



THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

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EAPN CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Never before has the future of Europe been so in question. The Euro crisis, austerity policies, BREXIT and the refugee/immigration crisis, among other factors, have led to the EU's work model, its viability and its future being questioned by Eurosceptic or Europhobic parties. Nearly half of citizens do not trust the European institutions, and people also show low levels of confidence in their own country's institutions.

A Social Europe reality - based on the generalization of welfare to all EU inhabitants, with minimum social standards for all - is put in doubt by the persistence of poverty and exclusion of almost a quarter of the population.

The Europe 2020 Strategy not only has not reached its goal in terms of eradicating poverty, but has been replaced before its deadline: can the new European Pillar of Social Rights be a way to recover Social Europe? Despite some verbal comments from the European Commission, the reference document does not include any role for civil society, meaning a step backwards in the governance of these issues. On the other hand, the lack of goals and mechanisms for the implementation of the Pillar generate uncertainty over how far national, regional and local governments will adhere to it.

Social Europe does not seem to have a prominent place within the "five scenarios for Europe" proposed by President Juncker. For this reason, social and environmental NGOs agreed on a "sixth" scenario, based on sustainable and inclusive development. Relying on the overall sentiment of solidarity and optimism about the European future, and especially given the conclusions arising from the EAPN Meetings of People experiencing Poverty¹, EAPN must get involved in the discussion about the future of Europe because there is a lot at stake. Our priorities for the future of Europe are: **inclusive employment; decent and stable jobs for young people; decent pensions; adequate and effective minimum income; economic benefits for children; extensive and quality healthcare; extensive and quality educational investment; effective social services; attention to vulnerable groups; a wide range of social housing; affirmative actions for gender equality; a redistributive tax reform; and greater and better participation of society in European democracy.**

In the next elections of 2019, the composition of a new European Parliament will be decided, without the United Kingdom, and the political future of the EU will be redefined. We have a lot of work ahead, if we want to achieve a more sustainable, more social, and fairer European Union!

¹ <https://www.eapn.eu/voices-of-poverty/>

WHY MUST EAPN GET INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE?

The White Paper on the Future of Europe was presented by President Juncker on 1 March 2017. It marks the beginning of a process for the EU27 to decide on the future of their Union and will end with the European Parliament elections in 2019.

EAPN must be involved in the discussion on the Future of Europe because there is much at stake. The conclusions of the annual People experiencing Poverty (PeP) Meetings highlight the fact that the high levels of poverty and social exclusion have negative and diverse consequence on the lives and future of a quarter of the European population.² They also confirm that, although the economy has recovered, austerity policies and cuts in social spending are maintained in most member states, while in-work poverty has raised, showing that increased employment does not always translate into a way out of poverty.³

The role of the EU is questioned within this debate. The much-needed EU social standards - such as a European Minimum Income, which could grant a better life for all - are rejected by the Council and the Commission. In 2017, the European Parliament proposed to reinforce European labour legislation in order to strengthen working rights and incomes, and to introduce new EU-wide solidarity mechanisms to combat child poverty, the gender gap and social exclusion.⁴ Instead of this legislation, what actually emerged was the European Pillar of Social Rights, which relies on the member states for delivering...

'My dream is for Europe to agree on the same system of assessing pension and for people who have to rely on pensions to be able to live a dignified life...' (PeP Meeting 2017)

Around half of EU citizens maintain a level of detachment or mistrust of the European Union's role in their lives, largely because they do not feel protected in their economic and social rights in a clear and effective way. In the next European elections (May 2019) we will have to

² A quarter of the European population has been at risk of poverty and exclusion for more than a decade. While one of the five goals of the Europe 2020 strategy aspired to reducing by at least 20 million the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion (from 115.9 million in 2008 to 95.9 million in 2020), in 2015 these citizens already accounted for 117.6 million in the EU-28. Moreover, 32.2 million disabled people were at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2010, as well as 26.5 million children, taking the overall percentage to unacceptably high levels (23.7%). The rise in inequality since the economic crisis has especially impacted women, single parent families, the young, non-EU residents, the unemployed, the in-work poor, among others, exacerbating poverty among them and excluding them even more from the labour market.

³ Austerity policies have involved cuts in social spending, and even the countries with more developed Welfare States maintain AROPE rates above 10% of the population. 16th Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, Brussels, 2017, "Let's tackle in-work poverty!", https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EAPN-Short-Report_PeP2017_electronic.pdf

⁴ The report "Combating inequalities as a lever to create jobs and economic growth" was adopted by the European Parliament in 2017. The European Parliament establishes combating inequalities as a political priority of the EU, and proposes a roadmap with norms, tools and resources to achieve this. It establishes the need to balance the European Semester by introducing genuine monitoring of the Union's social dimension and feeding this data and any conclusions into the country-specific recommendations. It focuses on the need to reinforce European labour legislation in order to strengthen working rights and incomes, and to introduce new EU-wide solidarity mechanisms to combat child poverty, the gender gap and social exclusion. Finally, the report emphasizes the need to improve our fiscal coordination and harmonization in the fight against tax fraud, evasion and disloyal unethical fiscal engineering that happen in this field.

deal with resentment-driven political parties, offering anti-EU, as well as xenophobic and racists proposals.

For all these reasons EAPN must get involved in the discussion on the future of Europe. We are a channel for the demands of people living in poverty, and we have a mission to promote the democratic participation of civil society. A lot is at stake, and we need to get even more committed to a Social Europe for All.

WHAT DO EUROPEAN CITIZENS THINK ABOUT THE EU?

The European Opinion Polls (Eurobarometer) show that there is a stark commitment to a Social EU, based on solidarity and the protection of those living in vulnerable conditions. It is also crystal clear that most of the citizens do not trust the EU, which means that they disapprove of the road taken by the Commission and the EU in general. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that most of them stay optimistic about Europe's future.

Key concerns at EU level differ from those at the national level

Eurobarometer 89 on Public Opinion (March 2018) showed the following **main concerns at European level**:⁵

1. **Immigration** remains the leading concern at EU level, with 38% of mentions (-1 percentage point since autumn 2017).
2. At 29%, **terrorism** remains in second position, though it has lost ground since autumn 2017 (-9, and -15 since spring 2017).
3. The **economic situation** lags behind, despite a slight increase since autumn 2017 (18%, +1).
4. The state of Member States' **public finances** (17%, +1).
5. **Unemployment** (14%, +1).

The hierarchy of these top five concerns has remained unchanged since autumn 2017. The EU's influence in the world (11%, +2) shares sixth place with climate change (11%, -1), which has a double-digit score for the second consecutive time. Other issues are mentioned by no more than 10% of respondents: crime (10%, unchanged), rising prices/inflation/cost of living (9%, +2), the environment (8%, unchanged), energy supply (4%, +1), pensions (4%, =), and taxation (4%, +1).

It is striking that - despite the statistics showing steady AROPE and Inequality rates - economic problems are being pushed down to secondary positions among public opinion. However, **the main concerns regarding the national level differ**:

1. Mentioned by a quarter of EU citizens (25%, unchanged since autumn 2017), **unemployment** remains the most important issue at national level.
2. At 23%, after a 3-point increase since autumn 2017, **health and social security** reaches a new high and is now in second place for the first time since spring 2007.
3. **Immigration** is in third position at national level (21%, -1 percentage point).

⁵ [Standard Eurobarometer 89 Spring 2018](#)

4. Rising **prices/inflation/cost of living** (17%, =) and **pensions** (17%, +3) share the fourth place.
5. And here in fifth position, the **economic situation** is cited by 15% of respondents (-1), falling to its lowest level since spring 2007.

The education system is in sixth place (12%, +1), while crime (11%, -1) and housing (11%, +1) are in equal eighth place. Four other items are mentioned by 10% or less of the population: terrorism, after a significant 6-point decrease (10%), the environment, climate and energy issues (10%, =), government debt (9%, =) and taxation (7%, =).

Around half of European citizens do not trust the key European and national institutions

Although trust in national Governments and in the EU is increasing, half the people do not trust the EU, nor their national governments.⁶ In March 2018, overall, **48% of Europeans tend not to trust the European Union**, while 42% tend to trust, and 10% don't know.⁷ While trust in the European Union has increased slightly (+1 percentage point since autumn 2017), **trust in national governments (34%, -2) and in national parliaments (34%, -1) has fallen** for the second consecutive time.

49% tend to not believe that their "voice counts in the EU". Just 45% said they believed their voice counts, and 6% answered that they "don't know". This data shows a clear lack of confidence in the representativeness of the EU from nearly half the population. This is a dangerous situation, which can lead to a centrifugal process such as that of BREXIT, and justifications to question key EU competences, in breach of European policies (i.e. the EU migration policy), as in the case of the Visegrad Countries.⁸

Solidarity and social values are on the rise

With regard to solidarity, in 2017, **79% consider solidarity in the EU to be positive**, with 34% saying it is "very positive" and 45% that it is "fairly positive". Only 18% consider solidarity to be negative, and just 4% see something very negative in solidarity. This result further emphasises the importance of the social dimension of the EU for Europeans that has been identified in previous surveys. For example, in a Special Eurobarometer survey conducted in September-October 2016, "social equality and solidarity" was the most mentioned area that EU society needs to emphasize to face major global challenges. In addition, "social inequalities" was the second most mentioned challenge for the EU (after unemployment). Finally, "comparable living and education standards" were the two factors considered most helpful for the future of Europe. It is very important to note that –since 2009– there is a steady and stark public attitude in supporting "solidarity" as a key EU value.

⁶ [Standard Eurobarometer 89 Spring 2018](#)

⁷ At 42%, trust in the European Union remains at its highest level since autumn 2010.

⁸ Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. In May 2018 they issued a joint communication asking for a new blueprint for Europe, with less competences and surveillance on behalf the EU institutions. "EU institutions should treat all member states equally and act strictly within the remits of their respective... competencies. The right of member states to carry out domestic reforms within their competences should be respected". "Eastern EU states tell Brussels to back off", in REUTERS. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-hungary-visegrad/eastern-eu-states-tell-brussels-to-back-off-idUSKBN1FF1U3>

The future of Europe is optimistic

In 2018, after a third consecutive increase, **58% of respondents say they are optimistic for the future of the European Union** (+1 percentage point since autumn 2017, and +8 since autumn 2016). More than a third are pessimistic (36%, -1 since autumn 2017), and 6% (unchanged) answer that they “don’t know”. **Optimism for the future of the European Union is predominant in 26 Member States** (as in autumn 2017); conversely, pessimism remains the majority view in Greece (53% vs. 42% “optimistic”) and in the United Kingdom (48% vs. 43%).⁹

THE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

The different scenarios proposed by President Juncker have large social consequences. On April 26 2017, the Commission launched a Reflection Paper on the Social Dimension of the EU. The document raises questions on how to sustain our standards of living, create more and better jobs, equip people with the right skills and create more unity within our society, in light of tomorrow's society and world of work. **It does so by setting out three possible options:**

(a) Limiting the social dimension to free movement

Under this option, the Union would keep rules to promote cross-border movements of people in place, such as rules on social security rights of mobile citizens, on posting of workers, on cross-border health care and the recognition of diplomas. However, there would no longer be EU minimum standards on, for instance, health and safety for workers, working and rest time, or maternity and paternity leave. Europe would no longer foster opportunities for Member States to exchange best practices in the fields of education, health, culture and sports, and social and regional reconversion programmes in the Member States that are co-funded by EU money would have to be discontinued or funded nationally.

(b) Those who want to do more in the social field do more

Countries sharing the euro as a single currency could do more together in the social field to preserve the strength and stability of the euro area and to avoid abrupt adjustments in the living standards of its citizens. Other interested countries could participate as well.

(c) The EU27 deepen the social dimension of Europe together

While the centre of gravity for action in the social field should and would remain with national and local authorities, the EU would explore ways to further support Member State action, making full use of all instruments in its toolbox. **Legislation would not only set minimum standards but, in selected areas, could fully harmonise citizens' rights across the EU, with the aim of focusing on social convergence in social outcomes.**¹⁰

⁹ Optimism for the future of the EU is most pronounced in Ireland, which stands out with 84% of respondents saying they are optimistic for the future of the EU; next, around seven in ten respondents are optimistic in Portugal and Luxembourg (both 71%), Malta, Lithuania and Denmark (all 70%), Poland (69%) and the Netherlands (68%). At the other end of the scale, optimism is predominant in France, but opinions are fairly evenly divided (48% vs. 47% “pessimistic”). [Standard Eurobarometer 89, Spring 2018](#)

¹⁰ European Commission, [Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en)

In September 2017, in his State of the European Union speech to the European Parliament, President Juncker presented his revision for Europe's future, a sort of “sixth scenario” based on three core principles: freedom, equality and the rule of law. These three principles make up the foundations on which “a more united, stronger and more democratic Union” should be built. The Pillar of Social Rights was mentioned as an important element for achieving this united EU.

President Juncker concluded his speech by calling for a Special Summit on the future of Europe in Romania on 30 March 2019, the day after the United Kingdom is due to officially leave the EU.¹¹ It is his hope that this summit will allow Europeans to go to the polls in the 2019 European Parliament elections with “a clear understanding of how the European Union will develop over the years to come”.

The European Political Strategy Centre produced a comparison among the visions of President Juncker (in the aforementioned State of the Union Speech), President Macron's Initiative for Europe, and Chancellor Merkel's Plans for European Reform¹²:

| SINGLE MARKET, SOCIAL EUROPE AND TAXATION | | |
|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |
| <p><i>‘Europe must be a Union of equality and a Union of equals.’</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip national authorities with stronger powers to better enforce EU consumer and food quality laws and cut out illegal practices wherever they exist Create a common Labour Authority – a European inspection and enforcement body to ensure that all EU rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective manner Address social dumping by agreeing on the European Pillar of Social Rights – setting the basis for a European Social Standards Union (e.g. same pay for the same work in the same place) – as soon as possible and at the latest at the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017 Qualified majority voting for decisions on the common consolidated corporate tax base, on VAT, on fair taxes for the digital industry and on the financial transaction tax | <p><i>‘The single market is the very soul of Europe... But today, Europe does not protect from social dumping; today we have let the European single market develop against the very philosophy of our united labour market. Europe must build a genuine project of fiscal and social convergence.’</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End double standards on food, to combat fraud and guarantee food security A European inspection and enforcement body to ensure that all EU rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective manner Encourage convergence across the whole EU, setting rules and criteria (as the basis of discussions on the new Multiannual Financial Framework) that gradually bring social and tax models closer together (e.g. minimum wage; convergence of social contributions; solidarity fund) Accelerate the harmonisation of corporate tax base (between France and Germany within the next 4 years) by agreeing, by 2020, on a range of rates that would bind Member States. Rethinking the taxation of digital companies Franco-German initiative to fully integrate markets, by 2024, by applying the same rules to their enterprises, from business law to bankruptcy law | <p><i>‘The social market economy of the 21st century has come under pressure and digitalisation is one of the major challenges.’</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic convergence through strengthening of innovation capacity, with the help of additional structural policies Assist those countries that need to catch up by fostering science, technology and innovation A digital single market with uniform rules on data ownership Reform of the tax system to better reflect the central value of data and its pricing |

The Report finds significant convergence among the three leaders, but they are mostly related to the labour market, innovation and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights:

- President Macron openly supports a number of President Juncker’s proposals, namely stronger action against double quality standards and the establishment of a European Labour Authority.
- President Macron’s call for rules and criteria to encourage social and fiscal convergence is part of the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in November 2017 at the Gothenburg Social Summit.

¹¹ An online consultation on the Future of Europe is open. Available in all languages, this is the link for English <https://ec.europa.eu/consultation/runner/Future-of-Europe?surveylanguage=en>

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/epsc_-_three_visions_one_direction_-_plans_for_the_future_of_europe.pdf

- Chancellor Merkel favours economic convergence through improved innovation performance.

Regarding the issues of Climate, Energy and Sustainable Development, the coincidences are equally unambitious:

- President Macron adds a proposed reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, with stronger emphasis on food safety and greening.
- Chancellor Merkel stresses that sustainability cannot be achieved against large parts of society, emphasising the need for active support measures for those negatively affected by the low-carbon transition.

In summary, the scenario “to do more together” does not lead to a Social, Sustainable Europe, as EAPN believes necessary. The scenario involving a setback to the past contemplates the free movement of citizens as the only social policy. The approach of a Europe split in “different speeds” can bring poverty alleviation to some member states, but it will generate more inequalities than those existing today. Finally, the three leaders’ speeches coincide in the concept of a European Labour authority, and the encouragement of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as the main “social” proposals; regarding the environment, the proposals are equally short-sighted and unambitious.

The European Pillar of Social Rights... Will it deliver a more social and fair Europe?

EAPN welcomes the Social Pillar package as an important demonstration of a will to deliver on President Juncker’s promise of the “Social Triple A”, at a time when Europe faces the consequences of long standing mistakes and a real threat of disintegration. The Pillar is a *framework of rights and principles* developed as a Commission Communication and Recommendation, and adopted by the European Parliament, European Council and European Commission.

However, we are concerned about the concrete impact on the lives of the 1 in 4 Europeans living in poverty. Will it help to guarantee or reinforce their social rights? Will it help to rebalance the EU priorities to ensure economy policies deliver for people, not just for business? These in the end will be the key tests if people are to renew their faith in Social Europe.

Initial key positive elements include a clear rights-based approach aiming at upward convergence on rights as well as improving take up of rights. Some important improvements are seen in the key principles – for example the recognition that **children have a right to protection from poverty**, the new provision of a **right to social protection to apply to all types of workers**; the recognition of the right to adequate **unemployment benefits for reasonable duration**, and very importantly for EAPN, the explicit stating of the **right to a minimum income that ensures a life in dignity**. The legislative proposals on **work-life balance and access to social protection also appear to be a positive step forward**, as do both the *Policy guidance and recommendations* on the proposed principles being mainstreamed

through the European Semester monitoring and the extension of a social scoreboard to monitor progress.¹³

However, the Pillar remains a **framework of principles rather than binding obligations that can guarantee rights**, particularly for the most vulnerable, and initially it is only focused on the Euro area, and this is one of the major concerns. The **lack of focus on poverty and social exclusion (beyond children), or link to Europe 2020 targets** raises high concerns. We would need to see more concrete benchmarks particularly in key areas of social protection and social inclusion, linked to active inclusion, and explore in detail **how the package will be implemented** on the ground with the involvement of Member States and stakeholders. The **lack of concrete legal and non-legal initiatives and proposals for EU frameworks on minimum income, minimum wage and funding levels for social protection** raises worries of how the package will benefit those people who are not working, or only in poor quality jobs. Finally, whilst civil society is identified as an actor to aid implementation, **civil dialogue** is not considered on a par with social dialogue, which is a very difficult to understand – and accept – missed opportunity.¹⁴

THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO FOR EUROPE

The Sixth (Social and Sustainable) Scenario

As we stated before, the European Commission has proposed five scenarios. None of them guarantees the development of a Social and Sustainable Europe. They are insufficient to achieve the reduction of inequality, the eradication of poverty, guaranteed income for all those who need it, the elimination of gender inequality, or the full implementation of environmental sustainability. A sixth scenario, committed to a strong Social and Sustainable Europe, is urgently needed.¹⁵ **We need “more”, not “less” Europe, in order to grant our Economic and Social Rights, as stated in the European Social Charter¹⁶, and to comply with the Sustainable Development Goals, as established in the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷** It is necessary to reconsider giving more competences to the EU in the social area, **because the biggest**

¹³ According to a recent EAPN analysis, the Social Pillar is taken into account in some Country Reports, but not mentioned in the Country-Specific Recommendations

¹⁴ EAPN EU (2017), **Make Social Rights the beating heart of Europe! EAPN Response to the European Pillar of Social Rights**. <http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Response-European-Pillar-Social-Rights-1314.pdf>

¹⁵ European Commission, Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe, April 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en

¹⁶ The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights as a counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights, which refers to civil and political rights. It guarantees a broad range of everyday human rights related to employment, housing, health, education, social protection and welfare. The Charter lays specific emphasis on the protection of vulnerable persons such as elderly people, children, people with disabilities and migrants. It requires that enjoyment of the aforementioned rights be guaranteed without discrimination. No other legal instrument at pan-European level can provide such an extensive and complete protection of social rights as that provided by the Charter, which also serves as a point of reference in European Union law; most of the social rights in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are based on the relevant articles of the Charter. **The Charter is therefore seen as the Social Constitution of Europe and represents an essential component of the continent’s human rights architecture.** <https://www.coe.int/en/web/turin-european-social-charter>

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/2030-agenda-sustainable-development_en

challenges are shared and common. Moreover, we need to get away from individual, member-state-based “solutions”, as they may drive us into dumping procedures, which could further translate into more inequality and less rights for everyone.¹⁸

EAPN has already signed an unofficial **Scenario 6**,¹⁹ drafted by an alliance of civil society organisations - the SDG Watch - which considers the commitments of Agenda 2030, the environmental objectives, social rights and gender equality. **A more inclusive, social and sustainable scenario that would allow us to move forward together**, in which the European Pillar of Social Rights and the SDGs are central elements of the political Agenda.

EAPN must continue supporting this approach, making comprehensive inputs on poverty and social exclusion. We need, on the one hand, to be able to make acts of influence to build a more participatory, more democratic and more social Europe. On the other hand, we need to have a clear instrument to defend our proposal to fight poverty, as part of the EU policy hardcore.

Proposals for a Social Europe²⁰

The Charter of Fundamental Rights must govern in the Member States not only for European legislation, but also for national legislation. The European Social Charter should be fully enforced. And the EU should be delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the principles and Sustainable Development Goals: **Leaving no one behind, living within Europe’s fair share of our planetary boundaries, and putting respect for human rights at the core of EU and national policy-making.**

Poverty and exclusion rates that are scandalously high should be no longer accepted. The distribution of wealth is increasingly unequal and employment is no longer the pathway to social inclusion for several million Europeans, who have a job and, despite this, live in poverty. For these reasons, EAPN makes several proposals for a fairer Europe:

- **Inclusive employment**, including a strong fight against all sorts of discrimination, which may lead to improvements in labour income, and the disappearance of in-work poverty;²¹

¹⁸ At the beginning of the 2017 state of the union address, President Jean-Claude Juncker spoke of a "window of opportunity ... to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe for 2025." Revisiting the debate he started in March with the "Five scenarios for Europe by 2025" and the "[White Paper on the future of Europe](#)", **he set out his preferred "scenario six" for the future of Europe, combining elements of each of the original scenarios.** <https://euobserver.com/opinion/139006>

¹⁹ <https://www.eapn.eu/over-250-non-governmental-organisations-launch-alternative-vision-for-europe/>

²⁰ The *environmental* objectives which EAPN supports are detailed in **Annex 2 of this paper**, "SCENARIO 6: SUSTAINABLE EUROPE FOR ITS CITIZENS"

²¹ EAPN believes that people have the right to a job which: 1. Provides adequate / living wages. This needs to build on a positive hierarchy, which includes adequate minimum income as reference point (at least at the level of the poverty line). Poverty traps must be avoided, and transitions supported. 2. Provides a sustainable contract and adequate employment rights, ensuring protection against bogus self-employment and arbitrary dismissal and adequate severance pay, so as to fight the increased precariousness and segmentation of the labour market. 3. Entitles the worker to appropriate social security protection, such as health insurance, paid holidays, unemployment benefits, pension rights, etc, and provides for the cross-border portability of these rights. 4. Ensures quality working conditions and working environment. This includes the implementation of health and safety provisions, adapted working environments for key groups, reasonable working time and shift

- **Decent, fair and stable work for all and especially for young people**, allowing for a clear vision of the future;
- **Effective public social services and comprehensive and quality social protection**, implemented by public institutions with the support of social NGOs and social economy organisations (recognising their role true social actors, which could lead to their inclusion in a reformed Social Dialogue framework);
- **Decent pensions**, which provide a good standard of living, with universal healthcare and long-term care. This implies the elimination of the current gender gap;
- **An effective and adequate guaranteed income standard** that serves all households currently without resources (implementing the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation, mentioned in the EC document about the Pillar);
- **Economic benefits for children**, in addition to direct support resources for single parents and big families who are in greater difficulty, in order to tackle child poverty (implementing the 2013 Recommendation Investment in Children);
- **Extensive and quality healthcare, both in rural and urban areas**, by increasing public investment in order to extend the health coverage and access to care. Special attention should be provided to people with mental health, chronic diseases and disabilities. Full implementation of long-time care and portable Social Security rights across Europe;
- **Extensive and quality educational investment**, especially in early childhood, at the end of compulsory schooling and throughout life (to comply with the EU 2020 headline targets and to fight the trade-offs of globalization); Second-chance education opportunities should be available as well as income support measures, while segregation and discrimination must be actively combatted;
- **Attention to the most vulnerable groups**, including a vigorous fight against all kinds of discrimination, and recovering (and revamping) the 2005 EU Integration Agenda);²²
- **A broad offer of social housing** to ensure this fundamental right, and to eradicate homelessness (as recommended in the 2013 Social Investment Package);

arrangements - particularly regarding low-skilled jobs. 5. Allows for the reconciliation of private and professional life, including by providing opportunities for flexible working time arrangements. 6. Respects the right to participate in collective bargaining and social dialogue, for workers to have a say in changes of policy and practice that affect them, and to ensure meaningful participation and transparency in governance. 7. Protects the worker against discrimination on all grounds, both in obtaining a job as well as at the workplace, fighting against the ethnic and gender pay gap and other inequalities. 8. Guarantees access to training and personal development, building upon and valorising existing skills, and providing workers with opportunities to further develop their personal and professional competences, as well as soft skills. 9. Allows for progression in work and features opportunities for advancement. 10. Nurtures job satisfaction, as an essential component of people's well-being. EAPN (2018), [The Future of Work. Labour market trends and their implications for risks of poverty and social exclusion](#). Analysis Paper.

²² Building an inclusive approach to migration: The immigration policies applied by EU member states, focus on conditions of entry, residence and employment for non-EU nationals, more than migrants' integration. Migrants' unequal living and working conditions increase their risk of poverty and social exclusion. What is needed is an integrated, holistic and cross-sectoral approach to migration. One way to achieve this is to strengthen the link between social inclusion and anti-poverty strategies and migration policies. As has been already noted, migrants' inclusion very much depends on their access to social security and housing, health, employment and education. Migrants need to be included in the mainstream of policy-making in all these interlinked services. EAPN (2015), **Migrants in Europe's age of austerity. Report of the EAPN Task Force on Migration**, <https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/EAPN-2015-EAPN-migration-report-899.pdf>

- **A set of comprehensive affirmative actions**, in all areas, to eradicate gender inequality (as established in different EU Directives on Equal Rights between men and women and, of course, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty);²³
- **An effective tax reform at European level, with social equity**, that fights against corruption and evasion (reforming the current fiscal convergence in order to make it more progressive and to raise funds for financing the redefined Social Model): fair taxes for all;
- **A newer and more effective civil society participation**, which improves democracy, governance transparency and trust of EU citizens in building a positive and sustainable Europe.

Finally, to achieve the objectives we indicate, it seems that the time has come for the Heads of State and Government - in the light of the difficulties that the Union is facing, and the lack of trust that citizens have in the European Union - to make a leap in quality. This will mean working intensively and quickly to concretize the contents of the "Ventotene Manifesto", establishing a European federation, with a European Parliament elected by universal suffrage, and a democratic government with real powers in some fundamental sectors.²⁴

Only a Political Union can be effective to achieve the objectives of a Social, Sustainable Europe and make sure that the European Pillar of Social Rights and the SDGs are effective on the ground, without excluding any citizen.

²³ Cease gender discrimination of women in the labour market and in the institutions due to their attributed gender role in society. Increase female labour participation and the economic independence of women. Eliminate gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women. Sanction any discrimination process against women. Combat gender-based violence, protect and support victims.

²⁴ **For a Free and United Europe. A Draft Manifesto** (Per un'Europa libera e unita. Progetto d'un manifesto), is a political statement written by Altiero Spinelli and by Ernesto Rossi while they were prisoners on the Italian island of Ventotene during World War II. Completed in June 1941, the Manifesto was circulated within the Italian Resistance, and it soon became the programme of the Movimento Federalista Europeo. The Manifesto called for a federation of Europe and the world. In the text, European Federalism and World Federalism are presented as a way to prevent future wars. Vayssière notes that the manifesto is widely seen as the birth of European federalism. Spinelli (1907–86), a former Communist, became a leader of the federalist movement due to his primary authorship of the Manifesto and his post-war advocacy. The manifesto called for a break with Europe's past to form a new political system through a restructuring of politics and extensive social reform. It was presented not as an ideal, but as the best option for Europe's post-war condition. Source: Wikipedia.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: The status of this document

This paper is issued on behalf of the European Anti-Poverty Network. The original draft was produced by EAPN Spain. This draft was then considered and discussed by the Future of Europe sub-group, sent out for consultation to the Executive Committee and EUISG, and discussed twice by the Executive Committee. Comments and feedback were received from many national networks and three European members. The redrafting was coordinated by EAPN Spain and it was possible to incorporate most of the inputs received. In accordance with the EAPN protocol on forming policy positions, the final version was signed off unanimously by the Executive Committee.

Thanks go to colleagues from EAPN Spain for leading this process.

Diversity of opinion within civil society

Whilst EAPN members have a range of views on certain topics, all members are united in working to bring about a social Europe, free of poverty and social exclusion, with access to economic, social and cultural rights for all. Members are united by our vision and values, which can be found [here](#).

During the process of writing this paper, no major differences of opinion arose.



SCENARIO 6: SUSTAINABLE EUROPE FOR ITS CITIZENS

THE EUROPEAN UNION BECOMES A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

Why and how?

In a scenario where sustainability sits firmly at the heart of the European project, the EU27 will prioritise the interests of citizens, in the EU and beyond. **Europe will have a strong focus on Europe's core social values – democracy and participation, social justice, solidarity and sustainability, respect for the rule of law and human rights, both within Europe and around the globe.**

Citizens seek economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Economic wellbeing in the form of prosperity for all, starting with redistribution of wealth. Social wellbeing in the provision of quality, inclusive and affordable public services, the promotion of cultural diversity and a caring society. Environmental wellbeing residing in a healthy natural environment that sustains all life on Earth and protects our soils, waters and air, provides nutritious, healthy food and where climate change is minimized.

As a result of this focus, the EU27 will ensure a better health and quality of life for its citizens. This will increase public trust in European institutions. It will move away from the current focus where commercial and corporate interests are all too often prioritized over the public interest. Decisions are made in the public interest and transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions will be the norm.

The EU27 will ensure that policies agreed by the Member States are fully implemented and enforced. Scandals like Dieselgate, which caused tens of thousands of premature deaths, will not be repeated.

By 2025, this means:

Delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the principles and Sustainable Development Goals: leaving no one behind, living within Europe's fair share of our planetary boundaries, and putting respect for human rights at the core of EU and national policy-making.

The full implementation of the Paris Agreement by decarbonising our economy, enhancing energy efficiency and accelerating the just and sustainable transition to clean and affordable renewable energy, based on the principles of climate justice, in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

The notion of 'Better Regulation' implies that all EU policies, laws and regulations are focused on ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development and on enforcement of high standards for jobs, health, safety and the environment, delivering tangible benefits to all citizens and the regeneration of environmental capital. Policy coherence as a key objective will result in an end to negative externalities of domestic policies for the Global South and the phasing out of perverse public subsidies, especially for unsustainable food production and fossil fuels.

Companies and their subsidiaries outside the EU and throughout their supply chains are under a legal obligation to assess, mitigate and prevent negative environmental and human rights impacts of their business activities globally.

International trade is recognised as a means to achieve social, environmental and economic objectives, not an end in itself. A positive agenda for trade and investment agreements will be designed primarily to advance wellbeing and the public interest instead of cost reduction for companies. Europe will raise the bar for all other regions and actively discourage a race to the bottom.

Through strengthening representative and participatory democracy and ensuring civic space for people's participation beyond elections, citizens can better engage with the European project and shape a positive European vision for the future.

The EU27 and the Member States will consider education as a public responsibility that offers lifelong learning for all in order to develop active citizenship, critical thinking, social inclusion, cultural diversity and an understanding of sustainable development and human rights. Gender equality and women's and girls' rights will be a priority in all EU policies and practices, both domestically and externally

A just transition to a green and socially fair economy, in which our human and natural resources are cherished, within the planetary boundaries.

A European Social Model provides full protection to all workers, all consumers and all generations of people living in the EU.

Effective and coordinated taxation measures ensure that all companies pay appropriate taxes and contribute to national public budgets for socio-economic wellbeing. The EU27 will effectively fight tax evasion and close down European tax havens.

Pros and cons:

Europe reinvents itself and better communicates the benefits, rights and protections it delivers to citizens. Acceptance of and trust in European institutions will increase as citizens experience the benefits of European cooperation.

Policy silos are dismantled, incoherencies and contradictions are resolved. All policies and programmes are contributing to the sustainable development agenda.

IMPACT ON POLICIES

Capacity to address citizens' concerns and democratisation

- The EU27 will introduce new methods to increase the influence of citizens and civil society on key European policy issues and give them a bigger role in EU decision making, to strengthen transparency, participation and accountability.

Climate and a healthy environment

- Common standards are set that bring citizens clean air and water, renewable and community-based energy, safe and healthy food. Ambitious measures to phase out fossil fuels and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, including from the Global South, are implemented, leading to a fair share (sufficiency) in the use of natural resources.

Social and inclusive policies

- All European citizens and residents enjoy the same level of protection, based on international human rights. Income gaps are narrowed, equality goals are achieved, wellbeing is improved and health disparities decrease within and between countries and across generations.

Trade policies

- Trade policies become more transparent and contribute to the achievement of social and environmental objectives, including global climate agreements, the protection of the health and well-being of citizens, and are consistent with fundamental rights.

Foreign policy, migration and international cooperation

- Europe assumes a leading role in ensuring a human-centred response to global migration, for the benefit and protection of all those involved. It contributes its fair share, both as a donor and as host for refugees, ensuring equal and fair access to services for all.
- The EU continues to be a key donor to implement its commitments to the protection of human rights in its international cooperation. The EU actively supports binding rules on human rights for its businesses that are operating overseas.

Budgets

- The EU Budget lives up to its potential to catalyse sustainability, economic justice and wellbeing, to maintain and restore our natural resources and biodiversity. It includes participatory spending tools as well as strong accountability mechanisms. In other words, there will be a budget for the people.
- More progressive tax policies and a tax shift from labour to environmental use.

ILLUSTRATIVE SNAPSHOTS

- Trade, regional development and food policies incentivise local, national and regional governments to develop sustainable and locally distributed energy and food production systems: local production for local needs. International trade prioritises sustainability principles.
- An EU Enforcement Agency monitors the implementation of EU laws and quickly responds if needed. Amongst other tasks, this body actively monitors emissions from a wide range of products (cars, household appliances, etc.) for conformity with the agreed standards and applies effective sanctions in case of breaches of the regulations.
- EU budget and indicators: a new definition for economic progress in the EU is published regularly which goes beyond reliance on GDP and guides and measures impact of spending on the sustainable wellbeing of all citizens and their environment. All spending lines are fully sustainability- proofed, resulting in more targeted spending, and greater linking of resources with performance of Member States and regions in achieving the EU's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
- Energy, climate and social policies: the EU27 introduces a fund to make 50 million houses in Europe energy neutral, thereby lowering living costs for citizens, stopping energy poverty and drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- New and effective civil society participation improves democracy, governance transparency and trust of EU citizens in building a positive and sustainable Europe.

- Europeans consume healthier food produced by reformed European agricultural systems and they enjoy widely restored European nature and increasing green spaces in the cities.
- Europe's ecosystems are sufficiently protected and restored to deliver socio, economic and health benefits. Nature based solutions are at the centre of Europe's development.
- Free movement: the EU guarantees effective free movement to all people living in Europe.
- EU accessibility legislation will be adopted to ensure the 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe who currently cannot use mainstreamed products and services can participate on an equal basis with others as consumers in the internal market.

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See EAPN publications and activities on www.eapn.eu

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is an independent network of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union, established in 1990.



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

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