

2 May 2019

Dear President Juncker and President Tusk,

Re: Commit to a Future of Europe Free of Poverty at the Sibiu Summit

We write to you on behalf of the **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)**, the largest platform of anti-poverty organizations in Europe, representing thousands of anti-poverty organisations and activists across 31 countries, working with and for people with experience of poverty.

On 9 May, you will attend the Informal Summit of Heads of State or Government of the European Union in Sibiu, which we understand will be a key staging post in the discussions around the Future of Europe. EAPN has been engaging in discussions on the Future of Europe over the last two years, notably with our [Position Paper 'The Future of Europe'](#), [our response to the Commission's consultation](#) on the Future of Europe, and our participation in various 'citizens dialogues'.

Given the proximity of the European Parliamentary Elections to the Summit, we call on this Informal Summit to send a strong message to European voters, recognising:

- 1. The limits of our current economic and political systems, which have led to 113 million people EU citizens living at risk of poverty and social exclusion.** European leadership needs to redesign these systems to make Europe poverty free – we need a paradigm shift away from austerity, towards social investment in public services, as part of an integrated anti-poverty strategy ensuring adequate income, access to services and quality jobs. This means stepping up efforts on **tax avoidance** and **tax evasion** and promoting progressive taxation in order to boost public finances for this social investment.
- 2. That we have the tools at our disposal** – European leaders have made ambitious political commitments in the SDGs and the Social Pillar. **Leadership is now needed to ensure a transformative implementation of these commitments**, to ensure meaningful changes to the lives of people experiencing poverty. This needs a commitment to developing a **post Europe 2020 strategy, underpinned by the SDGs and the Social Pillar**, which must form the guiding principles for a sustainable Europe free of poverty and social exclusion, which leaves no-one behind, enables us to live within Europe's fair share of our planetary boundaries, and puts respect for human rights at the core of EU and national policy-making. **We thus call on the Sibiu Summit to support Scenario 1 of the Commission's recent Reflection Paper on the SDGs, ensure that ending poverty in all its forms is a prerequisite for effective social and sustainable development, and commit to putting poverty eradication at the heart of all policies and decision making of the EU institutions.**
- 3. That meaningful participation of civil society and people experiencing poverty** is key to tackling poverty and social exclusion. **We call on the Sibiu Summit to commit to the inclusion of civil society at every step of the way in the future Strategic Agenda, at the same level as social partners.**
- 4. That social protection forms the bedrock of our societies.** We need political leadership to ensure a strong, European wide framework directive guaranteeing adequate minimum income for everyone who needs it in Europe, as part of effective universal social protection systems throughout peoples' lives.

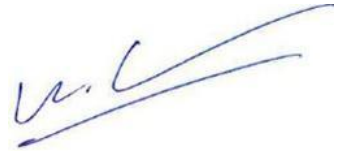
Finally - we take this opportunity to remind you of the catastrophic impact that poverty has on the lives of those 113 million people in Europe experiencing (or at risk of) it, as well as the wider community. Europe will incur greater long-term costs for future generations if social investment, social protection and social services are not accorded the degree of priority they deserve in both the political discussions on the future of Europe, and the financial discussions on the future European budget.

We urge you to take these messages to the Sibiu Summit on 9 May, and we will be watching the outcomes of the Summit with great interest.

Yours sincerely,



Leo Williams
Director
EAPN



Carlos Susias
President
EAPN