2018 – 2021 FPA contains a specific strategic objective which provides the context for the strategic thinking process, notably:

“To develop EAPN into a more dynamic, more effective member-driven organisation, that has increased its recognition as a key civil society network fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.”

As part of this objective we have committed to “Undertake long-term strategic thinking, looking at where we want to be in 25 years, and how we will develop a more coherent, efficient and effective system which is ‘fit for purpose”

**What does this mean?**

That, between January 2018 and June 2019, EAPN will undertake a ‘strategic thinking’ process, which is currently being defined. The first discussion as part of this process was held during the Bureau meeting of January 2018.

**What do we need to think about?**

* What we want and how we want to achieve it - The changes we want to see in Europe in the next 25 years, and the role EAPN wants to play in bringing about this change

**What is the output expected?**

* A ‘strategic direction’ document which will guide future actions of EAPN at the national and regional levels
* Graphic illustration of Strategic Direction document

**What do we hope to gain by doing this?**

* Members have a clear sense of where EAPN wants to be, the changes we want to see, and how we might go about getting there.
* Members are more enthused about, more committed to, and feel more ownership of the network.

**What might this strategic thinking process look like?**

The Bureau and Ex Co will start reflecting on our long-term strategy in early 2018. They will prepare the ground for a Strategic Congress in late 2018, where members will use participatory methodology to define our strategic direction for the next 25 years. Out of this process, sub-groups may be formed to take forward the thinking on different strands of thinking.

An indicative calendar along the following lines could be imagined:

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| **Description** | **Date** | **Body** |
| Initial brainstorm | January 2018 | Bureau |
| Initial process set | February 2018 | Director and Bureau |
| Background documents developed (timeline, history, potential evaluation) | Feb – April 2018 | Director and Bureau |
| Consultant recruited to support the process | March 2018 | Director |
| Strategic Thinking staging post 1 | March 2018 | Ex Co discussion in Vienna |
| Different ‘decentralised’ groups are established to lead reflections on specific areas (Our ‘theory of change’, ‘Mission Vision Values’, EAPN Structures, political change, participation, communication’ etc) | April – May 2018 | Decentralised groups |
| Decentralised groups reflection process, to feed into Staging Post 2 | May – June 2018 | Decentralised groups |
| Staff away day, to feed into Staging Post 2 | May – June 2018 | EAPN Staff Team |
| Strategic Thinking staging post 2 | June 2018 | Ex Co discussion in Brussels |
| Decentralised groups reflection process, to feed into Strategic Congress (Staging Post 3) | June – Sep 2018 | Decentralised groups |
| Staff away (half) day, to feed into the Strategic Congress (Staging Post 3) |  | EAPN Staff Team |
| Strategic Congress (Staging Post 3) | September 2018 | 3 people from each NN, during GA |
| Decentralised groups reflection process, to feed into Staging Post 4 | Sep 2018 – March 2019 | Decentralised groups |
| Staff away (half) day, to feed into Staging Post 4 | Sep 2018 – March 2019 | EAPN Staff Team |
| Strategic Thinking staging post 4 | March 2019 | Ex Co discussion |
| Decentralised groups reflection process, to feed into Staging Post 5 | March 2019 – June 2019 | Decentralised groups |
| Strategic Thinking staging post 5 | June 2019 | Ex Co discussion |
| Strategic Thinking document and graphic illustration | June 2019 | Strategic Facilitator and Director |

Note 1 – the Bureau will work closely with the Director to ensure this process remains on track. Ideally, one member from the Bureau will accompany each of the ‘decentralised groups’ in their reflections to ensure consistency.

Note 2 – we have just recruited a ‘Strategic Thinking Facilitator’ to help us with this process in 2018 – 2019 (Caroline Gardner from [Quality Matters](http://qualitymatters.ie/)). Caroline will help us refine this process and will guide us through the discussions over the next 15 months.