



# EAPN: Fighting for a Social Europe Free of Poverty

## Assessment of the European Semester & the European Pillar of Social Rights Belgium

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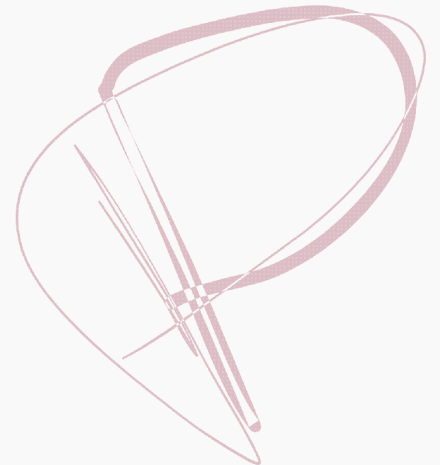


**EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK**



## PRESENTATION'S OVERVIEW

- Testimony of a person experiencing poverty
- Reflections on the Country Report
- Involvement of People experiencing Poverty
- The National Reform Program
- Alternative Country Specific Recommendations

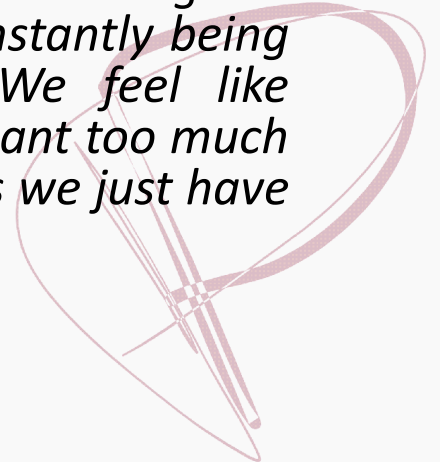




## Testimony of a person experiencing poverty

*It has been too long that it is difficult to live and even to survive. For years, we have been promised things. We have been told that our situation would get better. For years the state has been giving us something on the one hand but at the same time it takes away something else, and finally the situation does not improve, on the contrary.*

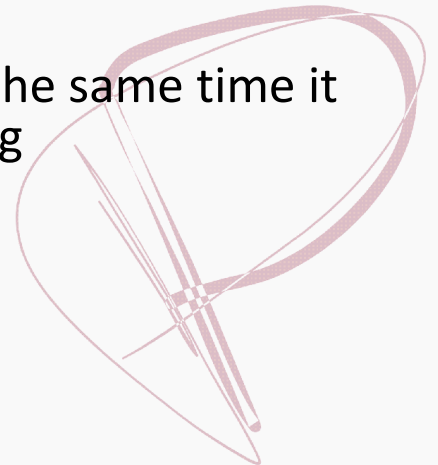
*Access to rights is increasingly hyper-conditioned. We have the impression that they are trying to make us lose rights, and that they make us feel guilty when we still manage to assert our rights. The reality is that we are constantly being judged. We feel in default all the time. We feel like troublemakers. We are led to believe that we want too much and we make too little effort when the reality is we just have too little!*





## What weight was given to poverty in the CR?

- **More attention to social rights and poverty but macroeconomic issues still dominate the discourse**
  - Limited space for poverty
  - Social exclusion is seen as a problem because it slows down economic growth not because it violates fundamental rights
  - Belgium is asked to tackle poverty but at the same time it is being pressured to lower public spending



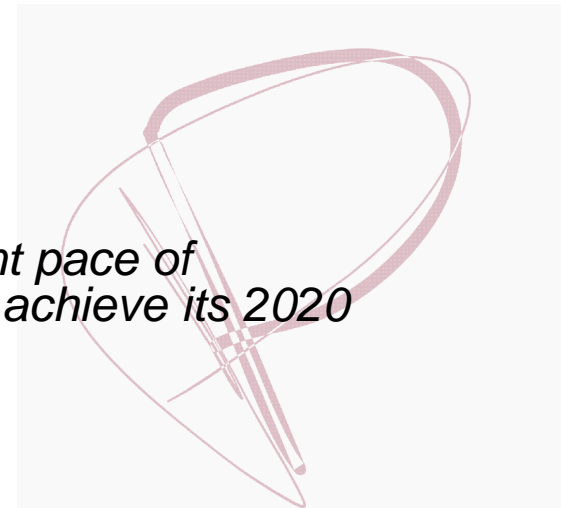


## the Europe 2020 poverty target

- Only mentioned in the annex
- Statistics are presented very positively:
  - *“Though diminishing from one year to the other, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is still very high. The cumulative difference from 2008 stood at (in thousands):*

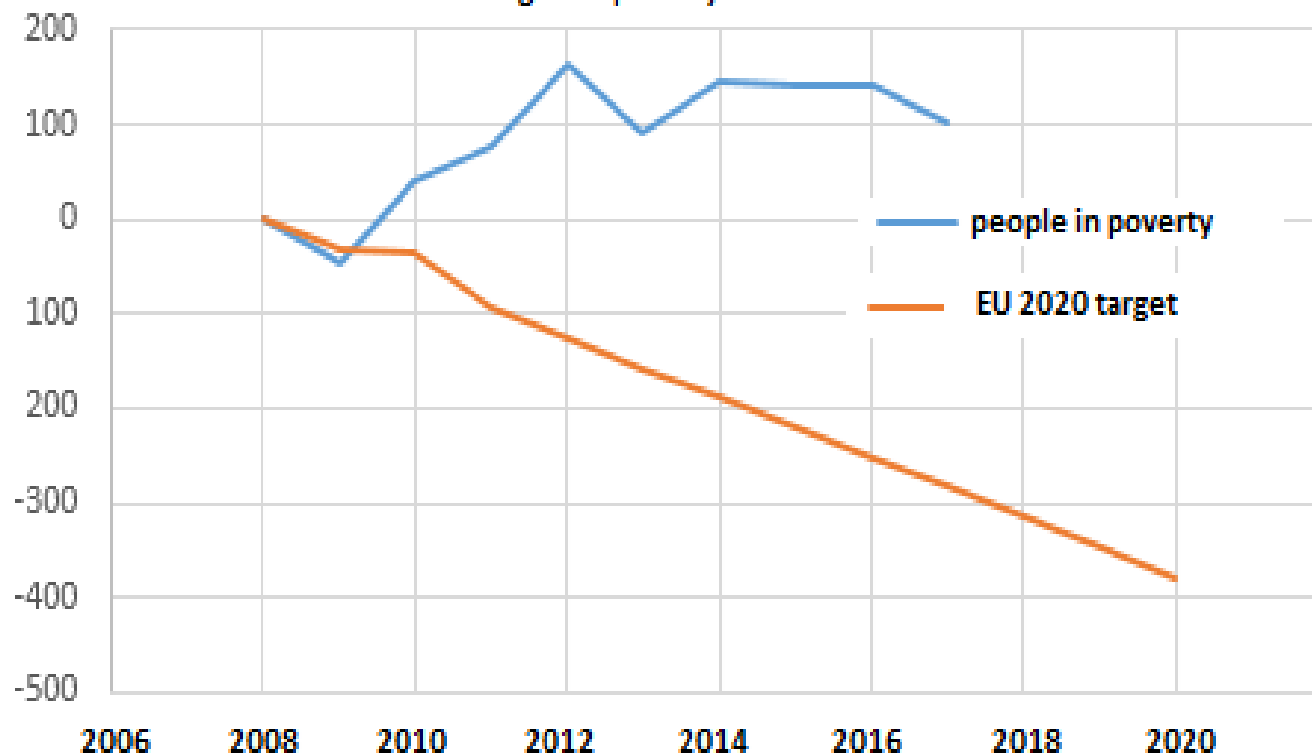
+146 in 2014;  
+143 in 2015;  
+141 in 2016;  
+ 102 in 2017.

*Though on a downwards trend, the current pace of reduction makes it unlikely for Belgium to achieve its 2020 target.”*



# Progress on the Europe 2020 poverty target

Number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (per 1000) compared with the EU 2020 target for poverty and social exclusion



source: Eurostat



# The European Pillar of Social Rights

- **The Pillar should be the driving force behind the social chapter**
- **The report refers to the EPSR on two different places:**
  - The social scoreboard
  - Annex D





# The European Pillar of Social Rights

- **The Social Scoreboard**
  - Belgium is an average performer
  - Not all principles are evaluated

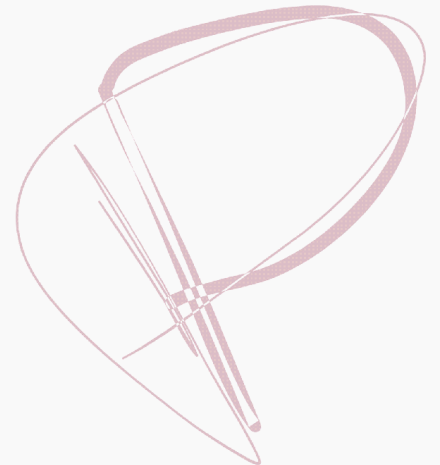






# The European Pillar of Social Rights

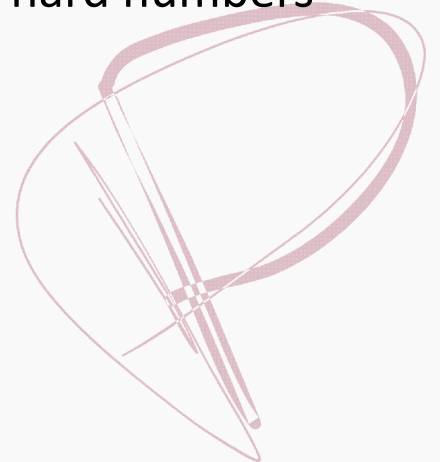
- **Annex D**
  - Strong focus on labour market activation
  - Education
  - Other very important principles are missing





# Involvement of People experiencing Poverty

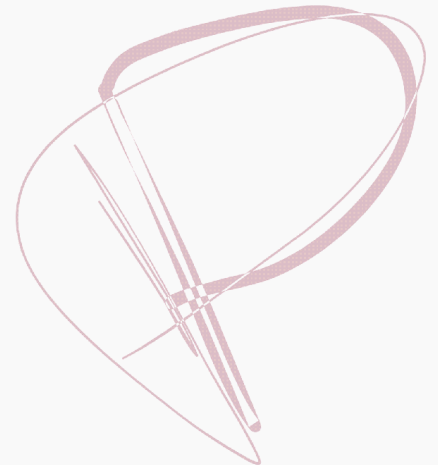
- Poverty Watch
- Meeting with the desk officer
- Our social housing concern was taken on board
- The experiences of people in poverty versus hard numbers





# The National Reform Program

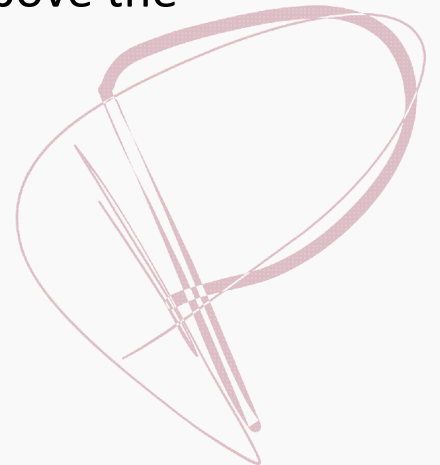
- No vision or global plan to eradicate poverty
- A fragmentary list of measures:
  - Some measures are not ambitious enough
  - Some measures have nothing to do with eradicating poverty
  - Some measures even increase poverty





## Conclusion : alternative CSR

- The participation of people experiencing poverty
- A strong policy that actually reduces the poverty figures.
  - Minimum incomes must be increased above the European poverty Threshold.
  - A new Federal plan to combat poverty.





# Thank you for your attention

For more information, please contact :

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A photograph of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket. His mouth is covered with a piece of silver duct tape. He is holding a yellow and white megaphone to his mouth, as if he is about to speak but is silenced. The background is a plain, light color.

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