



# EAPN Poland in the European Semester Eight Lessons Learned from Institutionalisation of Participation

Ryszard Szarfenberg  
Chairperson of the Executive Council  
[EAPN Poland](#)

# Eight lessons learned from EAPN Poland participation in the European Semester. Part 1

## 1. Institutional framework for participation

Institutional framework for participation of anti-poverty ngos in European Semester should be in place

*Poland: formal task force responsible for Europe 2020 implementation was established in 2012 by Prime Minister executive order*

## 2. Representation

Having EAPN NN representative in the task force which was established in the first step

*Poland: EAPN Poland had a chance to have its representative in the Europe 2020 task force. NGO representatives were selected by Council responsible for civic society at Ministry of Work and Social Policy*

## 3. Expertise

Representative of the EAPN NN in the Europe 2020 task force should be very well informed about politics and policy of poverty in the EU and in own country

*Poland: EAPN representative is an academic with extensive expertise in European and Polish social policy*

## 4. Strategy with concrete goals

EAPN NN should have a clear and concrete goals to achieve by participating in the Europe 2020 task force

*Poland: EAPN had a clear goal to make the Polish Europe 2020 anti-poverty target more ambitious*

## Eight lessons learned from EAPN Poland participation in the European Semester. Part 2

### 5. Concrete inputs and proposals

To make difference in documents like National Reform Programme the proposals of amendments should be as concrete as possible

*Poland: we proposed topics for task force discussions with our contribution (Poverty Watch) and concrete amendments to the documents like NRP*

### 6. Convincing argumentation

There needs to be good argumentation to convince the board of the task force responsible for Europe 2020 Strategy

*Poland: we have good argument for updating the target set for 2020 due to the fact that it was achieved as early as in 2013*

### 7. Coalitions with other stakeholders

EAPN NN representative should seek for alliances with other stakeholders within Europe 2020 task force

*Poland: there was an alliance with trade unions, employers organizations and other ngos built around several issues such as in-work poverty or poverty and disability*

### 8. Minimum quality of participatory process

The Europe 2020 task force should meet regularly and its board should be ready to take seriously proposals of the non-governmental members

*Poland: after two years of discussions the process reached sufficient quality in 2014 and improved in subsequent years. Yearly working meeting on poverty, detailed responses to proposals etc.*

## But was it worth making these efforts?

### DRAWBACKS OF THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER ITSELF

1. **European Semester was not designed to make national anti-poverty policy better.** Its focus is making economic policy and public finances better in terms of economic performance
2. **National Reform Programme is only a report** about what government has already decided in national processes. Successes in influencing the report are less important than successes in influencing decisions which are reported
3. **Interest of society and the media in the European Semester is very limited.** Even if we could have successes in this process, they are not being noticed

### BENEFITS OF BEING INSIDER IN NATIONAL EUROPEAN SEMESTER

1. **Asking questions and making proposals to government officials directly** at official meetings
2. **Closer cooperation with other stakeholders** and forming advocacy coalitions (e.g. trade unions)
3. **Better access to European Semester documents and better opportunity to have influence on them** (internal vs external consultation)
4. **Networking with concrete people from different stakeholders organisation** could be useful in advocacy outside ES process