

21 November 2019

Dear **Social Ministers: Finland, Croatia and Germany**

**Re: EAPN support Finnish Presidency Economy of Well-Being Conclusions on need for a coherent long-term social and sustainable post EU 2020 strategy – for European Council Dec 12-13 2019**

We are writing to you on behalf of the **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)**, the largest platform of anti-poverty organizations in Europe, representing more than 6000 organisations across 32 countries, working with and for people with direct experience of poverty. On behalf of the **109 million people** still at risk of poverty and social exclusion across the EU, we ask for your support to build on the excellent Finnish Presidency Council Conclusions and to work together to press for a **coherent long-term social and sustainable post 2020 strategy for the EU, that makes the eradication of poverty and implementation of social rights a pre-requisite, reflecting the Economy of well-being.** We are pleased to share with you EAPN's Full Proposals for a post Europe 2020 strategy: Europe 2020 for people and planet. See [here](#).

EAPN welcomes the ambition expressed in the new Commission President's *Political Guidelines 2019-24: A Union that strives for more* including initial proposals regarding a just transition/European Green Deal, an Economy that works for people, implementation of the European Social Pillar with an Action plan an EU framework on minimum wages and EU unemployment re-insurance scheme, the Child Guarantee and commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, these proposals consist of a **list of potentially interesting measures** rather than a coherent strategy for the EU. We are concerned that no Commission review has been carried out of the **current Europe 2020 strategy**, including the performance of the poverty target, to reduce poverty by at least 20 million by 2020 and other social targets. Neither is it clear how the **individual measures quoted, including implementing the SDGs will be developed, nor coherently shaped together to ensure consistency and coherence between the macroeconomic, environmental and social goals**. This is a particular concern when current macroeconomic priorities on reducing public debt and deficits have undermined rather than reinforced social investment in welfare states and social rights. Overall, we miss the visible commitment to develop together an **overarching longer-term 10 year comprehensive post 2020 strategy** that builds on the learning of Europe 2020.

We know that many Heads of State. In this regard, EAPN **strongly supports the Finnish Presidency Council Conclusions on the Economy of Well-being “on the expiry of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, a new long-term growth strategy for the Union, aimed at ensuring that the Union becomes the world's most competitive and socially inclusive, climate-neutral economy, reflecting the Economy of Well-being should be launched. It is important for the union to show global leadership by adopting an ambitious and well-balanced horizontal strategy in line with the commitments made in the framework of the Pillar and UN Agenda 2030”** . (Economy of Well-being Council Conclusions adopted by Council of EU 17. 10.2019).

For EAPN and other stakeholders, a post EU 2020 strategy, needs to be developed together with civil society and other stakeholders and would set coherent long-term social and sustainable objectives underpinned by Agenda 2030, the SDGs and the Social Pillar. We call for priority targets including a **new ambitious 50% reduction poverty target** reflecting SDG1: to end all forms of poverty, monitored/delivered through equal sections in the Country Report and Country-specific Recommendations. The target should be delivered through an effective integrated antipoverty strategy (as highlighted by Commissioner Schmit in his EP hearing) building on the active inclusion approach, as also outlined in the SPC Annual Report 2019, and underlined in the Council Conclusions (Oct 2019) *“Adequate income support, access to high quality health and social services, long-term care as well as early child-hood education and care, affordable housing and support for labour market integration and reintragation are essential to prevent and address poverty and socail exclusion”*.

EAPN also supports the need to move forward on **hard law instruments** to guarantee rights particularly in regard to guaranteeing adequate income: including new EU frameworks for living minimum wages, and adequate minimum income. As underlined in Agenda 2030, the **eradication of poverty should be visibly a pre-requisite** for an effective social and sustainable strategy and set out in detail how it aims to rebalance economic, environmental and social goals at all levels.

Moreover, the issue of **governance and participation of civil society organizations** including people with direct experience of poverty is crucial to the success of the strategy and to achieve credibility and accountability, helping to convince people on the ground that the EU is working in their benefit.

As the main social actors in the current and future Presidencies in 2020, we would urge you to press the December EPSCO meeting to require concrete follow up to the October Council Conclusions, urging the **Commission to set in place a proposal for a process to build a coherent long-term, social and sustainable post Europe 2020 strategy, that can deliver on the SDGs, social rights and poverty eradication**. This should ensure that the post 2020 strategy stays on the agenda throughout 2020 with the Croatian and German Presidencies, putting into practice a participative process which also engages civil society organizations, aiming for a strategy by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,



Carlos Susias

EAPN President



Leo Williams

EAPN Director