**EUISG WEBINAR: Poverty Watch in the COVID-19 Context**

**Break-out group 3**

**Participants**: EAPN BE, CZ, DE, MK, PL, SK, UK, AGE

**Staff:** Mathias

**Rapporteur:** Philippe

**Notes**

Colleagues shared information on Q1 and Q2 (see below) and their proposals on Q3 common EU messages.

1. Have you done/planning a PW in 2020? What are your main findings, including on COVID 19? How will you use it in Oct 17 campaign?
2. Did you involve people experiencing poverty? If yes, how, what kind of methodology did you use? How could this be improved?
3. What common EU messages would you give to the EU report?

As the three colleagues who had given a presentation before ended up in the same break-out group and had already elaborated on Q1 and Q 2, the floor was primarily given to the colleagues from the other countries.

Answers to Q1 and Q2

***Belgium***

On Q1: EAPN Belgium has elaborated own comments on NRPs which were sent to the government and also has done advocacy work in relation to the Poverty Target of the Europe 2020 Strategy, deploring that the focus on poverty reduction in the Belgian NRP (and national policies) got lost. Regarding the Belgian Poverty Watch Report 2020, it will focus on five topics - child poverty, migration, labour market inclusion, progress made and still existing deficits as regards social protection and housing – and also contain more data on these aspects as well as a chapter on minimum income. For BAPN the situation is a bit specific as research and reports on poverty and social exclusion are being produced by universities and governments which BAPN can well use in its advocacy work. There is no real need to produce a Poverty Watch Report if it was only for the domestic audience. It is therefore mainly written for EAPN and EU-level policy work because it is an aggregate of several reports. For the same reason it is not so easy to integrate the Poverty Watch Report in the day-to-day work of BAPN. The Poverty Watch will not be explicitly used in the context of 17 October International Day for the Eradication of Poverty as the local networks decide what to do around this date. There is a distinction made between the “good poor” who became poor because of COVID and now should be supported, and the “bad poor” who were exposed to/at the risk of poverty already before. But the important question is if the (policies) now set up are really targeting the strongly affected groups and the increased inequalities – this does not really seem to be the case.

On Q2: Given limited resources and the additional challenges due to the COVID-19-related restrictions the knowledge and from-the-ground-voices from other meetings was exploited for the Belgian Poverty Watch.

***Czech Republic***

On Q1: The Poverty Watch Report will be used to support two key advocacy activities in view of the Parliament elections this year, namely on the over-indebtedness of many households and on affordable social housing. The aim is to get improvements in the legislative framework.

On Q2: As in the case of Belgium existing information from meetings involving PeP was used to some extent.

***Germany***

On Q1: EAPN Germany will share the Poverty Watch with the relevant federal ministries (Labour and Social Affairs; Family, Women, Youth and Senior Citizens)

On Q2: The European PeP Meeting preparation meeting did not take place this year, therefore no input could be generated or coordinated with the PeP Coordinator.

***Slovakia***

The connection got interrupted, therefore no input from EAPN could be gathered. Mathias informed the participants that as of today No Poverty Watch was done and it was unclear if it was worked upon.

***UK***

On Q2: EAPN Scotland did organise two-weekly online meetings during lockdowns and in addition telephone research/outreach with low income people. The problem is that you cannot reach the most excluded people online. The experience EAPN Scotland made is that for this group at least the contact and exchange is easier and more personal than holding online meetings.

***AGE***

On Q2: This year AGE had no resources to elaborate a Poverty Watch, with many other activities to be organised and publications to be issued under more difficult circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Answers to Q3

In reply to Q3 “What common EU messages would you give to the EU report?” the group agreed on the following points:

* Those who were most affected by/at risk of poverty and those most disadvantaged before the COVID-19 crisis are even more so with COVID. Every inequality is getting bigger. This needs to be urgently tackled by EU-level action, initiatives, frameworks, etc.
* In many countries EAPN members feel that there is a distinction made between the “good poor” who became poor because of COVID and now should be supported, and the “bad poor” who were exposed to/at the risk of poverty already before. This differentiation needs to be countered.
* There needs to be a new EU anti-poverty strategy and poverty reduction target for the next decade!