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 **Prioritising 5-6 themes for EAPN for the next 5 years**

**1. Background**

**In Phase 1** of the Strategic Thinking process, we recognised that EAPN has had the tendency to focus on too many different thematic areas, and thus spread ourselves too thin – we don’t make enough of a meaningful impact on the issues, because we don’t spend enough time pushing for change. A clear agreement from phase 1 was that we should focus on **no more than 5-6 priority themes over the next 5-year period.** **Phase 2** took this forward with the development of our Theory of Change, which defined an ‘Underpinning activity of EAPN’ (nurturing and support the anti-poverty movement), and 4 priority areas:

**1. Strengthen links with people experiencing poverty** and ensure that they are meaningfully involved in, and leading, grassroots anti-poverty movements and campaigns around poverty, inequality, precarious work, digitalisation, social protection (with a focus on minimum income), living wages, at national and European levels. Amplify their voices wherever and whenever possible.

**2. Building public support and pressure for the eradication of poverty and an end to neoliberalism austerity politics** by developing challenging frames and narratives, and alternative social and economic political options. We will develop a compelling narrative about the reality of poverty in Europe, increasing our capacity to translate facts, figures and policies into meaningful and accessible stories that inspire action and aid understanding. We will amplify the voice of individuals and groups living in poverty so that their authentic experiences are heard, understood and used by the media, policy makers and the public.

**3. Advocate and campaign for social protection systems (with a focus on minimum income schemes), and living wages throughout Europe,** directly towards governments but with an increased focus on the public as well. As part of our advocacy we will continue to push for meaningful civil society space in national and national and European political processes with the most potential impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

 The content of these three activities come from our other priority:

**4. Policy expertise**, which has three strands:

o Pushing for the implementation of political commitments like the Social Pillar and the SDGs, via policy work at the national and European level

o **Developing policy expertise on an agreed, limited number of themes** likely to include: social and economic rights, living wages, the impacts of precarious work and digitalisation, equal access to high quality social services, the impact of technological and environmental changes on poverty, a ‘beyond’ SDGs/ Europe specific antipoverty agenda.

o Working in alliance with others on tax and redistribution, recognising this is not our primary area of expertise

**Phase 3** is working to clearly define and decide the 5-6 priority themes on which we should focus our policy work. As such, the EUISG considered the options in March, and made recommendations to the Ex Co, who discussed the possibilities in April (notes [here](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EAPN-E3-EAPN-draft-ExCo-minutes-0419-3635.docx), p10-12). The final stage of this process is to go back to the wider membership of EAPN with the final options, and for the Ex Co to use this information to take a final decision in June.

The themes which seemed to receive the most support from the Ex Co and EUISG discussions and outlined below, organised under **2 major priority areas, which could support an overarching priority of EAPN – a multidimensional approach to poverty, social exclusion and inequality.**

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| **Potential Overarching priority - a multidimensional approach to poverty, social exclusion and inequality**Our explainer on poverty and inequality came out of such work, and this has become the basis of our position on poverty, which is mainstreamed across the network. We’ve focused on poverty definitions and indicators through the European Semester, and have worked on the impact of poverty on specific groups, notably gender and migrants Roma, children, the elderly, homeless. EAPN member, ATD 4th World, has been doing detailed participatory research on indicators reflecting multidimensionality of poverty. The work in 2019 and 2020 around reworking our frames and narratives around poverty should build on all of this, and could be the space for us to build work around the critique of the financial system, wealth, tax, austerity and such issues. This could be an interesting approach, as EAPN could bring together the direct experience of people in poverty with policy expertise to get changes in the narrative, but also new indicators, more effective policy measures and approaches. It’s also a positive area to involve non-EU countries and EO members.  |
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| **Priority Area 1: Access to social and economic rights**EAPN rejects a charity-based approach and promotes a rights-based approach to poverty reduction. This topic is mainstreamed across EAPN, and we are often invited to speak in events about this. Our Task Force on ‘Poverty as a Violation of Human Rights (2016-2017)’ created a handbook for EAPN members ‘[Change, Hope, and Justice](https://www.eapn.eu/change-hope-justice-handbook-on-a-human-rights-based-approach-to-poverty/)’. During the Strategic Thinking process we agreed to develop our expertise and advocacy on the human right of participation. We are members of the global [Economics, Social and Cultural Rights Network](https://www.escr-net.org/). Find an overview of our work on rights [here](https://www.eapn.eu/what-we-do/policy-areas-we-focus-on/poverty-and-fundamental-rights/). |
| **Potential Theme**  | **What has EAPN done on this so far?** | **How has EAPN worked on this?** | **Where the work currently stands?** |
| **1a. Future of Europe and its social policies**1. Participation
2. Social Pillar and SDGs
3. Funding
 | * Strong engagement with Future of Europe discussions. [Position paper](https://www.eapn.eu/the-future-of-europe-eapn-contribution-to-the-discussion-on-the-future-of-europe/), consultation response, advocacy around Sibiu Summit.
* Advocacy on the content of the Social Pillar and engagement in the Gothenburg Summit of 2017, where the Pillar was adopted.
* Ongoing monitoring of the Social Pillar, with specific focus on 5 principles, through the European Semester processes.
* Engagement with Social Platform flagship conferences.
* Linking ongoing work to the SDGs, and specifically focusing thinking on a post-2020 Europe strategy on the SDGs.
* [Taskforce on EU Funding](https://www.eapn.eu/what-we-do/policy-areas-we-focus-on/eu-funds/) (ended in 2016).
* [Paper](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/EAPN-2018-EAPN-MFF-paper.pdf) and advocacy on the MFF
 | * Future of Europe work has been undertaken by the Ex Co, with ongoing advocacy towards this process being undertaken by staff and members (advocacy letters, meetings etc).
* Work on participation is largely organised through processes related to the PeP meeting, and ongoing discussions in Ex Co. Staff will also be developing work on the human right to participation in 2019 and 2020.
* Social Pillar work has been led by the EUISG
* We engage in SDG Watch
* Work around EU Structural Funds has been harder to prioritise without staff resources or a specific task force. We have been focusing more on trying to find more funding opportunities for our members in general.
 | * Quite well placed on the Future of Europe. Well positioned with Policy Conference on post-Europe 2020 and a strong elections campaign which looked to the future of Europe as well. Need to see how we can engage with the Leaders Strategic Agenda.
* Following 5 specific priorities of Social Pillar. Trying to mainstream SDGs. Focus on implementation and turning Social Pillar into legislation.
* Low level work on EU Structural Funds.
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| **1b. Income guarantee*** **Minimum Income / Social Protection**
* **Decent work / wages**
 | **Minimum Income / Social Protection*** Key area – projects, campaigns, papers.
* Campaign to get Minimum Income in the EC Active Inclusion Recommendation 2008
* Campaign on adequate minimum income 2008-9, building to 2010 EU year against poverty which we coordinated with major conference on MI and work with EP’s opinion.
* Pushed for an EU framework directive for minimum income, backed by a [legal opinion](https://eminnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/EAPN-2010-Minimum-Income-Directive-legal-assessment-107.pdf)
* EMIN and EMIN2
* Financing for Social Protection [paper](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/EAPN-2018-EAPN-reflection-paper-on-Financing-for-Social-Protection.pdf)
* Advocacy to ensure minimum income principle in Social Pillar and increased focus in Semester

[**Decent work, decent wages**](https://www.eapn.eu/what-we-do/policy-areas-we-focus-on/employment-poverty-social-exclusion/)* Key actor in the European Employment Strategy and its implementation, currently through the European Semester.
* Campaign & publications on the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation (one of the three mutually reinforcing pillars is Inclusive Labour Markets).
* Core thematic area for work around the European Semester, Europe 2020, the Social Pillar.
* One of the very few NGOs recognised as interlocutor and partner in employment debates at EU level, alongside social partners.
* Part of the Public Employment Services Network (of the European Commission), of the Mutual Learning Programme (of the European Commission), invited to speak in Employment Committee (EMCO) meetings and the Labour Market Observatory (of the EESC)
* Chaired the Employment Working Party of the Social Platform.
* Organised and coordinated the informal Employment Lunch for many years.
* EAPN Living Wage campaign of 2015, see [here](https://www.eapn.eu/eapn-awareness-raising-action-on-decent-living-wages-2/)
* [PeP meeting 2018 on In Work Poverty](https://www.eapn.eu/16th-european-meeting-people-experiencing-poverty-lets-tackle-in-work-poverty-2017pep/)
* [In-Work Poverty: Compendium of Promising Practices](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EAPN-CompendiumEAPN-V4_nobleed-00.pdf) (2019)
* [Inclusive Labour Markets](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Position-Inclusive-Labour-Markets-1006.pdf) (2017)
* [Future of Work paper 2018](https://www.eapn.eu/the-future-of-work-labour-market-trends-and-their-implications-for-risks-of-poverty-and-social-exclusion/)
* [10 Principles on Quality Work](http://www.eapn.eu/?p=435)
 | **Minimum Income / Social Protection*** Advocacy work supported by communication campaigns ([here](http://www.adequateincome.eu/en/about-the-campaign/) and [here](https://you.wemove.eu/campaigns/Guaranteed-Minimum-Income-Scheme))
* [Conferences](https://www.eapn.eu/20132-2/)
* [Working paper on framework directive](https://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/Working-Paper-on-a-Framework-Directive-EN-FINAL.pdf)
* Worked with Parliament and EESC to get opinions supporting Framework Directive
* Funding for EMIN and EMIN2

[**Decent work, decent wages**](https://www.eapn.eu/what-we-do/policy-areas-we-focus-on/employment-poverty-social-exclusion/)* Employment Working Group (97-2012)
* Core topic for the EU ISG (2013-2015)
* Systematic follow up of the employment target of Europe 2020 and of quality work throughout the European Semester – specific response to the Joint Employment Report, dedicated chapters in the yearly analyses of the Country Reports, CSRs, and NRPs (since 2011).
* Focus on quality of work and employment in all our work around the Social Pillar, including responses to public consultations (long-term unemployment, access to social protection for all workers).
* Task Force on Decent Work (2014-2015) led on the campaign.
* Part of wider focus on quality of work and employment

  | **Minimum Income / Social Protection*** Working on a concept note for an EMIN3 project.
* Mainstream minimum income and social protection into our ongoing policy work, and focusing on ensuring EAPN engagement in the potential Minimum Income network of Public Authorities.
* The EUISG continues to input, monitor and lobby member states and the Commission via principle 14 and 11 mainly in the detailed engagement/work on the European Semester, achieving an increase in the Country-specific Recommendations and a continued strong focus, including re adequate financing, better indicators to monitor adequacy, and to advocate for an EU framework directive on minimum income.

[**Decent work, decent wages**](https://www.eapn.eu/what-we-do/policy-areas-we-focus-on/employment-poverty-social-exclusion/)* Systematic follow-up in the European Semester of the area of quality of work and employment continues.
* Systematic follow-up through the Social Pillar work continues – principle 6 on Wages has been chosen as a priority by EUISG.
* Regular invitations to speak in high-level events, concerning decent work and wages
* Living wages work is not so active, apart from [our facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/EAPNLivingWage/).
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| **Priority Area 2: Access to quality services**Core component of our approach to Active Inclusion, and mainstreamed across our work. We’ve focused on housing and health as priority areas (mutual learning and exchange, and a [publication](https://www.eapn.eu/nobody-left-behind-eapn-booklet-on-services/)), but also energy (Right to Energy coalition, ASSIST project) and [water](https://www.eapn.eu/campaigns/) in recent years. The EUISG has focused here, undertaking [advocacy around the Social Pillar](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EAPN-2016-EAPN-Position-European-Pillar-Social-Rights-600.pd) (Principle 20) and the [European Semester](https://www.eapn.eu/tag/european-semester/). We ran a joint campaign (with Social Platform) in 2006-7 on the Service Directive. Our European members have key expertise here.  |
| **Potential Theme**  | **What has EAPN done on this so far?** | **How has EAPN worked on this?** | **Where the work currently stands?** |
| **Education, training, lifelong learning** | * Not a focus before the Europe 2020 strategy – more approached from a labour market and skills perspective.
* Core thematic area for work around the European Semester, Europe 2020, the Social Pillar.
* Previous engagement with the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative New Skills for New Jobs and subsequent spinoffs (ie, the New Skills Agenda).
* Attendance of the yearly European Commission Education Forum, and part of the DG EAC structured stakeholder dialogue group.
* Focus on this work also through Youth Guarantee and NEETs – cooperation with other NGOs, specific input to the European Commission etc (see here).
 | * Systematic follow up of the dual education target of Europe 2020 and of quality work throughout the European Semester –dedicated chapters in the yearly analyses of the Country Reports, CSRs, and NRPs (since 2011).
* Focus on education in our work around the Social Pillar.
* Access to education was topic of 2018 PeP meeting – report [here](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EAPN-Long-Report_PEP_FINAL-3537.pdf)
* Other education deliverables:
* [Youth Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe](http://www.eapn.eu/?p=560) (2013)
* [Response to the Flagship Initiative A European Agenda for New Skills and Jobs](http://www.eapn.eu/?p=384) (2010)
* EAPN [position on Skills and Mobility](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/EAPN-position-on-Skills-and-Mobility.pdf) (2009)
 | * Systematic follow-up in the European Semester continues.
* Systematic follow-up through the Social Pillar work continues – principle 1 on Education, Training, Lifelong learning has been chosen as a priority by members.
* Position paper on Education, Training and Lifelong learning scheduled to be produced by the end of 2019
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| **Health, housing, social services.**  | As detailed above. Work here could be undertaken in collaboration with members and partners. We’d need to be clear about what this would mean in practise – would it mean joint publications like the explainer we did on Child Poverty with Eurochild, would it mean EAPN supporting specific events, would it mean basing advocacy / campaigns around specific services, working with specific members.  |
| **Potential cross-cutting priorities: Environmental and technological challenges, gender, demographic challenges** |
|  | * Our PESTLE analysis and Theory of Change recognised environmental and technological challenges as a potential focus for EAPN, given the impacts that these changes will have on people experiencing poverty, and the political and public space which exists for an organisation like EAPN.
* It was not an area that received high votes from members in the EUISG and EXCO.
* EAPN has worked extensively on the issue of energy poverty/energy in alliance with trade unions/environmental NGOs as well as in the Semester Alliance which could provide the basis for effective joint working and action.
* An informal Gender and Poverty Working Group, led by members, has formed in recent years and created publications, including [here](https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EAPN-2017-EAPN-Briefing-Gender-and-Poverty-final.pdf).
 | * Light engagement in SDG Watch, supporting 6th Scenario
* Engaging in a small number of spaces at the European level, with a Bureau member focusing efforts here.
* EAPN has worked in alliance with environmental organizations and trade unions in the Semester Alliance to achieve a social and sustainable Europe and currently with EPSU/FoE/and other Environmental/Social organizations in the [**Right to Energy coalition**](https://righttoenergy.org/) currently successfully getting new priority to Energy poverty through EU Directives on energy efficiency/ and supporting just transition.
* Reflections on how to mainstream gender across EAPN have started, and we should define what our value of gender equality means in 2020.
 | * Existing partners and alliances could be strengthened, focusing on the Just Transition
* Gender Group could be strengthened
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