



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

Terms of Reference – Executive Committee

Background

EAPN Mission

- To promote and enhance the effectiveness of actions to eradicate poverty and prevent social exclusion
- To raise awareness around poverty and social exclusion
- To empower the people living in poverty and social exclusion
- To lobby for and with people and groups facing poverty and social exclusion.

EAPN vision

It is unacceptable that almost 120 million people are living in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion of in the European Union. We are committed to the eradication of poverty and aim to put the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the top of the political agenda of the EU.

Our vision is a Social Europe free of poverty and social exclusion with access to economic, social and cultural rights for all.

To achieve this, we seek:

- a fair distribution of wealth,
- accessible quality employment,
- high levels of social protection,
- the combatting of discrimination,
- the meaningful participation - through the organisations in which they participate - of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

EAPN Values

We believe that poverty and social exclusion:

- are a denial of fundamental human rights and thus a failure to respect and protect human dignity;
- arise from complex and multidimensional processes that cannot be dealt with in isolation or on the margins.

We believe:

- in the possibility to achieve a better sharing of wealth, opportunities and resources;
- in gender equality;
- in respect for cultural and religious diversity and non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or social origin;
- in the organisation of our work in a democratic and transparent way;

- that people have the right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their views and experiences listened to and acted on;
- in seeking to work in partnership with other actors sharing a common vision including actors within; state authorities, public sector bodies, European Union Institutions and with trade unions and employers and with other NGOs;
- in the independence of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

What is this document?

This ToR is an attempt to describe the current reality of EAPN, to provide clarity to EAPN members, and to enable the Strategic Thinking process to have a clear overview of the structures of EAPN.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is a strategic decision-making body of EAPN, responsible for ensuring the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly, providing strategic direction to EAPN and taking strategic decisions to guide the work of the staff team.

Mandate

The Executive Committee possesses **full management and administrative powers** other than those vested in the General Assembly.

- To manage EAPN's human, technical, material and financial resources
- To develop, promote and manage the work of EAPN
- To execute the General Assembly's decisions
- To take initiatives under the general policy guidelines laid down by the General Assembly
- To elect the Bureau members and represent the network
- To delegate authority to Bureau - as outlined in the ToR of the Bureau - to undertake key functions in between Executive Committee meetings if decisions are required at short notice and then report back to the Executive Committee.
- To prepare, convene and suggest an agenda to the General Assembly
- To represent EAPN in external meetings
- To sign agreements and contracts that are necessary to the normal conduct of its activities
- To monitor the implementation of the EAPN Fund
- To confirm the appointment of the Director
- To propose amendments to the Statutes
- To have oversight of the structure and functioning of EAPN members, and to examine inconsistencies between these and those of EAPN
- To ensure the financial sustainability of EAPN, approving accounts and budgets
- Once a year, to consider a 'Risk Analysis', presented by the Bureau
- To sign off on EAPN public policy positions
- To provide strategic guidance to EAPN Structures

Current Composition

- One member of each National Network
- A number of members proposed by the European Organisations, which should not exceed one-fifth of the number of administrators from the National Networks. This number is currently (2018) set at 6.
- If an Executive Committee member from a National Network stands down, the National

Network shall be asked to appoint a new member

- If an Executive Committee member from a National Network fails to attend three consecutive meetings, the National Network shall be asked to appoint a new member to occupy his/her seat on the Executive Committee.
- If an Executive Committee member from a European organisation fails to attend three consecutive meetings without notifying the secretariat and without valid reason, the group of European organisations shall be asked to appoint a new member
- The administrators shall be appointed by the General Assembly for a renewable three-year term of office.
- EAPN strives for gender equality in the Ex Co, aiming for at least 40% of Ex Co members to be female.

Ways of working

- There should be at least 3 face to face meetings a year, finance permitting
- Meetings may take place by webinar, where possible and appropriate
- The quorum is two thirds of the members present in person or by proxy, provided that at least two-thirds of the members from national networks are present in person or by proxy
- Decisions are taken by a simple majority of members present in person or by proxy. If there is an equal number of votes, the president shall have a casting vote
- Decisions are clearly prepared by the Director and the Bureau, to ensure that members are clear on the issues
- French and Spanish interpretation is provided, where finances permit
- The President (or other members of the Bureau) should preside over the meeting. Different members of the Executive Committee may preside over specific discussions
- Staff members can be present in relevant parts of the meeting. All relevant parts of the meetings are, in principle, open to staff members who are directly involved in the area of work being discussed. This principle depends on the availability of finance, the costs involved, and prior discussions between the staff member and Director based on the agenda
- A member of staff could thus be present at all times. Where this is not possible, the Director will provide feedback to the staff team, as per the ToR of the regular staff meeting
- A Trade Union representative(s) must be present at all discussions concerning working conditions / staffing

Elections

- National Networks select their members of the Ex Co. If the member is not approved by majority vote of the General Assembly, the National Network shall be asked to make another proposal.
- Candidates put forward by the group of European organisation members are elected separately. If any candidate fails to win a majority of votes in the General Assembly, the group of European organisation members present shall be asked to put forward new proposals for the candidate(s) not accepted.

Criteria

- Must agree with the overarching goals of EAPN
- Must be mandated by an EAPN NN or EO
- Must have experience and been involved in EAPN issues at local, national or European levels
- Must be willing to give the time required for the functioning of the Executive Committee (see below)

- Must demonstrate knowledge of European issues, and experience in participation in national and international arenas, ideally at EU level.
- Must have strong leadership abilities
- Must have capacity and ability to develop national networks, fostering ownership and participation
- Must have the ability to engage with other Executive Committee members in democratic decision making
- Must be able to accept majority positions and respect minority opinions
- Must be able to follow-up and deliver on decisions and agreed points.

Expectations of Ex Co members

- To fully participate in the work of the Ex Co
- To meaningfully prepare for Ex Co meetings, including, where relevant, discussing specific recommendations within your network
- To participate in various sub-teams / committees
- To be guided by their experience as activists in the fight against poverty and by their particular constituency (national network or European organisation)
- To act as the principal liaison point between the national network / European organisation and the EAPN Executive Committee and Secretariat
- To ensure adequate feedback from the Executive Committee and Secretariat to the national network / European organisation, and vice versa
- To share responsibility for the smooth operation and decisions of the Executive Committee
- To provide guidance on the future strategic direction of EAPN
- All members of the Executive Committee should be able and willing to speak on behalf of EAPN with their constituencies, or at local, national, or European levels.

Responsibility of Ex Co members

- Under Belgian law, administrators are not responsible for the debts of the organisation for which they are an administrator – unless there are serious cases of mismanagement from the Ex Co. If the Ex Co puts in place actions which are deemed illegal under Belgian law, administrators can be held accountable for this
- Administrators are protected by ‘civil responsibility’ insurance, which covers costs for any judicial proceedings

Time commitment

- Members should anticipate spending a total of **3 nights per Ex Co meeting, (total 9 days / nights of travel per year)**
- Members should anticipate spending half a day preparing for each Ex Co meeting (reading background papers, discussions with colleagues) **(total 1.5 days per year)**
- Members should anticipate spending half a day on follow ups in-between Ex Co meetings **(total 1.5 days per year)**