

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EAPN and anti-poverty work

EAPN Workshop for EXCO/EUISG and European Organisation Members

13 November 2020, 14:00-17:00

Short Report

WEBINAR Agenda

Chair: Sian Jones, EAPN Policy Coordinator

14.00 -14.05 Welcome: *Sian Jones, EAPN Policy Coordinator*

14.05-14.15 Introduction to objectives of the workshop and programme: *Graciela Malgesini and Marija Babovic, EUISG co-chairs and gender experts.*

14.15-15.00 Opening Panel Debate: Setting the EU context:

“A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025”. Implementation and funding implications for NGOs”

- *Lesia Radelicki, member of Equality Commissioner’s cabinet*
- *Maria Noichl/MEP (S&D/DE), rapporteur for FEMM/EP report*
- *Mary Collins, Senior Policy Coordinator, European Women’s Lobby*
- *Eleni Karaoli, EAPN Vice-President, EAPN Cyprus.*

15.00-15.15 Q & A and Discussion

15.15-16.00 2nd Session: Findings of the EAPN Gender Mainstreaming Survey

15.15-15.30 Presentation of main findings and recommendations of the Survey, *Graciela Malgesini, co-author of survey/EUISG co-chair.*

15.30-15.45 Q & A and Discussion

15.45-16.30 3rd Session: Group Work: Priorities for Action at national level

15.45-15.50 Explanation of methodology: *Marija Babovic, co-author of survey*

15.50-16.30 Break into 3 groups to discuss 2 questions:

1) What concrete steps can you take to mainstream Gender Equality in your organisation.

2) How can you mainstream Gender Equality in your work policy/advocacy/etc.

16.30-17.00 4th Session: Feedback, Conclusions and Next Steps

Chair: Sian Jones and Marija Babovic

16.30-16.45	Feedback from 3 groups
16.45-16.55	Discussion on Recommendations/Guidance to members
16.55-17.00	Next Steps
17.00	End of Workshop

Participants

Martina Brandstätter (EAPN AT), Caroline Van der Hoeven (EAPN BE), Aleksandra Zivkovic (EAPN HR), Eleni Karaoli (EAPN CY, Lidmila Nemcova and Karel Schwarz (EAPN CZ), Marjatta Kaurala and Anna Järvinen (EAPN FI), Helena Jestin and Richard Delplanque (EAPN FR), Marius Isenberg and Mathias Becker (EAPN Germany), Dina Vardaramatou (EAPN EL), Krisztina Jasz (EAPN HU), Anne Loftus, Paul Ginnell and Emma Hughes (EAPN Ireland), Giulia Segna (EAPN IT), Laila Balga and Egils Rupeks (EAPN LT), Aiste Adomaviciene (EAPN LT), Biljana Dukovska (EAPN MA), André Bonnelo (EAPN MT), Jo Bothmer and Sonja Leemkuil (EAPN NL), Honoratte Muhanzi and Froydis Jensen (EAPN NO), Kamila Plowiec and Ryszard Szarfenberg (EAPN PL), Paula Cruz (EAPN PT), Iris Alexe (EAPN RO), Marija Babovic (EAPN SB), Ana Kalin and Ziva Humer (EAPN SL), Carlos Susías Rodado and Graciela Malgesini (EAPN ES), Katherine Duffy (EAPN UK), Philippe Seidel (Age-Platform), Fran McDonnell (IFSW). Staff: Sian, Mathias, Rebecca, Magda, Sigrid, Philippe, Anna, Leo. Speakers and Interpreters.

Report of WEBINAR

14.00 -14.05 Welcome: Sian Jones, EAPN Policy Coordinator

Sian welcomed the participants – EXCO and EUISG members, EO’s and other national members – also external participants and speakers. She gave a brief introduction to EAPN highlighting that EAPN has been around since 1990 and is currently celebrating our 30th anniversary this year, even though in rather unfortunate circumstances because of COVID. EAPN is the largest independent network on grassroots antipoverty NGOs and European Organisations in Europe, committed to the fight against poverty and for social, economic and cultural rights, together with people experiencing poverty. She explained that the **webinar is co-organised by the EXCO and EUISG, supported by the EAPN Adhoc Gender and Poverty Group**. This group formed in 2017 and produced two important documents: Gender and Poverty and Gender and Violence. From this shared work, a decision was taken to move forward on gender equality mainstreaming within EAPN. This is reflected in our Work Programme 2020 and 2021. The objectives of these overall actions are: **To explore the aspects of gender within EAPN structures, work and communication;** to initiate a gender mainstreaming process by increasing awareness, and capacity, then agreeing initial recommendations/ guidelines on how to mainstream gender at national level and in their networks.

EAPN has been very lucky to count on the expertise of 2 very well-known and respected EAPN members, both founding members of the adhoc Gender and Poverty group: Graciela Malgesini (EAPN Spain) and Marija Babovic (EAPN Serbia) who both have a wealth of experience and expertise on gender equality, as with the topics of poverty and social inclusion, and are currently both 2 Co-chairs of our EAPN's policy group (EUISG): EU Inclusion Strategies Group.

This workshop comes at an important time, with the launch of the EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025), as well as the preparation for the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2021. However, these initiatives are being drastically impacted by the eruption of COVID-19, which has exacerbated the difficulties already facing people in poverty, discrimination and exclusion – in particular women. The overarching threat of COVID-19, as well as the EU response through the European Recovery and Resilience Facility ,will be a prominent thread in our discussions to see how we as antipoverty NGOs can work to ensure progress on gender equality, and the fight against discrimination, poverty and social exclusion in the coming period, starting with our own organisation. She then passed the word to Graciela and Marija to introduce themselves, and the programme/objectives of the workshop.

14.05-14.15 Introduction to objectives of the workshop and programme: Graciela Malgesini and Marija Babovic, EUISG co-chairs and gender experts.

Graciela presented the three key objectives of the webinar and Marija presented the three main actions agreed prior to and after the webinar (see [Background Note](#)).

14.15-15.00 Opening Panel Debate: Setting the EU context: “A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025”. Implementation and funding implications for NGOs”

Sian outlined the current EU context for EAPN's work on gender equality and gender mainstreaming: Gender equality as major theme for EC President, gender pay gap and pension pay gap as major challenges, new [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), for first time Commissioner for Equality in place and in charge for implementing this Strategy, [FEMM Committee Own Initiative Report “EU Strategy for Gender Equality”](#) adopted on 9 November 2020.

• Lesia Radelicki, Member of Commissioner Dalli's (Equality Commissioner) cabinet

Ms Radelicki underlined that the work of CSOs on gender equality and gender mainstreaming as well as EC's work on gender equality with CSOs are very important in the current context, where resistance and opposition is also felt (from certain EU MS and certain societal stakeholders). She explained why the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (GES) is relevant: EC was in contact with CSOs during the first COVID-19 lock-down to learn about the impacts and situation on the ground.

It became obvious that the prospects for women were difficult or had become worse. There was an increase of gender-based violence. Women over-proportionally were working in “front-line jobs” in the health and care sector and in essential services such as e.g. retail services and were more exposed to the virus than men. The EC had asked the EU MS to give a gender-sensitive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the “recipe” already included in the GES adopted on 5 March 2020, containing a clear vision and thematic priorities. It also has a slogan: *“This Strategy has the vision of a Europe where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are equal – where they are free to pursue their chosen path in life, where they have equal opportunities to thrive, and where they can equally participate in and lead our European society.”* (Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ganda_20_357). The GES 2020-2025 is a reply to the request of CSOs, but also from EP for a robust GES. It is built around three pillars: “lead”, thrive” and “setting everybody free”. See also [here](#) for a useful fact sheet on the GES.

What is different compared to earlier work? The GES 2020-2025 is more ambitious and visionary. Further progress is still needed on a number of topics, including anchoring gender mainstreaming in all policies and combatting gender stereotypes. The EC has set up an Equality Taskforce, coordinated by the Secretariat General, but linked with all DGs. Equality Coordinators have been put in place (however, working on all aspects of equality, not only gender equality) to make sure that EC policies are mainstreamed around equality from the early stages. The equality mainstreaming is being implemented in different agendas, e.g. the new European Skills Agenda, in the MW dossier, etc., which should all have also a gender angle. The GES 2020-2025 also promotes gender budgeting and provides funding for CSO working in the fields of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. She then went on to briefly outline the 3 pillars of the GES:

1) Pillar “Free”: Women should be free to follow their chosen path free from harassment and violence, challenging gender stereotyping by ensuring that the EU Access and implement the Council of Europe Convention, raise awareness and increasing data and monitoring.

2) Pillar “Thrive”: Women should be economically independent. Priority should be given to closing the gender pay gap and to setting up pay transparency measures, including by means of an EU Directive.

3) Pillar “Lead”: Women and girls can lead and be in leading positions both economically and politically. In the economic sphere this principle should be realised by achieving a 50% female share in management boards. The GES 2020-2025 also foresees a “fitness check” of EU MS’s measures and policies to combat violence against women. This “procedure” has been launched in line with the [2011 Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) and will be followed-up and monitored by the EC.

• **Maria Noichl/MEP (S&D/DE), rapporteur for FEMM/EP report on Gender Equality Strategy.**

Maria deplored that in the last five years there was no European Gender Strategy which hindered progress on gender equality and gender mainstreaming and welcomed new GES 2020-2025. She further deplored that the element “gender” is no longer included in the job title of the EU Commissioner Dalli, but has been broadened to “equality” only, instead of keeping “gender equality” also in the title. She highlighted that the GES 2020-2025 started before COVID19, but the resistance and opposition against gender equality have emerged again. This is exemplified with attacks on the rule of law, human rights, democracy by EU MS such as Hungary and Poland. The EU here has a political and moral obligation to intervene. She expressed the hope that the GES will be extrapolated/continued beyond 2025. Its policy goals and its reference frame for policy monitoring it should set the scene for the next 20 years.

• **Mary Collins, Senior Policy Coordinator, European Women’s Lobby**

Mary welcomed the fact that gender equality is included as a structural challenge and task in EAPN’s current and future work. She underlined the need to tackle the structural discriminations and disadvantages women face in the labour market and in social protection (e.g. concentrated in precarious contracts, underpaid, work undervalued, more exposed to COVID-19 infection risks, higher risk of exclusion from temporary unemployment measures). The COVID-19 pandemic has already exposed more strongly the most already vulnerable persons, over-proportionally affecting women. She agreed with Maria Noichl in deploring the lack of an EU Gender Equality Strategy in the past 5 years and generally also welcomed the new GES (2020-2025).

Mary underlined some gaps in the focus on poverty and inequality linked to gender in the GES. The GES 2020-2025 has some links to poverty by mentioning the scandalous 40% pensions gap, by referring to other initiatives such as the European Skills Agenda, the Youth Guarantee and the Child Guarantee, but other than that has little reference to poverty. It therefore ran the risk of being perceived as primarily an agenda for middle-class women. This would be extremely damaging, as all women and girls should be covered as otherwise the more/most privileged would have the biggest impact/advantages. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming should be much better be anchored in the EU Directive on Pay Transparency (which would also positively impact on the minimum wages), in the Disability Strategy, Roma Strategy and European Green Deal.

She welcomed that based on an agreement reached between the EP and the EU MS, gender equality and gender mainstreaming are now mentioned as horizontal priorities in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the increase in the EU allocations for funds for equality NGOs. However, progress and the actual impact should be monitored in the context of the mid-term review of the MFF. Mary highlighted another urgent monitoring task on our agendas: How will the commitments of the GES 2020-2025 be assessed and monitored when the EU MS have to submit their National Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRF)?. Up to now in all

recovery measures there has been a stronger focus on investing in the sectors where male employment is predominant. Where will the Gender impact assessment of these measures be?

• **Eleni Karaoli, EAPN Vice-President, EAPN Cyprus**

Please see her [speaking notes](#).

15.00-15.15 Q & A and Discussion

- **Graciela Malgesini** asked about the lack of poverty in the EIGE Gender Equality Index.
- **Philippe Seidel** highlighted data lacking on older women, in particular the break-down for women in the age group 75-84. Without data it is difficult to take appropriate and targeted policy action. He also highlighted the very strong focus of EU's Gender Equality Policy on women at working life age and suggested that the EC strengthen the gender equality orientation in long-term care policies as this would benefit women (on pay, recognition of care work, shift of care work to men).
- **Lesia Radelicki (and later Maria Noichl, too)** agreed with the need to have a break-down for older women, including in the age group 75-84 and on the problems stemming from the lack of poverty orientation/sensitivity/focus in the EIGE Gender Equality Index. She informed that the Action Plan on the Implementation of the EPSR would follow up on some of these issues, related to the EPSR Principle on Gender Equality.
- **Maria Noichl** highlighted the need to have a full gender mainstreaming for all different policy fields (also for dossiers not dealt with by the EP FEMM Committee), referring e.g. to decent pay for women in agriculture. She considered the inclusion of a conditionality on decent pay for agricultural workers for farmers to be able to receive money from EU funds in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy as one good example in this regard and a recent success.
- **Mary Collins** underlined that gender mainstreaming is a necessarily a 'disruptive' approach, not only a reformist. The huge pension gap could only be reduced by overcoming the logics and dynamics of the male break-winner model. Gender-based violence as a human rights violation is an expression of power relations and privilege where it's needed to end impunity and to free women from situations where they are trapped with their perpetrators.
- **Eleni Karaoli** underlined the need to mainstream gender for all women, in every policy and area – as single women or in families. Women facing poverty, exclusion and abuse and violence needed to be recognized as a clear priority, recognizing the specific challenges they face, and that inequality of income and wealth, only exacerbates gender inequality. She was pleased that EAPN had determined to give prioritise Gender Mainstreaming, as well as Diversity training in the coming year.

15.15-16.00 2nd Session: Findings of the EAPN Gender Mainstreaming Survey

15.15-15.30 Presentation of main findings and recommendations of the Survey, Graciela Malgesini, co-author of survey/EUISG co-chair.

See her [presentation](#).

15.30-15.45 Q & A and Discussion.

This session was cut short to allow time for discussion in the workshops, as the plenary session had extended beyond its time due to the interesting discussion.

15.45-16.30 3rd Session: Group Work: Priorities for Action at national level

15.45-15.50 Explanation of methodology:

Marija Babovic, co-author of survey with Graciela Malgesini, together with Sian Jones, Policy Coordinator, explained the tasks for the break-out groups and the aspects to focus upon.

15.50-16.30 Break into 3 groups to discuss 2 questions:

- 1) *What concrete steps can you take to mainstream Gender Equality in your organisation.*
- 2) *How can you mainstream Gender Equality in your work policy/advocacy/etc.*

16.30-17.00 4th Session: Feedback, Conclusions and Next Steps Chair: Sian Jones and Marija Babovic

16.30-16.45 Feedback from 3 groups

Graciela Malgesini reported back from Break-Out Group 1, Philippe Seidel from Break-Out Group 2 and Katherine Duffy from Break-Out Group 3.

Q1: What concrete steps can you take to mainstream Gender Equality in your organisation?

Break-Out Group 1

No concrete recommendations were made as the colleagues from the EAPN National Networks in GR, LT and NL reported that women are well represented in boards, in the workforce of the national offices. They, however, had also reported that gender equality as a rule was not strongly monitored systematically nor a continued priority in the policy and advocacy work. This is partly due to the fact that partner organisations (e.g. the national member of the EWL) were covering them and national boards agreed not to put too much independent focus on them, given limited resources, but rather to cooperate (e.g. in LT with Lithuanian Women's Lobby). However, they recognized that it would be important to look again at these issues following the workshop.

Break-Out Group 2

- There was a need also to involve men better in organisational structures as most members of national Networks representing the care sector have are overrepresentation by women,

as carers, often as volunteers. There is an issue regarding which roles men and women take within antipoverty organisations and networks.

- Having a feminist organisation as part of the national network would be key to be reminded of gender-specific issues, gender equality and gender mainstreaming

Break-Out Group 3

- There is a need to consider and highlight the intersectionality of class, gender and race and other forms of discrimination – not all women have same challenges.
- The survey results on job roles for men and women in EAPN, showed that there was a feminisation of volunteers in anti-poverty NGOs, with a greater concentration of men in the paid jobs/ and hierarchies. Pathways for volunteers to become paid staff of NGOs should be developed.
- Check lists to make sure that women within the organisations have access to decision-making roles and power and to apply gender-sensitive language members have articulated the need for training to make this happen.

Q2: How can you mainstream Gender Equality in your work policy/advocacy/etc.

Break-Out Group 1

- A proposal made to develop a transnational EAPN project to help national networks to participate in gender-related topics – building awareness and capacity.
- Most networks would need capacity building and on how to do better gender-related advocacy work. The Checklist developed by WG in Spain when drafting documents to see if they reflect the gender aspect, if the language is gender-sensitive could/should be translated and shared with EAPN members/EUISG Group.

Break-Out Group 2

- Importance was highlighted of bringing in men into care models/work also in our policy/advocacy.
- Gender issues can present themselves in a different way for minority populations, e.g. migrants – more awareness/analysis is needed of this.
- Underlining the importance of partnership and coordination with the national and EU members of the EWL – to help members to do this.

Break-Out Group 3

- Policy, advocacy and communication work need to fully reflect the principle of gender equality – developing a checklist for this would be crucial together with the networks/organisations.
- National data often does not currently distinguish sufficiently/not gender-sensitive in the way this would be needed – this needs to be a key demand for EAPN.
- Poverty-related policies strongly concern women; always need to look what all policies mean for women.

- Participation: Need to ensure gender balance also for our work with PeP; gender needs to be on the agenda for PeP, too.
- Increasing challenging/regressive environment on gender issues including abortion. EAPN needs more discussion/support to networks where women's rights are under attack and what this means for poverty.

16.45-16.55 Discussion on Recommendations/Guidance to members

- Marija recalled the ways by which gender equality has been prioritized so far within EAPN.
- National networks recognize the need to have higher gender competence and need support for this.
- EAPN networks/organisations need to be aware of the environment we are working in (gender equality; attacks on women's and equality rights), as this also has an impact on gender aspect of poverty.
- Further priorities need to be the impact of distribution of work to sector/feminization of certain sectors, and types of work. Who works in NGO sector and in what role?
- The importance has been underlined of working work in alliances (women's organisations, LGTBQ organisations).
- Need also to focus more on poorer women who are/stay excluded because they cannot participate in the labour market due to care obligations.
- Mutual learning and assessments are needed for EAPN member organisations, also to analyse their own gender structure in governance boards and develop action plans.
- EAPN members need to take a further look at policy and advocacy work, particularly with a focus on care policies (minimum income, minimum wages, food provision) and care services and to have gender transformation in employment in feminized sectors
- Awareness of cultural bias and influences on gender equality is also crucial.

Sian added that given the imbalance of gender roles in many EAPN organisations, with women concentrated as volunteers or Directors in organisations with mainly volunteers, there is a need to provide pathways for volunteers in the sector, so that they could move into (well-paid) jobs. She also highlighted again the crucial aspect of intersectionality; women in poverty have different needs and challenges depending on their other characteristics, groups to which they belong, e.g. thinking about Roma, migrant, disabled women, single mothers, older women etc.

16.55-17.00 Next Steps

Sian informed the participants that notes will be done including links to the presentations, circulated and also integrated into the report. The draft report on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EAPN will be adapted to include the **Recommendations from this workshop**, and shared with members on the 19th November, with 2 weeks for comments. The final report would be sent out to members following finalization with the Comms team. It would remain an internal EAPN document. The report will therefore include recommendations of how to make progress in

EAPN in terms of our national structures and policy and advocacy work at the national level (or in EOs).

In 2021, the EUISG will lead on follow up to the report and recommendations, with a mutual learning exchange with members to review implementation, exchanging on good practice examples from members. In the Work Programme 2021, the aim is to continue the gender mainstreaming work, this time at EU wide level in EAPN – in EAPN structures, staff and joint policy, advocacy and communication work. A further workshop on gender equality and mainstreaming will be done in 2021. It's hoped that Graciela and Marija can be contracted to continue the impressive work they've done this year, and to support a revitalized Gender and Poverty group, including members also from the EXCO.

Graciela highlighted the possibility for members to also suggest/share good practice examples to be taken up in the report when commenting on the draft report

17.00 End of Workshop