

EUISG Meeting – Agenda Item 5

EAPN Assessment European Semester 2021

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Mathias Maucher
Policy Officer
European Anti-Poverty Network

EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

RESEAU EUROPEEN DES ASSOCIATIONS

DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE

ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE

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European Semester Cycle 2021

EAPN Information & Guidance & Analyses + Assessments



☐ European Semester Cycle 2021, incl. RRF

- ☐ EUISG 30 September 2020: Presentation of main changes (deliverables; actors; timelines; procedures): Slides [MM](#), EAPN + [Filip Tanay](#), DG EMPL
- ☐ EAPN Assessment & Information: [EAPN Briefing Note](#) (5 October 2020)
- ☐ [EAPN Guidance Note](#) for members for submission of 3 main proposals for national RRP and NRP (4 December 2020)
- ☐ EAPN Capacity Building Webinar European Semester Cycles 2020 & 2021 (19 November 2020): Updates (incl. on impacts of changes on EAPN members) & Assessment => [Presentations & Recording](#)

Please look up category "Materials from webinars/capacity buildings/conferences", then the links put under this event

☐ EAPN Policy and Advocacy Work

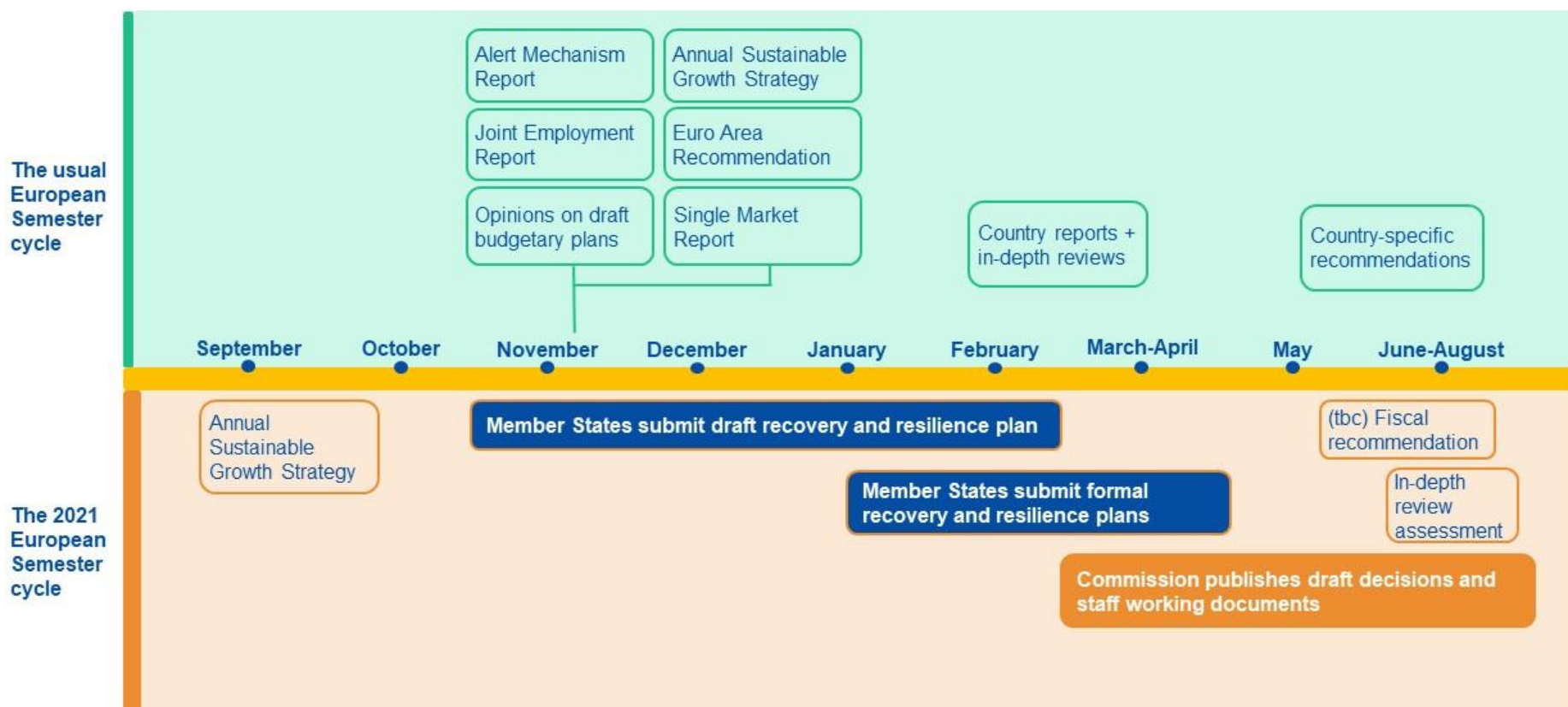
- ☐ EAPN [Assessment of ASGS & JER 2021](#) (18 February 2021)
- ☐ Involvement of CSOs/EAPN Members in ES Cycle 2021 (26 March 2021)
- ☐ Adaption of EAPN [European Semester Toolkit 2020](#)

European Semester Cycles up to 2020 + 2021

EC Deliverables and Timelines



Aligning timing: 2021 European Semester cycle



European Semester Cycle up to 2020 + 2021

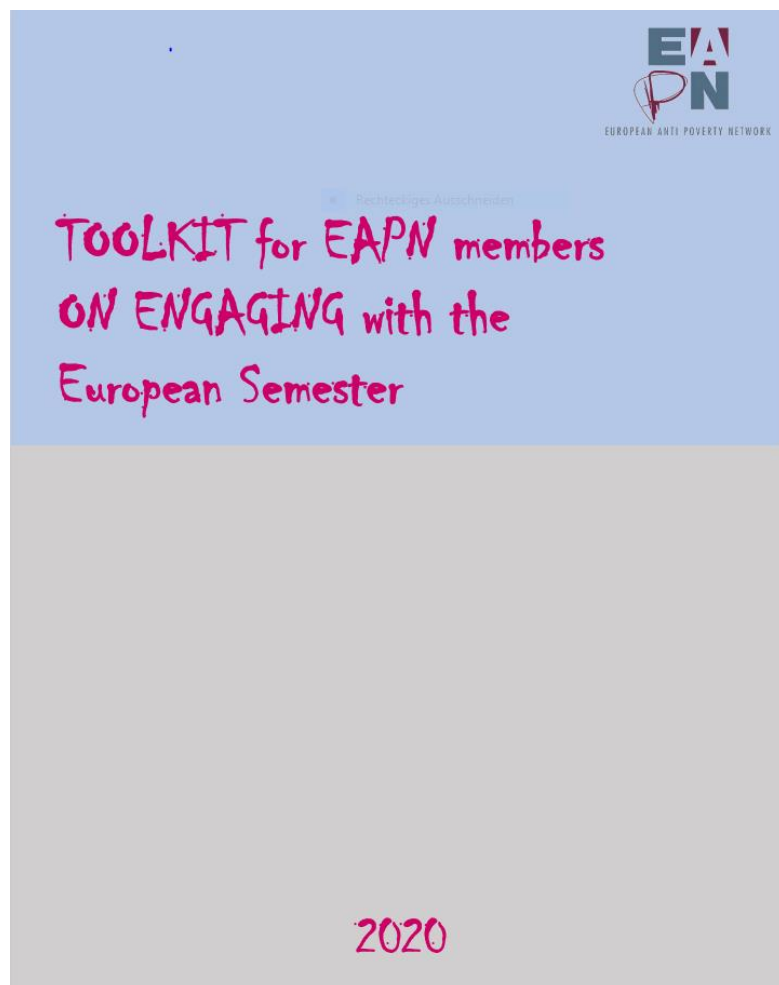
EC Deliverables and Timelines + EAPN Work



Key Deliverable + EAPN Work	ES Cycle 2020	ES Cycle 2021
<i>EAPN Assessment ES Cycle 2019</i>	September 2019	-
<i>EAPN Letter on ES Cycle 2020 to EC President</i>	October 2019	-
Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy (ASGS)	November 2019	September 2019
Joint Employment Report (JER)	November 2019	November 2020
<i>EAPN Assessment of ASGS + JER</i>	January 2020	February 2021
Country Reports	February 2020	Not issued
<i>EAPN Assessment of Country Reports</i>	April 2020	(Not possible)
National Reform Programmes (NRP)	April 2020	NRP integrated in RRP
Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR)	May 2020	Not issued
<i>EAPN Assessment of CSRs</i>	June 2020	(Not possible)
Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRP) – DRAFTs & FINAL	(Format did not yet exist)	November 2020-April 2021
Analytic Documents (replacing Country Reports) for RRP + Proposals for Council Implementing Acts on RRP	(Format did not yet exist)	June-August 2021
<i>EAPN Assessment of RRP + NRPs & in-depth EC assessments</i>		July-September 2021 <i>tbc</i>

EAPN European Semester Toolkit 2020

Please look it up and try it out! => Update



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EAPN Assessment of ASGS & JER 2021 –

Key Messages & Specific Recommendations

- ❑ Mainstream all principles of the EPSR throughout the ASGS and ES to fully support the implementation of the AP EPSR and social rights
- ❑ Need for integrated EU Anti-Poverty Strategy with ambitious EU poverty reduction targets
- ❑ Need to rebalance ES to ensure delivery on social rights and inclusive growth which leaves nobody behind in context of economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic
- ❑ Ensure use of Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), EU Structural Funds (in particular ESF+) and Technical Support Instruments for social reforms which guarantee social rights
- ❑ Give priority to adequate funding of and social investment in strong welfare states and guarantee access to key public services as a social rights
 - ❖ Make progress towards a Framework Directive for Adequate Minimum Income
- ❑ Increase focus on person-centered, rights-based and integrated support to quality, sustainable jobs, for all ages and excluded groups, rejecting negative conditionality
- ❑ Promote a holistic approach to education, training and lifelong learning as a social right
- ❑ Confirm and invest in civil society organisations (CSOs) and dialogue with people with direct experience of poverty as equal partners

EAPN Assessment of ASGS & JER 2021 –

Assessment ASGS 2021 & Analysis JER 2021

❑ ASGS 2021

- ❖ Opportunities: 1) Ensuring fairness as to the protection of the needs of European citizens, their health and their jobs; 2) Key challenges – e.g. rising inequalities and increased vulnerabilities for specific groups – correctly identified; 3) Focus on social upward convergence; 4) Call for social investment; 5) Highlighting importance of socially fair green transition; 6) Need to address labour market segmentation & tax evasion
- ❖ Concerns: 1) Insufficient focus on poverty, specific groups at risk of poverty and facing inequalities, in-work poverty, precarious employment and discriminations; 2) No explicit reference to social or human rights; 3) No focus on access to social protection, incl. MI; 4) Decent and affordable housing absent from ASGS, as is e.g. also inclusive education; 5) No mainstreaming of SDGs; Lack of explicit role given to civil dialogue and participation

❑ JER 2021

- ❖ Positive: 1) Mentioning of persistent problems with adequacy of MI & other social benefits; 2) Acknowledging of insufficient effect of social protection to reduce poverty; 3) Flagging up of persistence of in-work poverty, barriers for pwd and housing cost overburden
- ❖ Negative: 1) Lack of mainstreaming of social rights; 2) No reference to active inclusion

Governance of European Semester Cycles up to 2020 & challenges for CSOs this year



❑ Legal base for CSO involvement

- ❑ [Employment Guideline 7](#) “Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue” and [Recital 10*](#) of the [Employment Guidelines 2020](#) (26 February 2020) provide guidance for CSOs/NGOs to be consulted and to be treated as key partners by national governments and the European institutions

** (...) While the Integrated Guidelines are addressed to Member States and the Union, they should be implemented in partnership with all national, regional and local authorities, closely involving parliaments, as well as the social partners and representatives of civil society.*

- ❑ Role of CSOs in European Semester explicitly acknowledged in AGS 2019 as “a key partner to improve ownership, legitimacy and get better socio-economic outcomes”

❑ Challenges for CSO in view of Governance of European Semester 2021 Cycle

- ❑ **Role of CSOs** – a) in setting the milestones, targets and timelines of the reforms and investments as well as b) in the process leading to the adoption of their RRP and their monitoring – **in none of the documents explicitly recognised/“guaranteed”**
- ❑ **No reference to the Employment Guidelines** and meaningful involvement of CSO

EAPN Members' Involvement in European Semester Cycle 2021: Information & Evaluation



- ❑ **Summary info on involvement of EAPN members and on possibilities to give input in structured and meaningful manner:** 1) Contributions prepared; 2) Channels made available and used; 3) Thematic priorities of contributions; 4) Impact of involvement
- ❑ **Report “Assessment of participation and take-up of contributions”** (15 March 2021)
- ❑ **4 key learning points:** 1) Ineffective use of existing consultation practices and structures; 2) Weakened role for established interlocutors in national ministries (e.g. of Employment and Social Affairs)/traditional “entry points” to national governments; 3) Unclear procedures and/or very short deadlines for consultations; 4) Persistent unclarity about links between key deliverables of European Semester and possibilities to use the different EU-level funds for the effective delivery of policies, reforms and investments
- ❑ **Additional points (already received by EAPN LT)? => Approval of summary information?**
- ❑ **EAPN Secretariat to send EAPN Analysis & Assessment ASGS 2021 & JER 2021 + Report with summary information to EC, SPC and Permanent Representations => National networks to share it with European Semester Officers & Country Desk Officers**

Thank you for your attention!



For more information, please contact

Mathias Maucher

EAPN Policy Officer

mathias.maucher@eapn.eu

2021 European Semester Cycle & Recovery and Resilience Facility – First reaction (2020)



❑ Reference frameworks

- ❑ **Frequently mentioned reference frameworks for AGSG 2021: Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF); European Green Deal (EGD);** European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR); National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP) and the Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP) under the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)
- ❑ **Role of EPSR:** EPSR mentioned in relation to the need for the EU MS to “adopt measures to ensure equal opportunities, inclusive education, fair working conditions and adequate social protection.” (Communication, p. 8), but **no reference to a social or human right!** Also **no mention of the AP EPSR.**
- ❑ **SDGs** (including the at least 9 key SDGs essential to the fight against poverty and inequality, in particular SDG1 on poverty reduction) **not mainstreamed**, in contrast with the previous year’s intention of integrating them in the European Semester

❑ Dimension “Fairness” in ASGS 2021

- ❑ Small relative weight compared to other key 3 dimensions of ASGS 2020 and 2021

2021 European Semester Cycle & Recovery and Resilience Facility – First reaction (2020)



☐ Dimension “Fairness” in AGSG 2021

- ☐ Contents of section “Fairness” and other references to dimension => Examples
- ☐ Many useful “hooks”, but no explicit mention of poverty or minimum income

☐ Dimension “Monitoring and benchmarking framework/use of indicators

- ☐ Use of **Social Scoreboard** mentioned in Guidance Document, but unclarity how?
- ☐ Will the AGSG 2021 help to mainstream and implement social rights, beyond the Social Scoreboard?

☐ Governance of European Semester 2021 Cycle

- ☐ **Roles and power distribution in EC:** New EC Recovery and Resilience Task Force; Strengthened role for DG ECFIN; Which role for DG EMPL, Country Desk Officers?
- ☐ **Role of CSOs** a) in setting the milestones, targets and timelines of the reforms and investments as well as b) in the process leading to the adoption of their RRP and their monitoring not explicitly recognised/“guaranteed”
- ☐ No reference to the Employment Guidelines and meaningful involvement of CSO

ASGS and European Semester Cycle 2021 – What Risks? (2020)



- ❑ **Fairness dimension has small relative weight in ASGS** – only ½ page.
- ❑ **Lack of focus on social/human rights**, EPSR Action plan, SDGs, unlike Semester 2020
- ❑ **No mention of poverty or Europe 2020 target**, despite 109 million people (2018 AROPE). With COVID, Strategic Foresight Report 2020 predicts rise of 4.9pp (125-130 million).
- ❑ **No mention of minimum income and explicit role in fighting poverty** ensuring adequate income despite EPSR support/ and now adopted German Presidency Council Conclusions.
- ❑ **European Flagships focus on digital/green transition investment not social**, and no explicit social earmarking in funding – only green and digital.
- ❑ **Strengthening economic/ social resilience but no specific focus** for social impact
- ❑ **Lack of clarity about the role of the Social Scoreboard or how EPSR mainstreamed** and link between NRP and RRP?
- ❑ **Unclear monitoring/involvement of social actors** – particularly loss of CR and CSRs – how far all CSRs will be prioritised? Will Assessment Report be made public/JAF?
- ❑ **Lack of participation/transparency**– no mention of NGOs in ASGS - what opportunities for NGOs to engage or provide input with loss of CR and CSRs, and switch of ministries.

ASGS and European Semester Cycle 2021 – Some Recommendations (2020)



- ❑ **Explicit mainstreaming of all 20 Social Rights, beyond Scoreboard, [implementing the EPSR Action Plan](#)**, monitored systematically through the Semester and reflected in the RRP.
- ❑ **Urgent priority to fight against sharply rising poverty in COVID context:** EU integrated antipoverty strategy, new ambitious poverty target (SDG 1: 50% AROP/extreme Poverty)
- ❑ **Social ear-marking in funding**, clearer advice on the 43% left over from 37% on just transition/20% digital transition.
- ❑ **Social/Poverty Impact Assessment** to prevent negative impact of green/digital transition proposals and promote social rights. ([EAPN Reflection Paper on Green Deal/Just Transition](#))
- ❑ **Priority Investment in Social/Green initiatives** e.g. energy efficient social housing/support 'green jobs' from those furthest from labour market, affordable green transport
- ❑ **Need for an overarching strategy Agenda 2030/post 2020 strategy (Social/Green Deal)**
- ❑ **Transparent Assessment process** – Ensure Assessment Reports public on website.
- ❑ **New obligatory, transparent guidelines** to ensure that CSO's are engaged meaningfully as partners at all stags, underpinned by legal base: Recital 10 Employment Guidelines,
- ❑ **Commitment to return in 2022 to full ES with CR and CSRs**, in line with the Employment Guidelines and with systematic engagement of CSOs as partners – national and EU level.