



25 November 2019

Dear Prime Minister or Head of State,

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 our organisation which is part 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 in pressing 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** in the European Council Meeting of 12-13 December. We have been working on the content of such a strategy over the last year, and are pleased to share with you **EAPN's Proposal for a post Europe 2020 strategy: Europe 2020 for people and planet** [here](#).

EAPN welcomes the ambition expressed in the new Commission President's *'Political Guidelines 2019-24'* specifically regarding a just transition/European Green Deal, an Economy that works for people, implementation of an Action Plan for the European Social Pillar, and an EU framework on minimum wages and EU unemployment re-insurance scheme, the Child Guarantee and commitment to implementing the SDGs.

However, these proposals consist of a **list of 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**, specifically in relation to the target of reducing poverty by 20 million by 2020. 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.

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, Europe needs 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. 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).



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

A post EU 2020 strategy must be developed together with civil society and other stakeholders, and must set coherent long-term social and sustainable objectives, underpinned by Agenda 2030, the SDGs and the Social Pillar.

EAPN calls on the Council to progress **on soft and hard law instruments** to guarantee rights, particularly through implementing the SDGs and Social Rights through a reformed European Semester and adopting an EU framework for living wages and adequate minimum income. As underlined in Agenda 2030, the **eradication of poverty should be a pre-requisite** for an effective social and sustainable strategy which must clarify how Europe will rebalance economic, environmental and social goals at all levels.

Moreover, the **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.

We would urge you in the December Council meeting to mandate the Commission **to launch a participative process to develop a coherent long-term, social and sustainable post Europe 2020 strategy, that can deliver on the SDGs, social rights and poverty eradication, engaging civil society organizations in its design, delivery and monitoring.**

Yours sincerely,

Member organisation of EAPN

Carlos Susias, President of EAPN