# **A close up of a sign  Description generated with very high confidence**

Draft Notes of EAPN Executive Committee

V1

14 and 15 June 2019

Brussels

**Participants: (members):** Vera (Austria), Caroline (Belgium), Maria (Bulgaria), Karel (Czech Republic), Eleni (Cyprus), Kärt (Estonia), Jiri (Finland), Richard (France), Jens (Germany), Olga (Greece), Laufey (Iceland), Michelle (Ireland), Vito (Italy), Laila (Latvia), Aiste (Lithuania), Biljana (Macedonia), Noël (Malta), Jo (Netherlands), Honoratte (Norway), Kamila (Poland), Sergio (Portugal), Iris (Romania), Jasmina (Serbia), Anna (Slovakia), Carlos (Spain), Magnus (Sweden), Neil (UK), Luigi (SMES), Ian (IFSW), Freek (FEANTSA)

**Participants (staff**): Leo, Philippe, Sigrid, Magda, Elke

**Session 1 - Oversight**

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| **Item** | **Key points** | **Status** |
| **Approval of notes of last meeting** | N/A | **Approved** unanimously |
| **Approval of Ex Co agenda** | N/A | **Approved**, but spending less time on scenarios to gain time elsewhere |
| **Proposed ‘complaints procedures’** | There may be some confusion if there are complaints against staff members – if complaints are serious enough it may be sensible for Bureau to be involved as well, not just the Director. If the Director acts in accordance with the Bureau member with responsibility for staffing issues, this may be enough. | Ex Co members have until 15 July to make written comments to IanProcedure will come back to Ex Co for adoption in September |
| **Proposed ‘conflict of Interest’ procedure** | Should apply to all governance groups of EAPNStaff may have conflict of interests as well (recruitment processes, for example)May make it difficult for EOs to be part of financial discussionsImportant for members to simply declare the conflicts, in full transparencyThe examples could perhaps be removed from the textWe need to finalise the ‘level’ of family ties which should be declaredImportant to recognise potential conflicts – potential gain to self, to family members, to own organisationsPractically, Ex Co members could simply be asked at the start of each meeting if they have any conflict of interests to declare, and the group then decides the course of actionEx Co members should perhaps sign a code of conduct, which could cover this (and other) procedures | Ex Co members have until 15 July to make written comments to Ian.Procedure will come back to Ex Co for adoption in September |
| **Proposed MoU between EAPN and Dentons** | Some discomfort about entering into such an agreement with a large legal firm like Dentons who defends clients with whom many of us have serious problemsRecognition of the need for legal support, both within EAPN and our members | **Approved**. 19 votes in favour, 10 abstentions, 0 votes against |
| **Finance** | Scandalous that the Commission has taken so long to pay first instalment of 2019 contract2019 Budget will be finalised by September – needs careful planning as we don’t have EMIN funds16 June deadline for national contractsReminder of reimbursement forms – to be sent within 1 month of meetingOffice to check with Commission whether we really need to submit boarding passes for each travel | N/A |
| **Membership application from EAPN Slovenia** | The ‘new’ EAPN Slovenia consists of a mixture of new and old organisations (from when EAPN Slovenia used to exist)Working relationship between these organisations seems positive and healthy | **Approved unanimously** – Ex Co will recommend that the GA accepts the membership application  |
| **Proposed UK amendment to statutes** | This proposal would mean that the UK, and other countries who may decide to leave the UK in the future, would be able to remain full members of EAPN Europe. | **Approved.** 28 votes in favour, 1 abstention, 0 against. |

**Decision**

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| D1. We will sign the MoU with Dentons |
| D2. We recommend the GA accepts EAPN Slovenia as members |
| D3. Ex Co will propose this amendment to the GA |

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Deadline** |
| A1. Send comments on two procedures to Ian Johnston i.johnston@talk21.com  | Ex Co members |  15 July |
| A2. Finalise procedures and bring them to next Ex Co for decision | Ian Johnston |  31 August |
| A3. Finalise signature of MoU with Dentons and organise implementation | Leo |  14 September |
| A4. Share feedback with EAPN Slovenia  | Magda |  End June |
| A5. Share proposed amendments to statutes with EAPN members | Leo |  14 June (done) |
| A6. Feedback on issue of boarding passes | Philippe / Richard |  September Ex Co |

**Session 2 – Insight on European Politics**

**Ex Co members split into groups to discuss two key questions in relation to European politics**

**1. What lessons can we draw for our organisations and for EAPN as a whole?**

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| **Lesson 1.** We need to play a more active role in big political issues (like Brexit), finding the right advocacy hooks for our key issues |
| **Lesson 2.** Poverty and social issues are not high on the political agenda, and many MEP candidates knew very little about these issues |
| **Lesson 3.** There is a lot of political space to link climate change and social issues, following the ‘Green Wave’ and the focus on climate change and sustainable development |
| **Lesson 4.** We need relationships across the political spectrum, not just focusing on our natural allies. |
| **Lesson 5.** European still feel like fighting poverty is an issue for other continents |
| **Lesson 6.** Candidates are asked to sign many pledges, and in many cases don’t really pay attention to what they sign. Strategically it may be better in the future to join forces across civil society. |
| **Lesson 7.** EP Elections Campaigns are focused more on national debates and politics |
| **Lesson 8.** We should not limit ourselves and focus only on the EP, the EC is equally important |

**Key points from countries**

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| **Finland** | Social issues were closely connected to climate change in the campaign. New left-wing gov will focus on ending homelessness and retrialling basic income. Trying to be more active at the European level. 4 candidates who signed pledge were elected. |
| **Portugal** | Candidates were unaware of social issues, Social Pillar etc. Was hard to relate the fact that 113 million people are at risk of poverty to most people’s reality. We still need normal people to understand these issues more if we are to have more of an impact. Sustainable development and climate change seem to have more political priority at this moment. GUE is now very weak.  |
| **Slovakia** | EAPN cooperates well with many MEPs. Social issues are on the agenda of the newly elected MEPs, there’s a new progressive wind. 10 candidates signed, 1 elected |
| **Lithuania** | National elections were much more important than the European ones. 4 candidates who signed pledge were elected. |
| **Estonia** | Estonian Parliament is now quite anti-European, even removing EU flags from Parliament. President is against migration. Uncertain future. 2 candidates who signed pledge were elected, but good cooperation with 6.  |
| **Bulgaria** | Scandals around use of structural funds. Low voter turnout. National more important than European. Some focus on poverty and social issues, no focus on inequality. Scapegoating of Roma people and implicit nationalism. New momentum, Bulgarian MEPs from all parties unite for certain national causes. |
| **Netherlands** | Social Democrats won with a very social program, the success of the far right party was a lot smaller than expected. |
| **Czechia** | 14% of the population are anti-EU |
| **Spain** | Strong national anti-poverty strategy, and plan to combat energy poverty. Social Democrats and Podemos coalition is moving in a good direction |
| **Poland** | Leading party re-elected but accused of buying votes, 2 candidates who signed were elected.  |
| **Romania** | Debates focused on justice and anti-corruption rather than social issues, EP Elections had a big impact but not a very European approach. Little Euroscepticism seen. 47 candidates signed pledge, 2 elected. |
| **France** | Huge turnout. Was a referendum on Macron. MEPs don’t know much about social issues. |
| **UK** | Brexit was the only issue – social issues couldn’t break through. |

**2. Where best to focus our effort, energy and resources given the new political context?**

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| This discussion was inconclusive and should be taken forward within the Bureau. It’s important to analyse the relationship and the power of the different institutions on our priority issues.  |

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Deadline** |
| A7. Consider issuing a statement / op ed based on these political discussions, triangulated with discussions in EUISG and Strategic Thinking session  | Elke to discuss with Carlos |  Early July |

**Session 3** Foresight - EAPN priorities

The Ex Co had a plenary discussion about the proposed EAPN thematic priorities, developed in response to a recommendation of the first phase of the Strategic Thinking process, and then split into breakout groups to discuss the potential priorities areas.

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| **Group 1: Potential overarching priority - a multidimensional approach to poverty, social exclusion and inequality****Group 2: Potential priority area 1 - Access to social and economic rights****Group 3: Potential priority area 2 - Access to quality services** |

**NB. The original proposal (**[**here**](http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EAPN-E10.-Prioritising-themes-3653.docx)**) was based on a vote by the EUISG, previous discussions of the Ex Co, and a paper which had been shared with EAPN members.**

**Key points from plenary**

* We need to have space to be both proactive (working towards our own priorities) and reactive – considering what is on the political agenda (for example, migration, the rule of law)
* EAPN Europe cannot be expected to tackle all the national level priorities – this is the role of the national networks. EAPN Europe must prioritise those issues where there as value add for European level work, and which can mobilise our members. We simply don’t have the resources to work on everything we might like to.

**Key points from group discussions**

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|  | **A multidimensional approach to poverty, social exclusion and inequality** | **Access to social and economic rights** | **Access to quality services** |
| **How do you see EAPN working on this over the next 5 years?** | * Continue to take active role in lobbying for a post-2020 strategy underpinned by the EPSR
* Empower national members to lobby EU Council (General and EPSCO) and Head of State level Summits
* Tax and wealth redistribution should be included here
 | * Push for enough ESF+ funds to be allocated to poverty and social exclusion, monitor use
* Continue with Poverty Watch
* Apply for funding around these areas
* Simplify our language
* Focus should be on income and wages, especially focusing on in-work poverty, recognising this growing trend
 | Mutual learning between countries to identify good and bad practise |
| **What would we be trying to achieve?** | * A post 2020 strategy that recognises the multidimensional aspects of poverty, that focuses (and delivers) on eradicating poverty and accessing rights (link to Area 1)
* Deconstruct myths about poverty
 | * Facilitate access to fundamental and social rights
* Eliminate barriers which exclude people from exercising rights in terms of health, well-being and other social issues
* Increase PeP participation
* Develop projects like Journalism Prize
 | * Reduced costs for key services
* Policy for equal rights for all to access services throughout Europe, not just citizens
* One centralised website with an overview of key services from different countries offered
* National level ‘service centres’ to help people access the services they need
* Common minimum standards of services throughout Europe
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| **What outputs would be needed?** | * An updated poverty explainer
* Updated paper on wealth, tax, redistribution?
* Position paper
* Standard lobby letters which members can use in advance of EU Council meetings and other Summits
 | * Accessible communication
* A new ‘frame / narrative’ which we can use
 | * Short, practical papers on key topics
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| **Other points** | More creative responses to EU data to build our impact – not questioning the statistics but interpreting them differently. Eg. A celebrated 0.1% reduction in poverty in Spain one year means that, at that rate, poverty would be eradicated in 221 years. | This area is perhaps too wide, and needs even more focusInspiration from Eurogender – has tools to monitor if gender balance is being achieved. Does something exist to monitor ESF expenditure? | Need to prioritise within this priority, and have a process to develop a specific approach |

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Deadline** |
| A8. Reflect this prioritisation in future Work Programmes and resource allocation | Director, with staff team | Ongoing |
| A9. Decide how EAPN should take forward these priorities over the coming years, when, and through which structures – could be an Ex Co member taking a lead on certain areas, working with a small group and mapping this out | Bureau, with staff team |  End of year |

**Session 4: Foresight - Scenarios**

Magda and Elke presented the ‘Impact Assessment’ undertaken during the joint Ex Co / EUISG session yesterday (See separate document entitled ‘Impact Assessment Notes’). It seems clear that members did not see much value in any of the scenarios under discussion, and a plenary discussion followed around structures and working methods.

**Key discussion points**

* A majority of members seem to want to reorganise the culture of how we work, so that we do ‘more meaningful’ work within Ex Co
* Some members recognise the problems we have in our internal ways of working, of communicating with each other – this could be an area to focus on
* Members needs have been mapped in the past, which led to the MASS (Membership Assessment and Support System) which most members then rejected. The Membership Development Surveys of 2017 and 2018 have also gone some way to mapping needs, and the Membership Development Group can take this work forward
* Need to delve deeper into Theory of Change, which indicates a shift towards more public facing work – we must reflect on how we would go about doing this at both the national and European level. This needs further discussion before we decide the structures, we need to deliver on this!
* If we are going to focus on changes to how we work, then it is time for concrete suggestions for these changes.
* We need to recognise that EAPN is a huge part of many people’s lives, and we need to build on and celebrate this. A good way to do so would be to **give more responsibility to Ex Co members**, and find areas where they can take leadership.
* Some call for small working groups within the Ex Co, taking forward specific areas of work for the European network, using their specific expertise (funds, thematic etc)
* Ex Co meetings could have time for updates from each member, over the course of the year
* Crucial for EAPN to have a political strategy for influencing the new Institutions – this should be a priority for the Ex Co
* Important to build on the ‘Square of Expectation’ developed in Pamplona to develop a set of principles by which we agree to work together – this could help improve our working methods during and between meetings. (Homework between meetings, keeping on topic, answering questions posed etc)
* We could have space for agenda items to be proposed and led by Ex Co members – ideally in advance of the meeting, so documents can be shared in advance
* We need to diversify our funding urgently, this should be a major priority
* Important for Ex Co to have a balance between management (oversight), content (insight) and strategy (foresight)
* We need to maintain focus in Ex Co meeting, working towards objectives and decisions
* EAPN Germany risks leaving EAPN if structural changes are made to reduce the number of members on the Ex Co.
* Some members emphasise the necessity for any organisation to be reviewing its governance structures on a regular basis, even if we don’t undertake structural changes – these are useful and legitimate discussions
* Some feel that the fact that EAPN has trying to change structures for years reflects the need for change

Decisions and actions were agreed during the next session on 15 June.

**15June**

**Session 5: Foresight – Strategic Thinking, Structures and Theory of Change**

This session built on yesterday’s discussion, voted on structural changes and discussed potential concrete improvements to ways of working.

**Decision**

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| D4. We will not make any changes to the governance structures at this time. We will focus on making changes to the way we wok during our meetings. **18 votes in favour of this, 1 against, 3 abstentions.**  |

 **Key points on discussion of Theory of Change (ToC)**

* EAPN Belgium recognised that the Theory of Change is a very important document for EAPN which needs further discussion, as everyone involved in EAPN needs to understand this. It is clear, in this document, that PeP should be the basis of EAPN, linked to everything – communication, policy etc.
* There may be some clarification for how EAPN works to support its national networks, and how EAPN enables the participation of PeP in its structures
* The ToC rightly pushed EAPN to engage PeP more in all aspects of our work
* Our language needs to be simpler – we look forward to the guidance being prepared by the Comm’On Group
* We need to be more holistic, more united as a network. We should aim for short position papers on thematic priorities worked out yesterday, hopefully connected to projects, funding, campaigns.
* Our campaigns need to be built on strong and clear policy asks, with clear recommendations for change
* We need to pay more attention to the coordination between the European and the national level, with more guidance for national networks to be involved in EU processes, and how to use EAPN material

**Key points on improving Ex Co meetings**

* We need to retain our focus – discussions are often taken in various directions and colleagues get lost. Ex Co members should to stick to the agenda and the discussions at hand, discussing questions being posed
* We should bring back the evaluation of Ex Co meetings, with a view to regularly improving them.
* Meetings should find a balance between info sharing from the national level and discussing European level issues / priorities
* Ex Co members should come well prepared, having read documents and discussed key issues within the network – they should have completed any ‘homework’ from previous meetings, i.e key action points.
* At the start of each session, we should clarify what we want to achieve, and have a short presentation about the topic
* We should develop a ‘Contact Book’ of expertise of Ex Co members, like the one used by EUISG
* We could organise around key themes / priorities, under the leadership of Bureau members.
* Bureau could take more leadership on key governance areas, so Ex Co is signing off documents rather than discussing at length

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Deadline** |
| A10. Refine Theory of Change based on discussions this week and put it to the General Assembly for adoption in September | Bureau, Leo |  Mid-August |
| A11. Focus on Theory of Change during September meetings, as part of Strategic Thinking session | Leo |  Mid-August |
| A12. Discuss Theory of Change internally at the national level in advance of General Assembly  | Members | For September meetings |
| A13. Develop Ex Co Contact Book, mapping expertise of Ex Co members | Sigrid, members | For September meetings |
| A14. Integrate suggestions for improving meetings into future meetings | Bureau, Leo |  For September meetings |

**Session 6: Foresight – 2020 Work Programme**

The Ex Co split into groups to discuss 2 questions:

* **What should be prioritised / deprioritised from the 2020 work programme because it has been most / least effective in our 2019 work programme so far?**
* **What should the balance of efforts be moving forward be between Commission, Parliament and Council? How best to influence the new institutions?**

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| **To prioritise** | **How?** |
| 30 years celebration of EAPN, building on the ‘history of EAPN’. Could be in the Parliament, could be built into different events through the year, must be involving people experiencing poverty. It should also be forward looking, building on the Theory of Change, and should be used to build the political pressure we put on institutions. | Small group within Bureau taking a lead on planning the celebrations. Sergio finalising the history. |
| Build Theory of Change into Work Programme |  |
| Funding – sourcing collective projects | Now the Theory of Change is quite clear, a small group within the Ex Co should take forward the issue of funding, building on research done by the staff team and the earlier work of the Funding and Financial Diversification Committee, which should be revived. |
| Capacity Building of our members | N/A |
| Coordinated advocacy, using members to feed into a strong advocacy plan | N/A |
| A small guide on how to claim social rights | N/A |
| Minimum Income | Build into Poverty Watch. Funding proposal for EMIN3, by end of 2019. Link to the agenda of the future German Presidency. |
| Links between climate change / just transition / social justice | Capacity building, learning exchange, potential joint work between Ex Co and EUISG. Interest from Lithuania, Poland, Macedonia, Iceland, Estonia, Sweden. |
| In-work poverty | N/A |
| Involving PeP in EAPN’s work | N/A |
| Training on participatory process and public / political discourse (frames and narratives) is already in the programme | EAPN UK can support this work, and Sweden is interested. |
| Poverty Watch, bring out trends in poverty, with testimonies.  | Such material can be well used to respond to the ‘good news’ stories of the Commission |
| Post 2020, EPSR etc | Ongoing, through EUISG |

**What should the balance of efforts be moving forward be between Commission, Parliament and Council? How best to influence the new institutions?**

* Conversations were inconclusive in terms of the balance of efforts – further work is needed here
* We need to focus on the EU Council – and should set up an informal collaboration between EAPN networks which mirror the [EU Council Presidency Troikas](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/)
* We should push to put poverty firmly on the agenda of the European Parliament. We’ll need a follow up of the European Parliamentary Elections campaign, and national networks need to build links with their MEPs. It may be worth pushing for more structured, regular meetings with leaders of the Parliament – **but only if we have very clear asks.**
* We need to reclaim our more political role – and to do so we will need to rethink our political strategy, based on a clear stakeholder analysis which maps out who holds the real power to make the changes we want to see in the world

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Deadline** |
| A15. Set up email list for exchanges and planning between Romania, Finland and Croatia | Leo | 27 June (done) |
| A16. Undertake a stakeholder analysis on our key issues with a view to better planning where we focus on resources | Bureau, with Leo and Sian | For September meetings |
| A17. Send letter to MEPs who signed the campaign pledge | Staff team |  1 July |
| A18. Follow up directly with these MEPs at the national level | National networks |  Mid July |
| A19. Reflect this prioritisation (and the discussion of our overall priorities) within 2020 Work Programme | Staff Team |  End August |