



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

Analysis of EAPN 2018 membership survey

September 2018

Introduction and background

In June - August 2018, EAPN conducted a second 'membership survey', as part of our Strategic Thinking process. The idea is to allow all members to feed in their thinking in a very concrete way. In July 2017, the first phase of the Strategic Thinking process is coming to an end, so we are undertaking an initial analysis of the answers received. Networks who did not yet had a chance to respond to the survey will still have time to do so, and the results will be analysed in early September, for discussion in Vienna (27-29 September)

Overview of early responses

30 responses were received, from 25 national networks responded and 5 European organisations. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>National Network</u>	<u>European Organisation</u>
Macedonian Anti-Poverty Network	IFSW
EAPN Germany	Eurodiaconia
EAPN Finland	SMES
EAPN Denmark	PICUM
EAPN Ireland	FEANTSA
EAPN Spain	
EAPN Italy	
EAPN Latvia	
EAPN Cz	
EAPN Slovakia	
EAPN Serbia	
EAPN Bulgaria	
EAPN Lithuania	
EAPN Portugal	
EAPN UK	
EAPN France	
EAPN Romania	
EAPN Poland	
EAPN Sweden	
EAPN Luxembourg	
EAPN Belgium	
EAPN Netherlands	
EAPN Malta	
EAPN Iceland	
EAPN Croatia	

Q5. To what extent do you agree with EAPN’s current vision “A Social Europe free of poverty and social exclusion with access to economic, social and cultural rights for all”

This vision was last discussed in a strategic planning process in the early 2000s – so it is sensible to consider whether it still matches our reality and our ambitions.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	30.77%	61.54%
0	0	2	8	16

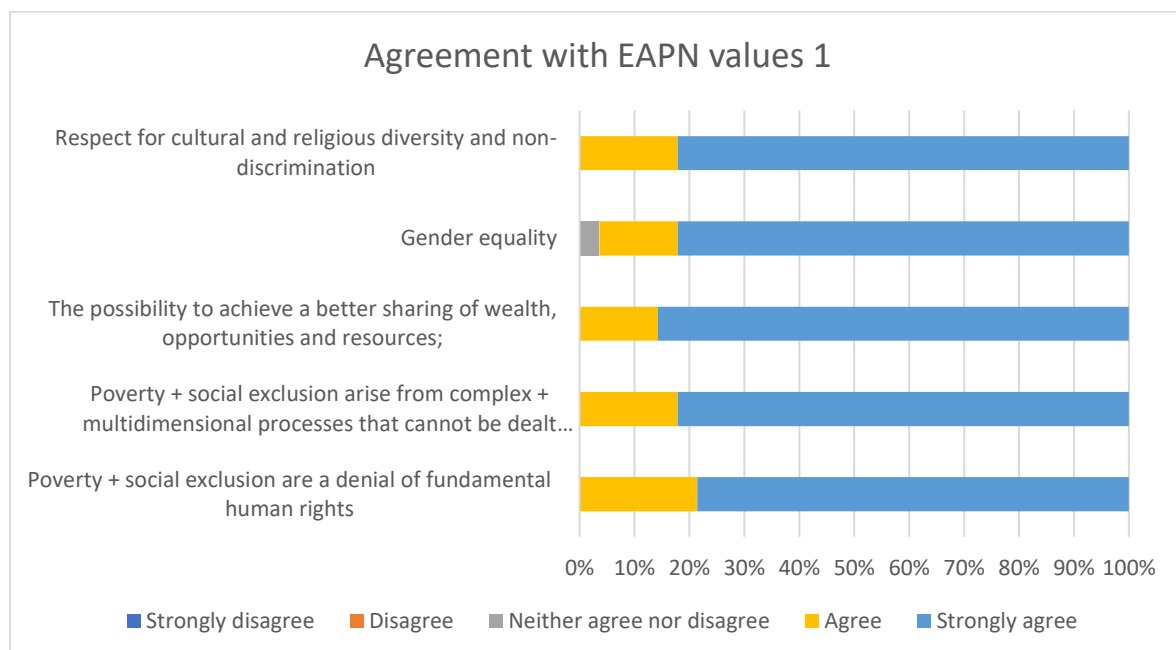
Analysis

We see a high level of satisfaction with our vision, with over 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Clearly the vision is still largely acceptable to EAPN members, though comments indicate some desire to strengthen a little.

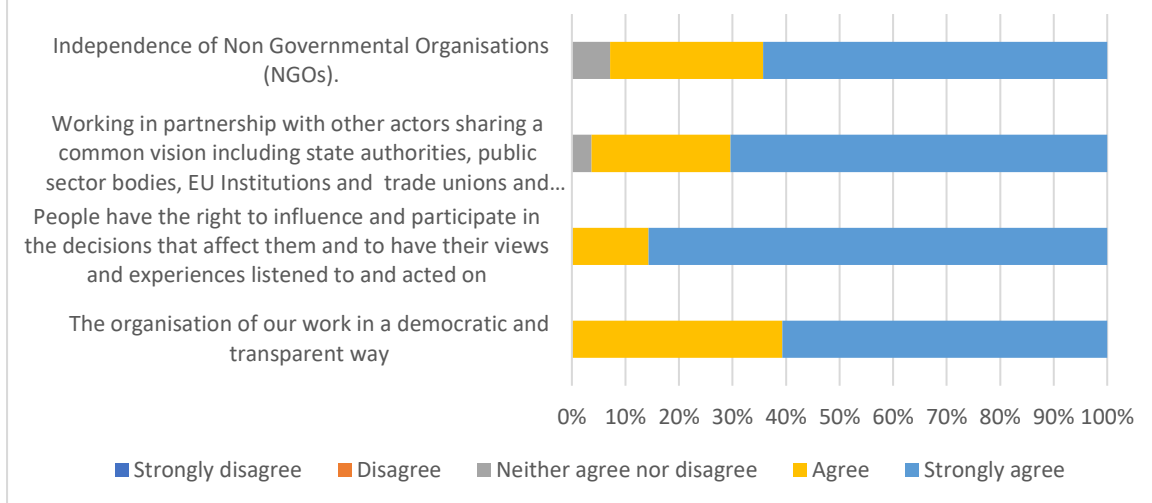
Key ideas from the comments

- We should add a focus on **equality** and **sustainability**, to help connect the social and environmental fields, which could become increasingly intertwined over the next 25 years because of the impacts of climate change.
- Over the next 25 years, we should **widen our vision to the rest of the world**, recognising that global poverty affects all of us?
- Should our vision include something about **raising the voice of experts with experience of poverty?**

Q6 and Q7: To what extent do you agree with the current EAPN values, based on your ambition for EAPN over the next 25 years?



Agreement with EAPN Values 2



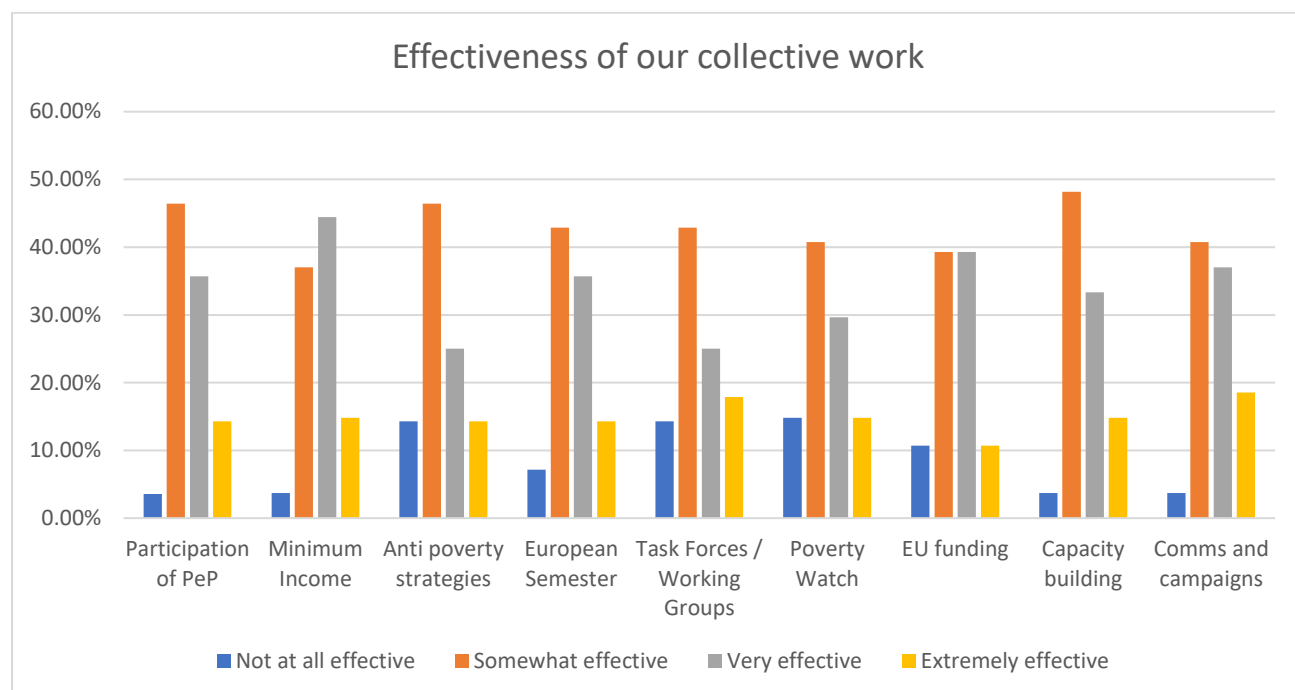
Analysis

We see almost full agreement on all our stated values – with no strong disagreement anywhere – although it is striking that almost 10% of our members neither agree nor disagree about the independence of NGOs. This indicates that members are, in general, in agreement with our values. Comments indicate some strengthening may be needed however.

Key ideas from the comments

- We value high levels of equality, recognising that high inequalities are damaging to society
- Need to value “Sustainable development, equality, global democracy and the reinforcement of the international human rights”
- Interdependence of social, environmental and economic goals
- Strengthen value on quality work, respecting people’s dignity and providing workers and their families with a decent life
- Delivery of Agenda 2030 and SDGs
- Reinforce the role of civil society at some level as social partners
- Solidarity with non-EU citizens arriving on our borders
- Social justice should feature more prominently
- More importance should be given to participation, direct involvement of experts with experience of poverty. This value could and should be strengthened in our work, as it is one of our unique selling points.
- Support to the national level as a basis of our work should be a key value
- Independence of NGOs could be more of a core value, especially with state instrumentalization of funded NGOs.

Q9 and Q10: Please rate these different areas of EAPN’s collective work in terms of effectiveness and impact in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, at the European level



Analysis

Our areas which are seen as most effective, which we should build on are:

- **Minimum Income schemes** (59% very / extremely effective)
- **Comms and campaigns** (56% very / extremely effective)

Several areas have an even split between being viewed as effective and ineffective, notably

- **Work on European Semester** (50% very / extremely effective, 50% not at all / somewhat effective)
- **Work on EU Funding** (50% very / extremely effective, 50% not at all / somewhat effective)
- **Capacity building** (48% very / extremely effective, 52% not at all / somewhat effective)

There are three areas which are seen as less effective (high levels of “somewhat effective”), notably:

- **Work on anti-poverty strategies** (60% not at all / somewhat effective)
- **Working through Task Forces and Working Groups** (57% not at all / somewhat effective)

Overall, members do not seem to feel that the collective work of the network is as effective as it should be – this should be a wakeup call to our whole network, and we should truly reflect on how we can be more effective throughout the Strategic Thinking process.

Key ideas from the comments

- Work on minimum income seen as influential and important – though it hasn't had the desired impact to date. Should we be more ambitious in the long term (basic income?) Is more technical expertise needed here to make more impact?
- We need to work harder at all levels to better involve experts with experience of poverty – networks find it hard to implement this principle, and to reach these experts. Does the European Summit of Experts with Experience of Poverty need a revamp? Is this the identity of EAPN – giving a voice to these experts?
- Being able to demonstrate where PeP involvement has made a difference would improve the overall effectiveness of our work in this area.
- Not clear that our work on anti-poverty strategies has led to results? Our work has been more successful when it has been outside the framework of the European Semester. National networks are clearly having impact, the European impact is less clear.
- We must look at our work on the Semester – we cannot continue with the same methodology year after year. We need to find faster, better ways of working on this, maybe with clusters working on specific issues throughout the Semester. While some results are seen within the Semester, it is not clear how / if this is guiding actions of national governments. ***“It is difficult to work with this at national level, because members and general society are not aware about Semester procedure and it is difficult to explain about these political procedures.”***
- We need better ways of presenting our work – short videos, quick analysis of single issues, working with a few members. We need to modernize our methods.
- Task Forces were too slow, too long term - though they produced high quality work.
- EU funding – this is too complicated and not understandable for members.
- We should bring back training for new members, and increase membership exchange
- Need to reinforce collective comms to increase impact.
- ***“We need to be more effective in the use of (EAPN) outputs. A campaign approach is needed when we finalize such important instruments of lobby. Policy approach is a tool and not an end. That's why it is so important that we have stronger membership to make the outputs visible and have the desired impact”***
- ***“We must recognize that for different reasons our members are not interested or can't afford themselves to follow this issue (EU Funding). However, since it is crucial we must find a way to support them.”***
- ***“It is important to contribute to the national networks to become stronger and more effective. Strong national networks are a pre-requisite for a strong EAPN Europe”***
- ***“Support to members is very important and needs to be constant and ongoing, not just for new members or those in crisis.”***
- ***“It is not enough to have fighting against poverty among priorities of EUROPE 2020. We must work with the wide scale of people, organisations, institutions, churches, etc. to cooperate”***
- ***“(EAPN is) well known within some institutions but totally unknown of the public opinion. We have put too much focus on the instruments (policy area) and not balanced this with a strong support to our members having a good and modern communication strategy”***

Q11. If we are to be effective in achieving our vision of 'A Social Europe free of poverty and social exclusion with access to economic, social and cultural rights for all' what other activities, strategies, or topics should we pursue and why?

Activities

- Develop true clarity on our purpose
- Really go the ground and listen to the needs of experts with experience of poverty
- Publicly track progress on political commitments – notably requesting official responses to the demands of the PeP meeting from the Commission and Parliament, publishing and monitoring the responses and action, and linking to 17 October.
- Invest in statistical anti-poverty analysis

Strategies

- Agree a small number of common priorities
- Exchanges with other regions of the world on the fight against poverty
- Modernize ways of working and outputs for more impact
- Develop strategic relationships with like-minded organisations
- Strengthen networks, enable participation of all members, sharing experiences between members better
- Development of a narrative that includes a paradigm shift together with the members and PeP to influence public debate at EU and national levels

Topics

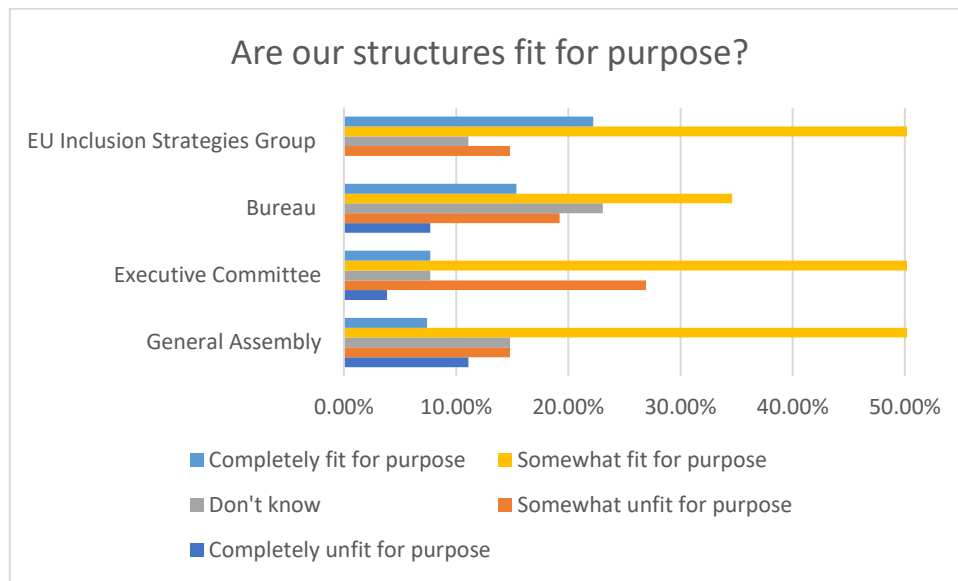
- Economic, social and cultural rights, linking to SDGs
- Well-being, feeling of belonging – key part of inclusion and social cohesion.
- Economic policy, including tax
- Over indebtedness

“We strongly believe that building the capacity of our members (including the participation of people experiencing poverty) should be 50% of our focus as it is crucial instrumentally to be effective in the overall areas. The same goes for the communication and campaigning. In brief we need to be strong and visible to make the lobby and advocacy become effective.”

“We would like EAPN Europe to demand from the European Commission and the European Parliament an official answer to the proposals made by the people experiencing poverty in the framework of the European Annual Meeting of People experiencing poverty (PeP); 2. We would like EAPN Europe to publish this answer and to draft a Press Release on this topic on the occasion of the international day of fight against poverty, which takes place each year on the 17th of October.”

“There is a need for us to reduce the number of issues that we attempt to deal with, to be more focused on particular aspects of poverty (e.g. minimum incomes) and try to make change in these over a number of years. There is a very wide range of areas that a network such as EAPN can cover. If we continue to attempt to cover all these areas, we will not make change in any of them.”

To what extent are the following structures 'fit for the purpose' of your ambitions for EAPN over the next 25 years?



Analysis

Roughly 60% of our members think the General Assembly, Ex Co and Bureau are ‘somewhat or completely fit for purpose’, with sizeable minorities (25%, 30%, 27% respectively) thinking they are ‘completely or somewhat unfit’. Almost 25% ‘don’t know’ how effective the Bureau is. The EUISG is seen as more effective, with almost 75% responding ‘somewhat or completely fit for purpose’

Given that around a quarter of our members don’t feel our statutory bodies are fit for purpose, it would make sense to examine our structures in more detail throughout the Strategic Thinking process – especially if we consider the results of Phase 1 of the Strategic Thinking process. That said, we should not rush into any changes, recognising that 60% feel these structures are at least ‘somewhat’ fit for purpose. Any changes must be thoroughly explored and discussed.

Key ideas from the comments

One big idea

“We should have only one strategic body meeting regularly. This body should count with one representative per National Network and EO’s. This means that we are proposing the fusion of the Ex Co and the EUISG. This body would then organise its tasks around thematic approaches and work as task forces not counting the full participation of all members. The body itself all together would meet once a year to prepare and coordinate the work, according of course with the working program. Then the task forces would rule their work and meetings according to the needs, budget and opportunities.”

General Assembly:

- Needs time for core discussions, for more political exchanges and less formal business
- ***‘The GA should be the planning engine of the overall organization, a space for strategic reflection, exchanges and consensus building’***
- ***‘Inputs from all members, regardless if they are new or old, big or small, coming from big or small countries, coming from the East, West, North or South, work on a voluntary basis***

or have staff, should have the same value - equal voting rights seem to be a sine qua non condition for all members to feel represented by the network.'

- *'Cumbersome, resource intensive/draining (staff time & financially), it exasperates a lot of the negativity in the network.'*

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Ex Co

- *'Is it too big? Could it be enough to have a Board of about 10-15 people running things?'* If we adopt such a change, a set number of seats must be rotated each time a new Ex Co is elected, so that all members assume leadership at some point.
- *'Too big, too much time & resources for too little results.'*
- *'It is necessary, once and for all, to recognise that a structure with so many responsibilities that meets 3 times a year with 35 persons is not able to deliver what is expected, respecting all our principles and values. Modifying the structure does not mean necessarily to reduce the democratic participation of our members; it is exactly the opposite way: if continue to act as we do now, participation is very low, and the lack of consensus can be quite destructive.'*
- The structure of the Exco must reflect its members, with all NNs and some EOs represented.
- Shouldn't take on policy work, should look at alternative political scenarios
- Could the EUISG and Ex Co fuse, as per the 'big idea' above?

We should note the differing opinions here. Most comments reflect the need for a smaller Ex Co, but certainly not all members share this analysis. Clear options will need to be presented and discussed throughout the Strategic Thinking process.

Bureau

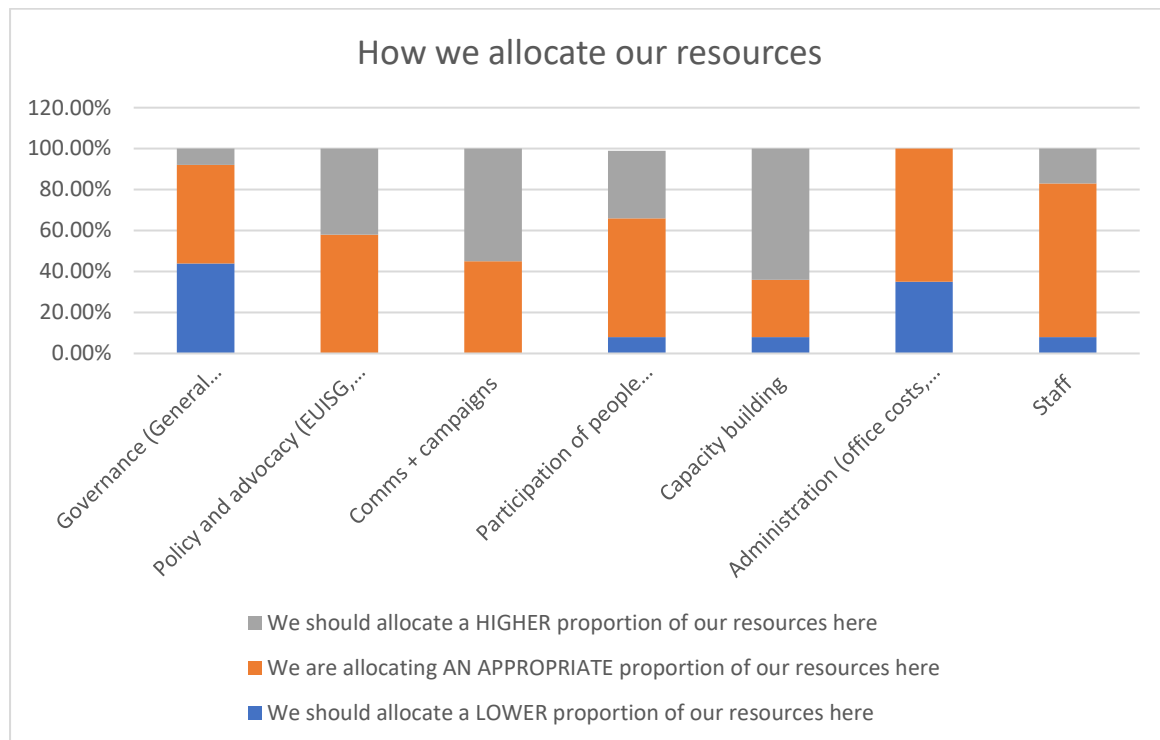
- Ex Co and the bureau could be replaced by a small board
- Feeling of lack of transparency
- Limited tenure for the Bureau and all bodies is necessary
- 'A more representative Bureau is necessary'

Again, we should note the clear internal disagreement here.

EUISG

- Need to innovate, not repeating the same work each year
- Need fewer themes, with less focus on EU technicalities – 2020 strategy etc. Better to be less led by EU processes, but draw on the experience and priorities of members
- It shouldn't be necessary for the EUISG members to participate in all topics worked on
- Could the EUISG and Ex Co fuse, as per the 'big idea' above?

Q13. Where should EAPN focus its resources (human and financial) to meet the ambitions, you have for EAPN over the next 25 years?



Analysis

The main question seems to be whether we should reduce the amount we spend on governance (over 40% suggest this is necessary) and increase the amount we spend on comms / campaigns (55%) and membership development / capacity building. (64%) The results of the initial PESTLE analysis and Theory of Change would support this direction of travel.

Key ideas from the comments

‘The goal should be to devote the largest proportion of our limited resources to those things that are going to help us make the biggest impact. If we are to continue spending almost 25% of our income on PEP, then it needs to make a bigger impact on policy change. If we think NNs are the ways to make change, then we need to invest more. If the policy and advocacy work does not include the staffing resource that supports it, then it seems we are spending a lot on organizing roundtables, conferences, publications, etc. Is the best way to make change? Ultimately, we need to be clearer on how we think we will make change, then put the resource to those things we know will make a difference’

- *“It seems that a lot of money goes to the national networks, but it is not always clear as to how this is used and why this is such a priority. I appreciate the need to support the membership in this way but perhaps the visibility of the work carried out could be clearer and more linked to the policy strategies EAPN wants.”*
- *“EAPN staff resources seem to constantly decrease and it is not realistic for this to continue and have an impact on the policy agenda. Perhaps a full-scale staff review of all posts and structure needed for the future should be carried out.”*

Q14. If we are to be effective in achieving our vision of 'A Social Europe free of poverty and social exclusion with access to economic, social and cultural rights for all', what are the most important changes we need to make to the way we work and the way we structure our network?

Key ideas from the comments

Proposals can largely be grouped under 8 areas, notably:

Area	Number of comments focusing on this area
Membership Development, Exchange, Coordination	16
Reaching a wider audience, outside the EU policy circles	13
Improve governance	8
Increase funding	7
Improve PeP engagement	7
Focus, prioritise	6
Well-being (staff, members, citizens)	5

- More strategic communication, less paper flow. Concrete demands to be better presented to enable use at national level.
- We must be a speaker of the poor and socially excluded and not restrict our work to responses to the EU 2020 strategy, the social pillar etc
- Modernize our working ways by a better use of new technologies and membership's expertise. For example, by creating clusters of networks that are interested in developing specific issues, make better use of simple technology to unify the network
- not be afraid to do radical changes or try new methods. The methods we have been using up till now do not seem to be effective enough, so we need new ones
- Find new resources
- Look at governance structure and make it lean, light and effective
- Improve link between policy and campaigning
- Build EAPN's future leadership – training
- Introduce measures that will ensure a collaborative, caring and supportive culture that empowers staff and active members to maximise their contribution to the goals of the organisation and be valued and respected for doing so.
- Increased focus on participation of experts with experience of poverty