



EESC: Public Hearing on Civil Society contribution to the
next European Semester Cycle: 12 Sept 2019

***Priorities for the 2020 European
Semester from a civil society
perspective***

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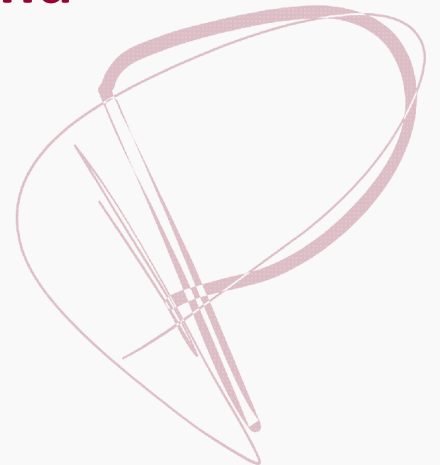


**EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK
RÉSEAU EUROPÉEN DES ASSOCIATIONS
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE**



Outline of the Presentation

- 1. Introduction to EAPN and European Semester**
- 2. EAPN Assessment of 2019 European Semester:
Is it more social?**
- 3. Key Priorities for 2020 and beyond**





What is EAPN - the European Anti Poverty Network?

- ❑ **Largest independent network of NGOs** committed to fight against poverty and social exclusion in Europe.
- ❑ **Started in 1990 – key actor** in poverty programmes and Social Open Method of Coordination, now Europe 2020 and the European Semester
- ❑ **Receives financial support** from the European Commission (EaSI programme)
- ❑ **31 National Networks** and **13 European NGOs** as members (10000+ organisations)
- ❑ **Participation of people** with direct experience of poverty must be part of the solution



EAPN and European Semester



☐ **Engaging in European Semester since 2010**

➤ **At National and EU level**

☐ **National and EO Member engagement**

- **National governments:** input to NRP/response
- **European Semester Officers:** Country Reports/Country-specific Recommendations/bilateral
- **Commission Desk Officers:** input Country Reports/Country-specific Recommendations

☐ **EU Level: Joint Input/Response/Advocacy**

- Input/Assessment **AGS** and Draft JER (Sept-Jan)
- Input/Assessment **Country Reports/Proposals** CSRs (Oct-Apr)
- Input/Assessment **CSRs (June)** and **NRPs (September)**
- **Review of European Semester 2019**



What Progress on the Social Pillar in the Semester?

- ❑ AGS 2019 refers to economic AND social coordination
- ❑ **Benefits of growth unequally distributed: ‘persistent high levels income inequality/slow reduction poverty’**
- ❑ **Need to foster long-term growth and equity with...inclusive and efficient tax-benefit systems – leading to fairer burden sharing**
- ❑ **Better balance between Flex and Security.**
- ❑ **New legal base CSO “key partner to improve ownership, legitimacy/get better socio-economic outcomes”**
- ❑ **Has it delivered??**



EAPN Review of European Semester 2019

Is the Semester more Social?

Survey of 23 EAPN national networks (July 2019)

| | |
|--------|--|
| 95.45% | Semester aimed primarily at macroeconomic/financial coordination |
| 63.64% | Austerity is still main focus, generating more poverty |
| 50% | More focus on Social Investment in Services |
| 69.57% | EPSR somewhat more present |
| 60.87% | Some stronger focus on poverty reduction |
| 68.8% | Employment still seen as main route out of poverty, with increased negative conditionality |
| 63.27% | Social Protection seen as a cost not as an investment |
| 31.82% | Commitment to increasing social rights/more visible |
| 45.6% | EAPN engaged or consulted in the Semester |
| 45.6% | EAPN not engaged or consulted in the Semester |

EAPN 2019 Semester Review

Participation: Key Findings

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 72.3% | Engage in European Semester at national level |
| 31.82% | Consulted by national government on NRP |
| 18.8% | Input taken on board |
| 40.19% | Engagement with national government is improving |
| 72.73% | Engage/Contact with European Semester Officer |
| 55% | Interests reflected in Country Report |
| 66.6% | Interests reflected in CSRs |
| 81.82% | Say engagement in the Semester is worth the effort. |



Is the European Semester more Social?

- ❑ **Stronger rhetoric in key EU documents but lacks mainstreaming** of all EPSR principles, beyond scoreboard
- ❑ **Stability and Growth remains dominant approach:** undermining investment in social rights/ welfare states
- ❑ **Lacks consistency/coherence of approach:** stronger on minimum income/social protection but weaker on affordable housing, health, social services.
- ❑ **Positive social scoreboard focus on poverty/ inequality/ but insufficient impact,** no follow up on target adequacy of social protection or antipoverty strategy.
- ❑ **Unequal CSO engagement despite new legal base/AGS:**

What progress on Poverty?

113 million people at risk of poverty





Economy for who?

- ❑ **Main focus of CSR 1 still reducing deficits/public debt/cost cutting welfare states, flexibilising labour markets rather than social investment in social rights**
- ❑ **Positive CSRs requiring distributional impact assessment** and tax/benefit policies to have impact on poverty/inequality - but not mainstreamed.
- ❑ **Tackling aggressive tax evasion** welcomed, but more needed on progressive taxation/fairer tax.
- ❑ **Services seen mainly as market** – eg housing: some CSRs on social housing, but not right to affordable housing
- ❑ **Annex D: use of EU Funds with positive Policy Objective on EPSR**, but narrow activation approach.



Key Priorities - AGS 2020

- ❑ **Economy for people!** Improve living standards, reducing poverty/ inequality, not just growth.
- ❑ **People and Planet:** Rebalancing economic/ social and environmental objectives – SDGs/Agenda 2030
- ❑ **All social rights must be mainstreamed** beyond scoreboard with equal, separate, section!
- ❑ **Continued focus on Poverty Target is crucial** – but more ambition in line with SDGs/Agenda 2030 6.
- ❑ **All Countries receive a social CSR as 1st priority!**



Key Priorities - AGS 2020

- ❑ **Quality Jobs with living wages/person-centred integrated support with inclusive labour markets**
- ❑ **Employment alone won't reduce poverty!** Rights-based, integrated anti-poverty strategy (A. Inclusion)
- ❑ **Social investment in affordable, essential services + adequate minimum income/social protection**
- ❑ **Finance through more progressive/ effective tax**
- ❑ **Effective partnership on equal terms with NGOs at all stages including people facing poverty**



**Putting people and social rights
at the heart of policy change!**



Thank you for your attention!

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