

PRIORITY 1: PARTICIPATION (PeP EUROPEAN MEETING 2019, EAPN SPAIN)

-Why have we chosen this priority?:

In Spain there are about 12 million people at risk of/or in poverty and social exclusion, indeed, more even than the whole voters of any political party. Nevertheless, there is an evident lack of participation of PeP in the steering agencies or stakeholders or any decisionary committee about designing policies about them, and if there is someone, is extremely reduced and tutorialized; so, in fact, we are still now in 'Enlightened Despotism' times: 'All for the people, but without the people' (change the word 'people' for 'PeP').

Social participation of PeP is often invaded or 'colonized' by other people: technicians, politicians, officials... This fact is a complete perversion of participation concept and theory, which also receive in exchange empty phrases like 'People are the priority' or 'people must be in the center of our policies', in a sort of paternalism of tutorialization of PeP, like if they were aged minors or unable to make opinions, judgements, proposals or if they couldn't talk with stakeholders, politicians or mass media. It's not only really unfair, but also is false, as a lot of PeP have an university degree, very large job experience, and can talk several languages, indeed; and even if some PeP don't have any of that, have in exchange a very large and wise experience in life.

But, however, we, the PeP, have two very important things: first, dignity, and second one, experience in poverty, a thing that any politician or stakeholder have experienced in his/her life. And we have to vindicate now, clear and loud, that we are PEOPLE EXPERT IN POVERTY, and not only beneficiaries of social subsidies or minimum income schemes that give sense to the job of technicians or politicians, or the 'perpetual ill people' that needs always 'poverty medicine'.

But in the universe of PeP there are lots of singular groups or collectivities that want to raise their voice:

-People with functional disabilities or 'special abilities' have all the right to participate in society and, in fact, the associative movement of these people in Spain begins to be important in Spain, because they don't want to be invisible to the society, and they want to be able to make visible their lacks and problems in front of the Governments (Autonomous Communities or State), and they intend to live in same conditions as the rest of society, sharing and learning experiences to make a better society.

-Migrant people have very often a lot of difficulties in order to participate in society and give their opinion about important matters for them or participate with stakeholders about doing laws that concern them.

An example is Navarre, on which a group of African women created an association, in order to give voice and visibility to them and to encourage the intercultural mix and the integration in the society, even despite these women have to manage with some barriers: language, excessive technical language from institutions, lack of work-life balance, so women must do their activities only on weekends.

**-There are any implemented policies about that? How are running?
What is the impact of these policies in PeP's lives?:**

It's true that Spanish Constitution obligates Administrations to encourage and promote citizenship participation, and the Spanish Government approved the National Strategy about Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023, which clearly states that there are to look for the most accurate policies to make more easy the participation of PeP in society and politics about matters that concern them. But this statement has no legal development yet and there is NO CORRESPONDANCE AT ALL with European Social Pillar or any EU directives, so it's only a sort of volunteerism without any legal or practical link.

It's true that in some municipalities (Zaragoza, i.e.) that PeP participate in some stakeholding decisions as members of Social Services Commissions, but unfortunately are isolate exceptions.

But in the other hand, exists also an abuse of volunteer participation in some cases and institutions are sometimes taking profit of this volunteer job, specially when this participant/volunteer is a long term unemployed.

What improvements or solutions propose PeP about this priority?:

The time has come about technicians, politicians, and officials of every Administration **STOP WORKING FOR US AND BEGIN TO WORK WITH US**. We, the PeP, have a real knowledge and experience of life, not theoretical, that want to put in service of the whole society. As Jacques Delors said one: 'All that is done for us, but without us, is done against us'; so, we demand a REAL participation in all the decissory spaces, not only at political and administrative level, but also and urgently, in NGOs and social entities, beginning for EAPN itself, i.e., integration of PeP in decissories structures of EAPN Spain and EAPN Europe, the creation of a consultative and permanent structure in the EU exclusively formed by PeP of the whole countries of the EU without tutorialization of technicians without personal

experience in poverty and/or social exclusion, or being permanent members of the Poverty Watch from European Parliament.

These proposals, in a mood of resume, were made also by Spanish PeP in our National PeP Meeting held in Santiago de Compostela last June.