

On proposed reform of EAPN's work

EAPN Sweden has taken note of and discussed the documentation and proposals for decisions regarding EAPN's governance and structure that were sent out for EXCO's upcoming meeting in Pamplona. We consider the ongoing work extremely important. We must always be prepared to rethink our methods, to ensure that we have the working methods that best promote our goals and make the most out of our resources.

The proposals that have been sent out now entail major and far-reaching changes and with great consequences on both national work and work at the European level. With the limited resources of the EAPN as a whole, it is very important that all the changes that are implemented are well-grounded throughout the network, and conceived so that they lead to a real strengthening of the EAPN we want to see in the future and with well-developed **democratic forms of work**. The changes must also be firmly anchored in our fundamental values.

Decisions on these issues are absolutely crucial for EAPN's future. It is important that the decisions are made in a **transparent manner**, and with **comprehensive documentation**, describing not only goals and objectives in general terms, but also that a detailed roadmap is elaborated, including a **proper impact assessment** of what the decisions mean for the different levels and central functions of the EAPN. It is also important that the decision-making process provides scope for sufficient **information, discussion and anchoring** throughout the network. It must therefore not be rushed forward without a proper **democratic process** in which all parts of the EAPN are given the opportunity to respond and participate. Major changes must be allowed to take time.

In our opinion, the documentation of proposals and process sent out so far does not meet these criteria. For example, there are no suggestions or discussions on how to ensure a fair rotation among the EXCO members, and, thus, how all networks are given equal opportunities to hold a place on the board over time. There is also no analysis of the effect of the lack of permanent representation at European level on the possibility for all national networks to have equal information and influence, or for that matter, and importantly, to feel that they are a valued and active part of the organisation. For many of the smaller networks without secretariat and staff, only the European representatives guarantee that there will be exchange of information between Brussels and the national network and that national responsibility for delivering desired reports, analyzes etc. is taken nationally. There is a great risk that the feeling of participation and responsibility decreases without firm links to the European level.

EAPN Sweden additionally finds it surprising that the issue of participation is only discussed as a matter of forms of membership and specific PEP forums, and no discussion is held on which forms of work and what organizational culture is needed to ensure that experiences

and suggestions from people with their own experiences are utilized in our work and that those affected can participate in EAPN on equal terms. And with equal value.

EAPN Sweden therefore wishes that sufficient **time for analysis and discussion** of various proposals for change is facilitated throughout the network and that a thorough **democratic process** is organized.

For example, the following suggestions may be considered: (1) in the event of a reduction of EXCO is limited to a halving of the number of members to allow smooth and fair rotation of seats between the networks; (2) that EUISG is retained as an umbrella for the thematic working groups and that all network has a representative who simultaneously works in one of the theme groups. The work in EUISG is limited to the overall exchange of information and support for anchoring and responsibility for the issues nationally.

EAPN Sweden proposes the following;

- That **decisions on these issues are tabled** at the EXCO meeting in Pamplona.
- That the proposals are made more concrete, including a broader **impact assessment** of what the proposals entail, not least for how the national networks may be affected.
- That these proposals are **sent out for referral throughout the network** with time for discussion and reflection.
- That the **changes take place gradually** in step with the majority's support for proposed changes.

With kind regards, EAPN Sweden
Lena Huss, Chairperson