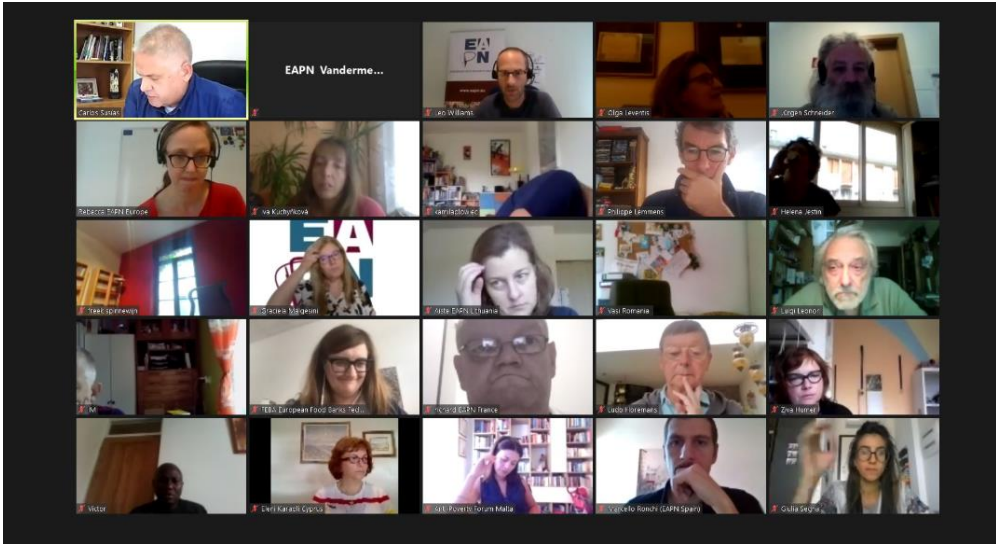




# Notes of EAPN General Assembly

## 25 September

### Online



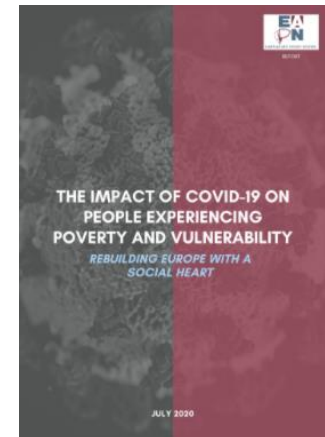
## SESSION 1 – SETTING THE SCENE

The President greets members (including former EAPN President Ludo Horemans) and highlights that EAPN is ‘celebrating’ 30 years of existence in 2020. However, it has been exceptional circumstances due to the COVID19 pandemic, resulting in a first ever online GA. He informed the GA that the Ex Co has agreed to organise the next GA in first half of 2021 to fully comply with Belgian legislation.



The President announced a process on the **revision of membership fees and statutes** to start with the next Ex Co and be dealt with at the next GA. He also announced that the candidate for the Interim Director Position would be presented to the next Ex Co. The President finally thanked all staff and the Director as well as all EAPN bodies for having adapted to online working.

In his introductory speech, the President referred to the current political set-up at EU level. He deplored that many objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy were not reached. Our ‘[Poverty Watch](#)’ reports could help to advance with our analysis and advocacy work, as the new [EAPN Multidimensionality of Poverty Explainer](#).



He referred to EAPN’s work on the European Semester, expressing his hope that it will be possible to make progress on poverty reduction with the new Country-Specific Recommendations, all knowing that the European Semester cycle is currently being reshaped. He also said that EAPN hopes that the **European Green Deal and Just Transition** would better take into account social aspects. The **COVID19 pandemic** has already shown the digital divide in our societies which should not increase. The President highlighted the ongoing advocacy work on the **Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights** which now has to be put into practice and called on all members to submit their reply to the EC consultation. He referred to the **upcoming Future of Europe Conference**.

The President praised the timeliness and usefulness of the [EAPN COVID19 Report](#). It has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic made the situation of the socially excluded and of vulnerable groups even worse, therefore EAPN’s continued work is of higher importance than ever.



The President recalled that **poverty is a political choice**. EAPN would need to make sure that the new **Recovery and Resilience Facility** respects social cohesion aims. He mentioned the work done on education and on minimum income schemes and called on all members to continue with their work for everybody to have adequate minimum income and decent minimum wages. These objectives need to be clearly reflected in EAPN's priorities. He finally thanked the EUISG for all its work.

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**Recognising members:** The president thanked members who were stepping down from various bodies in EAPN, recognising the important contributions made. He mentioned **Olaf Strømmen**, Policy Officer from EAPN Norway and EUISG member, and **Eugen Bierling-Wagner** (EAPN Austria) who has retired. He also thanked **Vera Hinterdorfer**, former EAPN Vice-President, who had to resign as ExCo member for Austria and from the EAPN Bureau due to health reasons and wished her the best for the future.

**Ratifying Delegates:**

**1. EAPN Portugal**

Antonio Condé Pinto is nominated to replace Sergio Aires

**2. EAPN Austria**

Robert Rybaczek is nominated to replace Vera Hinterdorfer

**Nominate proxies:**

No proxies had been received

**Decision**

**D1. New delegates were ratified. 102 in favour, 3 abstentions.**

## SESSION 2 – 2019 REPORTS

The Director gave a presentation about the 2019 activity report (see [here](#)), and the Treasurer presented the details of the finances in 2019, focusing on the balance sheet and other background documents (all available [here](#)). There were a number of questions on the finances – most answers were provided in the document '[Financial Q + A](#)'

### Priority C: Building Public Support - Campaigning around the European Parliamentary Elections



### Key discussion points

#### **Q: Do we really have a 30.000 Euro loss? Is this acceptable?**

A: The loss is 16.908 Euro in 2019, and that will not change. The amount of 13.300 Euro have been deemed ineligible by the auditor. We challenged the EC on this, and 9.600 Euro will be accepted – 2.700 Euro will appear in 2020, either paid by EMIN2 (outplacement Fintan for 1.750 Euro) or as loss (budget line interest for 950 Euro).

#### **Q: The EMIN2 project is finished – how much is the underspend and what will happen to it?**

A: EMIN2 has not been closed (financially) but will be in 2020. As per the balance sheet, there is an underspend of 118.540 Euro. As we foresee +/- 5.000 Euro spending in 2020, the benefit should be 113.000 Euro to be allocated in 2020. It would be allocated as per the decisions on the reserves (Doc GA7b)

#### **Q: Why is there a loss from the European meeting of People Experiencing Poverty?**

A: There is no specific budget for this. The Commission pays for most of the meeting but expects EAPN to cover local travel. Sometimes a funder covers this (the Austrian Presidency in 2018 for example) but we cannot guarantee this every year. In 2018 the Ex Co agree to increase the time of a staff member to work on this, recognising that in the past we did not have a staff member with responsibility for organising this meeting.

**Q: In the 'Rules of evaluation' document, to whom does the 'Board of Directors' refer?**

A: The Executive Committee

**Q: Why are we not voting on the EC EASI budget and audit report?**

A: Part of the mandate of the General Assembly is to 'Approve the accounts'. This is wider than just the EASI budget, it is the balance sheet and the **global** budget. The EC EASI budget and audit report are given as information as this is a large part of our total budget, but the vote is for our full accounts.

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### Decision

D2. Minutes of the 2019 General Assembly (GA3) were ratified. <b>104 in favour, 0 against, 4 abstentions.</b>
D3. The EAPN 2019 activity report 2019 (GA4) was ratified. <b>102 in favour, 3 against, 5 abstentions</b>
D4. The 2019 Balance Sheet (GA6) was ratified. <b>96 in favour, 9 against, 5 abstentions</b>
D5. Recommendation a) from GA7b. Recommendations on Allocations to EAPN Reserves was ratified. <b>97 in favour, 3 against, 10 abstentions.</b>
D6. Recommendation b) from GA7b. Recommendations on Allocations to EAPN Reserves was ratified. <b>96 in favour, 4 against, 10 abstentions.</b>
D7. The auditors' report (GA7) was ratified. <b>96 in favour, 0 against, 13 abstentions</b>
D8. The Rules of evaluation (GA7d) were ratified. <b>96 in favour, 14 abstentions.</b>
D9. The 'Discharge of the Members' was accepted. <b>84 in favour, 3 against, 23 abstentions.</b>

## SESSION 3 - 2021 WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

The Director presented the 2021 EaSI Work Programme as well as the planned work through the Working Yet Poor project. The Treasurer presented the 2021 budget. (Presentation available [here](#))



### Key discussion points

**Q. Why can we not vote on budget and work programme 2021 separately? How can we involve European Organisations (EOs) better in the work of EAPN, as they are not very visible in the 2021 work programme?**

A. The EAPN President assured the EOs of EAPN's commitment towards them and of the fact that collaboration with EOs on specific issues and activities will be continued in 2021. We try to engage EOs in our bodies (Ex CO, EUISG), political work (Poverty Watch, events, meetings, Intergroup on Poverty etc.) rather than have a specific item on engaging EOs in the work programme. We can take up further suggestions.

**Q. Are daily rates of the staff are reflecting real salaries? Based on the information presented in the budget, the hierarchy of salaries is confusing (e.g. financial manager earning more than the director).**

A: Staff salaries in EAPN were reviewed a number of years ago and a new salary scale was developed and is being used. It was agreed that it would not impact current staff, but would apply to future staff members, with a view to rationalizing salaries.



**Q. A request or suggestion for the 2021 WP. Can we introduce/include the topic of Food aid – sustainable and financially accessible food for all. EAPN FR would be interested to work on it, we are not suggesting introducing a new activity, we would like to introduce the theme into something that is already existing, within already planned activities.**

A: We can take up the topic in the work of the Ex Co and EUISG, thought the work around the European Green Deal, which includes the Farm to Fork Strategy. We could try to build a position on this topic and since we talk about food and nutrition, we need to include PeP in the consultations.

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### **Decision**

**D10. The 2021 Work Programme and budget was ratified. 100 in favour, 3 against, 7 abstentions.**

## SESSION 4 – STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Eleni Karaoli and Ian Johnston gave a presentation about the proposed Strategic Objectives – the presentation can be found [here](#). They reminded the General Assembly that the GA ratified the Strategic Review in 2019, and these proposed objectives are designed to be the short, medium and long term plan to implement the findings of the review, as requested by the GA in 2019.

**Q&A**

**Q. Where is the document which integrates the votes of the Ex Co on the proposed amendments of BAPN and FEANTSA?**

A. On Members Room [here](#) (GA10a). The ‘clean’ document is [here](#) (GA10).

**Q. The objectives only refer to EU countries, we need to reflect the fact that EAPN also has members outside of the EU.**

A. We will indeed need to find a way to update this next year to reflect the need to influence non-EU governments. We know that concretely, there are certain areas of EAPN which are suitable for collective work across the whole network – Poverty Watch, PeP meetings, Capacity Building etc.

**Decision**

**D11. Document GA10, Strategic Objectives, was ratified. 101 votes in favour, 0 votes against, 7 abstentions.**



## SESSION 5 – PRO BONO LEGAL SUPPORT FOR EAPN

### **Key discussion points**

Eleni Karaoli recalled that the Ex Co, in 2019, approved the proposal by Dentons to help EAPN and EAPN members on a pro-bono basis. This support was already used when revising EAPN's statutes.

Lamin Khadar ([lamin.khadar@dentons.com](mailto:lamin.khadar@dentons.com)), Denton's pro-bono manager Europe and International gave a presentation ([here](#)). He informed that Dentons is a commercial law firm, probably the biggest worldwide when it comes to the number of lawyers. It is a polycentric organisation with local and regional governance and with national offices in many EU MS and also countries outside the EU where EAPN has members. "Pro bono" means that free legal services are provided, also to NGO/CSO organizations' clients, including e.g. Eurochild or ENAR. Dentons can provide mainly two types of support and services for organisations such as EAPN and its members: 1) Legal compliance and documentation (e.g. employment contracts, consultancy contract, data protection, articles of statutes, compliance check of contract and partnership agreements); 2) Legal support to advocacy work and the defense of rights of people in poverty, homeless people, migrants and asylum seekers.

This could happen in the context legislative reforms, involvement in litigation in front of courts or "Amicus briefs" (mapping exercises, preparing legal briefings, putting together best practices on law reform). Lamin's aim is to serve as coordinator for any request, but EAPN members should then build up a direct contact with the legal team in country concerned. In reply question from Bert Luyts (ATD 4<sup>th</sup> World) on the generally shared values of Dentons and their ethics in engaging with clients, Lamin explained that Dentons is a commercial firm active in all parts of the world which also works with commercial agencies including in mining, extracting industry, aerospace. Dentons applies a rigorous vetting process and runs a human rights and business risk check for their clients also to prevent from negative impacts on Dentons' reputation. As a law firm they, however, also have the legal obligation to offer their services to commercial clients.