

Summary of feedback from EUISG on Strategic Objectives

Received from: EAPN IE, BE, FI, AGE-Platform, IFSW and EUISG Steering Group.

General feedback

- ✓ **Many national and EO members were unhappy about the SR process and did not feel that they had the power of decision.** Although a small majority agreed the SR in Helsinki, there was a sizeable minority against. Such a division will make it very hard to implement.
- ✓ **We must avoid sharing individual observations that are mere speculation. It is important to remember the EAPN Statutes in order not to risk trying to transform the EAPN into something that it is not.** It is necessary to reinforce the existing structures, such as the EXCO, the Bureau, the EUISG, the Staff and any working groups, national networks and find consensus between networks.
- ✓ **The Strategic Objectives would best be developed after a wider discussion based on the Resolution from the Belgian Anti-Poverty Network.** This might give some clarity to the overall context for the detailed deliverables but also give coherence as to how the different elements work together towards delivering on our mission.
- ✓ **If we want to have any impact on key EU developments, it is crucial that we reinvest in our policy work and recognize EU policy and advocacy work is at the core of our work.** The policy team at the office in Brussels needs to be strengthened and the involvement of all EAPN members in the EU advocacy work. The important role of the EUISG is not recognized in this document.
- ✓ **We still need to have a structured discussion together on the topic of building public support** for the eradication of poverty to tease out what the issue is, what it means for EAPN, what our specific approach and strategy is as part of our overall work.
- ✓ **The outcomes of action on changing narratives is unpredictable. That public support may support the idea that poverty is bad/wrong/unacceptable/affects us all/etc... but it does not mean our position on how to address it is accepted.**
- ✓ **It is therefore imperative that achieving public support cannot be at the expense of policy and advocacy within the political structures.** Therefore the line 'compliment not substitute' (4.b in Strategic Review) has implications in terms of co-ordination and staffing needs and therefore resources that need to be sourced.
- ✓ **This cannot happen without increasing staff levels and diversifying skill set, as well as specific training on policy and advocacy work at the national and EU level.** EU staff should work closely with national network and learn from each other. We need a task force dedicated to training and capacity building.
- ✓ **The verticality of EAPN is not sufficiently mentioned and taken into account, i.e. which objectives are better to pursue mainly by National Networks and which better suited for EU-wide action.**
- ✓ **There is not much mention of European organisations** and there should be an objective to develop their role.
- ✓ **The impact of COVID should be taken into account, both in terms of our policy goals and demands, but also the impact on networks and European Organizations.**

- ✓ **Concerns are raised about involving individual members separately** in Section 2. All consultation and decision-making should be done through the representative bodies, with clear accountability, not individual members.
- ✓ **There are some 10- year priorities that should be done sooner.**

Introduction

- ✓ There should be a short context paragraph in the Introduction - this was agreed in Helsinki.

“The objectives proposed under different priority areas should reinforce each other and always be underpinned by a Human Rights approach. They should respond and contribute to EU overarching strategies such as the Green Deal and Just Transitions, the Pillar of Social Rights and SDGS etc, as well as implementation through the European Semester activities. The EAPN strategy should remain dynamic and take into account the impact of events such as the Covid 19 pandemic. Achieving the objectives will depend on valuing all contributions to the network and coordinated working across structures, teams, country members, PEPs and EOs. Investment in empowering participation, rigorous policy development and effective communication will underpin the achievement of all the objectives. No single part, group or structure of EAPN will be able to deliver on the objectives in a vacuum or a silo.” (IFSW)

Priority A Policy

See above comments on the overall approach/priority

- ✓ **The timing of our policy goal and focus should be shaped by COVID19:** the EU and national response to the economic impact and impact on networks/PeP.
- ✓ **The phrase about EU processes in the 5 year goals is too vague:** we must mention the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Semester.
- ✓ **The European pillar of social rights as well as the SDG’s** must be taken into account not only in 2 years but also in the long term.
- ✓ **There is no mention of working on carbon-free Europe before 10 years** goal? and no mention of the SDGs that provides a good overarching approach, backed up by the Pillar of Social Rights. EAPN cannot take it on alone but can push for an integrated approach.
- ✓ **Integrating the human rights approach** is important but it will need to be worked out to what extent we can integrate it. Others consider that it should be a short- term priority.
- ✓ **Is there a consensus that we want simplistic explainers?** What’s the objective and who is the target audience? To be useful, these documents need to be more complex and analytical, and shaped by the group that will develop them ie EUISG.
- ✓ **We don’t agree with standardising the Poverty Watch** – if they are to be useful at national level we need to recognize very different needs/approaches and styles. This is their value-added. We should respect the approach developed by the EUISG.
- ✓ **What does participatory research mean? How do we realize this?** This is a priority and must be worked on earlier and not just in 10 years.

- ✓ **We must involve people experiencing poverty in the policy work at national and EU level, not only their voice** but empowering them in the political work and collaborating in drafting opinions. This has to start at the national level.
- ✓ **We don't agree with having the topics for work in 8 imposed.** (10 years/8). As the **group developing the work, the EUISG should have a clear role in the choice of topics** and be given the freedom to respond in the light of changing/new priorities.

Priority B Participation

- ✓ **We are worried about the lack of mention of national networks role in supporting participation.** National networks coordinate work with PEP, this needs to be recognized.
- ✓ **Clarify the link with policy/ EUISG with the advocacy work on participation,** otherwise there is a risk of parallel advocacy processes, particularly at EU level and messages that are not-aligned with EAPN agreed positions.
- ✓ **PeP work is key for EAPN Europe. We should try to ensure in 2 years that the «European Meeting of PeP» is clearly recognized** at political level and has a public visibility and this is not mentioned. It must be a work methodology, involving the staff and national networks. Selection of members that participate must be consistently based on transparent criteria.
- ✓ **Regarding the Comm'on Guidelines there were differing opinions:**
 - We need more transparency on how the Comm'on guidelines were developed. Was there a consultation? Were they approved by EXCO, what role for the EUISG? How can they be implemented if the EUISG had no say?
 - The Guidelines are very good but they sound very directive and need to be flexible. The Guidelines should be voluntary, allowing members time to look at them and assessing how best to use them, based on different national situations. Implementation may also need resourcing (people, skills, time, capacity)
 - Others who were in the Comm'on group highlighted the guidelines need to be understood, and national networks receive training. This needs money and staff recognizing some networks deal with difficulties at this level. The participation of PEP's must be placed as a priority in all actions of EAPN Europe and national networks. They underline that group was known and we have to believe in the work of these smaller groups. The document was presented in the zoom meeting in March and implementation discussed by EXCO and with all national networks. There are no two networks at national level.
- ✓ **The whole section related to setting up platforms/advocacy needs careful discussion and consideration.** It sounds like the setting up of a parallel structure of people experiencing poverty, potentially with separate campaigns, rather than linking and being part of to the overall work of EAPN. There must be a link with national networks
- ✓ **Item 4 talks of separate campaigns organized by PeP?** Surely EAPN Europe needs to stand in solidarity, give support to actions organised by PeP, as 1 organisation? When PEP

participate in campaigns the national networks help to empower them prepare with them and collectively develop messages. The role of national networks is key.

- ✓ **On the internal structures: again needs discussion.** For example EAPN Ireland is made up of representatives from member organisations, some of whom have a direct experience of poverty and social exclusion, but they don't differentiate this in the Board, or get people to somehow self-identify, but support all members to participate.
- ✓ **Participation should reflect the wording in the EAPN Rights handbook: Change, Hope and Justice approach (pge 28)** that PEPs should be having a say in the policies and practices that affect them and be involved in the whole development process which includes the design, implementation , monitoring and evaluation of polices.
- ✓ **Who is a person experiencing poverty?** The rationale of 10 years is not understandable.
- ✓ **We should map what members are doing on participation and what it means.**
- ✓ **The 30% goals for participation of PeP in EU EAPN Structures is too high.** Priority should be for participation at national level. Only then can you build representation at EU level.
- ✓ **On the 10-year goal developing an organisational model which results in X% of PeP at the national level actively identifying with the national network** as an organisation which represents them- Is this realistic, desirable or feasible?

Priority C on Communication/Public Support

- ✓ **We need to see if it is possible to get increased public support first,** before we set targets about impact of public support on poverty reduction.
- ✓ **The objective of each network to have a communication officer is not realistic.** It should be more about supporting capacity of all networks. Even with more resources most networks can't achieve this but have someone multi-tasking.
- ✓ **On the social media target:** What is the baseline and detail e.g. across all networks or just EAPN (Europe) audience?
- ✓ **If we want to be the consulted network - we need to invest more in policy** to develop in-depth knowledge on the topics we want to advocate for. It may be possible to be the best recognized network for EAPN (Europe) and some countries, but not most. There are other better resourced organisations lobbying on poverty and looking for media attention. EAPN's strength lies in the ability to come together on a European Level.
- ✓ **Involving people experiencing poverty in a tokenistic way must be avoided.** People are more than a 'sad story'. We want society to recognize them as people with an important opinion. Therefore, the link with policy is crucial.
- ✓ **Before launching new campaigns we need to evaluate EMIN 2 campaign.** A European campaign with strong impact is not easy, costs a lot of money, human resources.
- ✓ **On Standardising Poverty Watches, not all members can provide this kind of input,** only looking at the resources of an organisation like Oxfam we need to be humble on what we as a network can do. We should not set ourselves up to fail. We need to first discuss what we want the Poverty Watch to be, and the resources we want to allocate.

- ✓ **Public support must strengthen the European network, but also national networks.** It is essential EAPN reinforces its status as a political interlocutor of the European Commission. But for that, we must train National Networks so that they can also be recognized in the different Member States. For that training in communication is crucial. We need financing and staff as communication requires specific expertise.

Priority D: Campaign on social protection/minimum income/minimum wage/civil space

- ✓ **This area is outlined as separate to Priority A on Policy but it is all about policy** so it needs to be clear how this will work. Why is there no mention of the EUISG here?
- ✓ **We would like to see more emphasis on adequate income** for all.
- ✓ **While good to have ambition, the targets for 2,5, and 10 years on MI are overly optimistic/ambitious.** We think that it's a risk to have such specific aims that will be hard to achieve: for example; ensure that 6 countries will have adequate MI schemes.
- ✓ **On living wage, we need a benchmark for this to know where we are starting.** It will involve a strong campaign with Trade Unions etc.
- ✓ **We are missing key issues that have a connection with social protection, like the Child Guarantee.** Eurochild is an EAPN EO and EAPN an active member of the Investing in Children Alliance campaigning on this initiative. We need to reinforce EAPN as key partner.

Underpinning Activities.

- ✓ **First priority should be to secure the EaSI or equivalent EU funding** every three years. We need to secure funding for the core of EAPN in a way which tries to strengthen what we have and then build to address new challenges.
- ✓ **We need a clear strategy on accessing funding for projects,** being clear on the type of projects we are accessing and how they contribute to our objectives. The more we diversify our project funding, the more we could end up diversifying our activities.
- ✓ **How would having at least 12 national networks involved in co-financing EAPN work?**
- ✓ **Strong agreement for points regarding increasing communication between the different EAPN structures,** but this should include the Director and the Bureau. Improving internal communication is key, as it is apparent that a lot of people and networks feel that they are not being heard and being listened to.
- ✓ **Care should be taken to avoid trying to impose funding models from one country to others – Eg EAPN ES funding model.** This proposal is much too country-specific. We need exchange between members about their different models.
- ✓ **Commercializing our training is very worrying.** We should share our knowledge and expertise on poverty without a profit motive, but as a public good.
- ✓ **Why prioritize work with organization on another continent?** This is not a priority for most national networks. An opposing view is highlighted by IFSW: EAPN should learn from

and contribute to International organisations fighting poverty. EAPN is already involved in ESCR – Net, so this could be in the 2-year plan? We recognize this needs time and funds to support policy staff and members to engage.