

EAPN's Key Messages

Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth 2018

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The Social Pillar must lead to better living standards and participation!

The 2018 **Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth** will focus on the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, based on joint responsibility. The **European Pillar of Social Rights** is the most important EU social initiative of the Juncker Presidency, and the main instrument proposed to achieve a “*Social Triple A*” and more Social Europe. However, the context is worrying. Although poverty has slightly declined there are still **118.7 million people (2016)** at risk of poverty and social exclusion and no progress made towards the Europe 2020 poverty target. In-work poverty is increasing at an alarming rate to 9.6%. Migrants continue to flee war, violence, poverty and hardship but fail to meet a humanitarian response to the provision of basic rights.

If the Social Pillar is to be credible, it cannot remain a paper exercise, but progress towards social rights that lead to tangible improvements for people's lives, reducing poverty, exclusion and growing inequality as well as promoting participation and empowerment of the people most affected.

Whilst EAPN welcomes the **pragmatic focus on implementation**, success will depend on greater political ambition at EU and national level: ensuring that economic as well as social policies prioritize social rights, with new concrete proposals, backed by adequate funding. Participation of people with direct experience of poverty is a pre-requisite to getting effective policies and results for poverty reduction.

EAPN's 16th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty ‘*Let's tackle in-work poverty*’ underlined the importance **of concrete actions to ensure progress in living and working standards.**

FOUR KEY MESSAGES

- **Political ambition to put social rights first, including in economic policies!**
- **Concrete proposals to raise living/working standards!**
- **Increased EU funding for poverty!**
- **Priority to participation for effective solutions!**

Political ambition to put social rights first, including in economic policies!

The EU must show how all **20 principles** will be implemented in Member States, **ensuring economic policies contribute to social rights** and the **Europe 2020 poverty reduction target**.¹

- *The Commission, Council and EP should agree an Action Plan to progressively implement **all principles**, beyond the social scoreboard **and towards achieving the poverty target**, monitored through the European Semester at all stages, prior to the December Council.*²
- *The Commission should require clear **social / anti-poverty and distributional impact assessment** on current and future macroeconomic policies through the European Semester, stopping austerity and **increasing social investment** in rights and standards.*³

Concrete action to raise living standards! Adequate income and Services

EU action must urgently tackle declining impact of social transfers on poverty and increase funding and effectiveness of social protection funding. As the 16th PEP meeting highlighted, labour markets “must be reorganised to promote growth based on quality jobs, adequate minimum wages and dignity!” investing in “people-centered services before profit”⁴.

- *The EU must require **adequate financing of social protection**,⁵ raising levels of funding to GDP above the EU average, supported by new fairer forms of financing e.g. EU wide financial transaction tax; more progressive income and wealth tax; meaningful tackling of tax avoidance and evasion.*
- *The EU must ensure **adequate minimum income**⁶/social protection through the life cycle; **adequate wages**, and **quality public services**, and progress **towards EU frameworks enforcing social rights/standards**.*

Increased EU funding for the fight against poverty!

The new EU budget (MFF) must prioritize the fight against poverty and social exclusion and support the implementation of the Social Pillar and the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring civil society is an equal partner in design, monitoring and delivery of EU funds.⁷

- *The MFF must **ringfence a minimum of 30% of ESF** for the fight against poverty, allocated as a priority to the **active inclusion of those most affected**.*
- *The MFF must support a **large-scale poverty and social inclusion programme**, in which grassroots anti-poverty projects developed by NGOs can access EU funds.*

Priority to participation of people facing poverty and NGOs, for effective solutions!

Participation is a right and a pre-requisite to accessing other social rights. It is key to achieving legitimacy and developing solutions that work, but it needs to be effective. Anti-poverty NGOs are vital to ensure the real on-going engagement of people in poverty in these processes.

- ***The Commission and MS must invest in quality participation:** Develop quality guidelines and monitor progress of structured dialogue with NGOs at EU and national levels in the European Semester.*
- ***The Commission must ensure continued support for the annual European Meetings of People experiencing Poverty** and resource capacity building to ensure meaningful participation of people with direct experience of poverty, at all stages of the policy process.*

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¹ Reduce Poverty by at least 20 mil. according to three indicators: at risk of poverty, severe material deprivation, low work intensity (AROPE)

² EAPN position paper on the Social Pillar: [Make Social Rights the beating heart of Europe](#), 2017

³ EAPN response to the AGS 2018: [Getting results on poverty and the Social Pillar](#), 2017

⁴ [16th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty Key Messages](#), 9-10 November 2017

⁵ EAPN position paper on financing of social protection, to be published later in 2018

⁶ [EMIN Updated Road Map](#), 2017

⁷ EAPN Position on MFF, to be published in May 2018