

EU 2024 POVERTY WATCH

Towards a Systemic Approach to Social Protection

AGENDA



European Economic and Social Committee,
Van Maerlant Building, 2nd floor, Room VMA22
& Online



8 April 2025

European Poverty Watch Launch

8 April 2025

EESC

Poverty has remained at considerable levels in Europe in recent years whilst progress towards meeting the EU's 2030 poverty reduction targets remained limited highlighting the need for significantly improved efforts. Additionally, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) observes persistent poverty rates, in its various manifestations.

The absence of a systemic approach is evident throughout the various stages of the policy cycle. Among the most salient issues, we observed the limited involvement of those living in poverty and social exclusion —both during the design of social protection policies and assessment of their impact. The report raises concerns about the coherence of social protection policies with the basic principles governing our democracies, as well as with other policies; the coverage and financing of social protection schemes; and the growing number of challenges that hinder their protective function, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, climate change, ageing societies, war, and the shrinking of democracies worldwide.

Therefore, it is essential to explore why the policies in place are not addressing effectively the root causes of exclusion and therefore what must be done to enjoy the full potential of those policies. EAPN believes that a coherent, integrated, systems-based approach can significantly enhance the impact of social protection policies and the fight against poverty. Better policy coordination and greater political coherence are key characteristics of a systemic approach to social protection and fundamental principles of sound public governance.

Based on our findings, we propose concrete measures to improve the effectiveness of social protection systems and strengthen their protective function. These recommendations are organised into key proposals at the EU level concerning policy-making and implementation. This report should also contribute to the renewal of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the development of the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty and Affordable Housing and Energy strategies.

AGENDA

09.30 - 10.00

Arrival of participants & Welcoming coffee

10.00 - 10.10

Opening remarks

Séamus Boland, President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee

10.10 - 10.45

Key findings & recommendations of the 2024 Poverty Watch

Jessica Machacova, Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer, EAPN Europe

10.45 - 11.50

Roundtable discussion

What is missing from social protection systems to address root causes of poverty and support people experiencing poverty?

Moderation: **Juliana Wahlgren**, Director, EAPN

- **Jiri Svarc**, Head of Unit, Social Policies, Child Guarantee, SPC, DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission
- **Krzysztof Balon**, EESC Rapporteur on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and Vice-President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group
- **Marie Toussaint**, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament and co-chair of the Intergroup Fighting against Poverty
- **Gunou Mahmoud**, Person experiencing poverty representative, EAPN Netherlands

11.50 - 12.00

Concluding remarks

Juliana Wahlgren, Director, EAPN Europe