



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

FIGHTING POVERTY, SHAPING CHANGE

EAPN 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This report was drafted by Susana Anastácio, Senior Communications Officer, and Kahina Rabahi, EAPN Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. The design was developed by Susana Anastácio.



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Robert Bosch
Stiftung

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear EAPN Members, friends, partners, fellow advocates, and funders,

2024 was a pivotal year for the European Anti-Poverty Network: a moment of reflection, resistance, and renewed commitment. Over three decades since our founding, the world around us has changed dramatically. Civil society organisations face shrinking spaces and funding, the welfare state and social services are under threat, and the most vulnerable are being politically weaponised. Yet EAPN stands firm on its mission: **to fight for the eradication of poverty.**

While **reviewing our strategic planning for the next 4 years**, we continued to push for deep change, challenging not only policies, but also how poverty is understood and addressed. This was an opportunity to consult and regroup with the entire network. One of the year's most significant milestones was the **announcement of the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, a long-overdue step that EAPN has been consistently advocating for since 1990.** While the content and implementation of the strategy remain uncertain, this fight to centre poverty eradication at the core of the European project is well underway. It marked the focus of our second semester, while the first six months were dedicated to the European elections.

We also **expanded our alliances, worked on in-work poverty in dialogue with companies, and highlighted the impacts of digitalisation of essential services.** We did all this while **putting people experiencing poverty at the centre of policymaking**, pushing for the recognition that poverty represents a violation of human rights.

This year was also determining in securing funding and safeguarding the **financial stability** of our network. Thanks to a new grant from the **Bosch Foundation**, along with support from the **Belgian Presidency** and **Visit Brussels** for key events, EAPN is now well-positioned to enter a new phase: one marked by a more diversified funding base supporting both internal operations and external activities.

Our message remains clear: poverty is not a personal failure, it's a political choice, and so is its eradication.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a summary of a year of work.

Thank you for being part of this long journey. Let's keep moving forward collectively!

In solidarity,
Juliana Wahlgren
Director, European Anti-Poverty Network

2024: A YEAR OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS & STORIES

5 European reports

19 National Poverty Watch Chapters

17 500 followers on social media.

1 OpEd at Euronews.

1st edition of the Epic Fails with the Community of Communication Officers in Brussels.

1 participation on the podcast Europod.

3 conferences under the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Over 10 conferences featured our participation as speakers.

3 editions of the EAPN Talks.

4 In-person events

> 764 Participants



Development of the **EAPN Anti-Poverty Strategy** following the announcement of the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, in July 2024.

Launch of the **EAPN Roadmap Towards an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**.

Development of the **Coalition for the Anti-Poverty Strategy**.

1 meeting with **Roxana Mînzatu**, the Commissioner responsible for social rights and skills, quality jobs, within the Coalition efforts.



"Eradicating poverty means an equal starting point. Poor people can most often not partake in society like others. If you can't afford food, housing or healthcare, all your energy goes to trying to keep safe and survive; there is no wiggle room for any form of creativity or meaningful participation in your community. We owe everyone at least that. Especially children."

Bára Halldórsdóttir (PeP, EAPN/Iceland)

OUR WORK: CHALLENGES & BREAKTHROUGHS

In 2024, EAPN worked to defend and advance the fight against poverty in a **context where the role of civil society was increasingly under pressure, and the rights of systematically marginalised and vulnerable people were under threat.**

Along the way, we encountered familiar roadblocks: the continued framing of poverty as an individual failure; the widening gap between policy and lived realities; and the ongoing disinvestment in the welfare state and social protection systems. Internally, we also faced the challenge of **redefining our strategic direction — confronting our weaknesses while building on our strengths.** Yet there were real breakthroughs: the recognition of poverty as a political priority through the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy; the launch of a Coalition for the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy with other civil society organisations; deeper, more meaningful engagement with people experiencing poverty; and renewed efforts to sharpen our communications and strategic focus. The year taught us that **in times of backlash, staying grounded in our values, connected to communities, and bold in our advocacy is more essential than ever.**

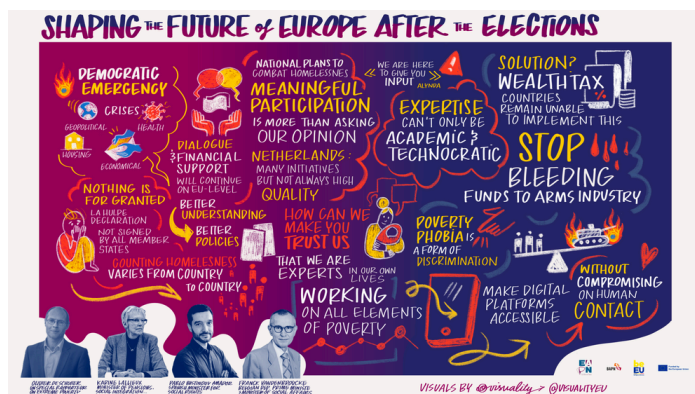
One of the key highlights of the year was the election to the European Parliament and the subsequent nomination of the new College of European Commissioners. **EAPN actively engaged in campaigns at both national and European levels, working closely with its members to ensure that the fight against poverty remained high on the political agenda.** Through targeted advocacy and coordinated action, EAPN emphasised the urgent need for robust social policies and concrete commitments to eradicate poverty across Europe.

In 2024, members of EAPN's Executive Committee and Bureau were also elected. This leadership team brings together experts from different fields: social rights, anti-discrimination, migration, economic justice, and gender equality.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY PARTICIPATION

EAPN promotes **meaningful and structured participation of people experiencing poverty through national networks, capacity-building processes, and direct involvement in EU-level policy dialogue.** These mechanisms aim to empower people to shape the decisions that affect their lives. Participation is not symbolic; it is rooted in respect, dialogue, and shared responsibility between all stakeholders. A PeP delegation was present during the People's Summit, the ADECCO event "Making Work a Safe Road Out of Poverty", and the PeP Summit.

In 2024, the highest point was the **European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty.** Organised since 2002, it is a platform for individuals affected by poverty to join forces, share knowledge, and engage in decision-making processes that impact their lives. This edition was **co-coordinated with the Belgian Anti-Poverty Network and supported by the Belgian Presidency and Visit Brussels.**



The 22nd People Experiencing Poverty (PeP) Meeting took place in Brussels, bringing together 32 national delegations and EU policymakers to address key issues. The discussions focused on the Child Guarantee, digitalisation, homelessness, and minimum income. The event featured two innovative moments: the Agora, where diverse and personal experiences of poverty across Europe highlighted the need for a unified, empathetic, and rights-based approach; and a hands-on drawing workshop that used visual storytelling to convey powerful messages and lived experiences.

The [PeP Summit Report](#) summarises the activities carried out and the resulting recommendations.

SHAPING POLICY FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

2024 PEOPLE'S SUMMIT - BUILDING THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS: TOWARDS AN EU ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

Following the announcement in July 2024 by the European Commission of the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, the 2024 edition of the People's Summit was a crucial opportunity to connect people experiencing poverty with decision-makers of the day focused on discussion and forward-thinking around one key question: How can the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy meet the needs of people experiencing poverty and lead to the eradication of poverty?

The 2024 People's Summit was attended by 100 delegates, including EAPN members, people experiencing poverty, representatives of EU institutions, civil society organisations, and academics. As one of the first public events on the topic, it sent a strong message to EU institutions: ending poverty is a political choice, and the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy is the opportunity to pave the way towards its eradication.



TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY: INFLUENCING THE FIRST-EVER EU ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

A comprehensive, ambitious and rights-based EU Anti-Poverty Strategy has been one of EAPN's core demands since its establishment in 1990. Since July 2024, we have intensified our advocacy efforts to ensure that the European Commission's commitment is translated into tangible outcomes for the millions of people living in poverty across Europe.

In October 2024, we published our [Roadmap towards an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy](#). The roadmap outlines the process of shaping the Strategy around four key pillars: a theory of change focused on eradication rather than mere alleviation; the meaningful involvement of people experiencing poverty (PeP); coherence with other EU frameworks; and strong governance mechanisms.

This Roadmap laid the foundation for [EAPN's position paper Towards the Eradication of Poverty](#), which will be launched in April 2025. Only an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy shaped through an inclusive, transparent, and ambitious process can bring about lasting change.

EP INTERGROUP ON FIGHTING AGAINST POVERTY

Together with ATD Fourth World, EAPN campaigned for the renewal of the European Parliament Intergroup on Fighting Against Poverty. In the context of rising living costs and the aftermath of multiple crises, the Intergroup played a vital role in connecting Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) with civil society organisations. It provides an institutional space to design and debate policies through an intersectional lens, with the goal of eradicating poverty.

By bringing together MEPs from different EP Committees, the Intergroup aims to break the siloed approach that often separates social rights from other policy areas. The campaign involved meeting with political groups and shaping a cross-party membership to ensure representativeness and commitment. Thanks to these efforts, the intergroup was successfully re-established in December.

REPORTING WITH PURPOSE

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS BY PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY

The digitalisation of public services and social protection, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has ushered in an era of digital solutions by default. This study seeks to understand the potential risks posed by the digital welfare state established in many European countries, particularly regarding access to essential services, social benefits, and the labour market. The report highlights emerging trends of digitally induced poverty. Additionally, the automation of discrimination facilitated by artificial intelligence (AI) demands close attention from social justice organisations.

Furthermore, since digitalisation is often seen as a tool to increase the efficiency of the welfare state, it also risks becoming a mechanism for implementing austerity measures

EU 2024 POVERTY WATCH: TOWARDS A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

In 2024, we published the latest edition of the EU Poverty Watch, our annual monitoring and analysis exercise on poverty and social exclusion in Europe. This year's report focuses on the need for a systemic approach to social protection and is based on 19 national Poverty Watch reports.

The 2024 EU Poverty Watch identifies key aspects that must be addressed to ensure a systemic approach produces concrete results for people experiencing poverty. This includes coordinating policy actions across areas such as housing, education, employment, and healthcare; including people experiencing poverty at every stage of the policy process; and addressing the root causes of poverty, including weakened social services and discrimination.

EAPN'S REACTION TO THE 2025 EU SEMESTER AUTUMN PACKAGE

Every year, EAPN monitors the European Semester process — the annual cycle that coordinates the EU's economic and social policies. With appropriate objectives and priorities, the European Semester has the potential to support EU and national efforts to tackle poverty and social exclusion by, for instance, promoting social investments, fairer taxation and revenue collection, adequate wages and minimum income schemes, and inclusive green and digital transitions. However, in practice, the European Semester has so far largely driven austerity policies, focusing mostly on competitiveness and fiscal consolidation.

The 2025 European Semester will once again continue this trend. Urgent reform of the European Semester process is crucial. This includes ensuring that social and environmental objectives are overarching priorities; excluding social and green investments from the 3% deficit-to-GDP limit established by the Stability and Growth Pact; and placing democracy, transparency, and accountability at the centre of the process.

Access EAPN reports.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Developing and strengthening communication was a top priority for EAPN in the second half of 2024. In a world where people are bombarded daily with countless messages, cutting through the noise requires a clear, strategic approach.

Effective communication is essential not only for reaching audiences but also for spreading our values and advancing our core goal: fight for the eradication of poverty.

This applies not only to external communication — engaging policymakers, the media, social media audiences, and the general public — but also to how we communicate internally. **Strong internal communication is key to reinforcing EAPN's work at all levels and ensuring that the lived experiences of people experiencing poverty are heard, valued, and reflected in our advocacy.**

EAPN ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

The development of a strong advocacy strategy for the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy required an equally compelling communications strategy. While respecting EAPN's visual identity, we focused on bringing innovation to the campaign's image.

This work has stood out across all campaign content, including EAPN events focused on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, creating a sense of continuity, evolution, and an increased recognition of our work among stakeholders.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

In 2024, the communications team led multiple impactful campaigns alongside the EAPN Anti-Poverty Strategy campaign. The most significant included:

- The European Parliament Elections Campaign in May
- The Digitalisation Report Campaign, launched in September and still ongoing
- The 17 October - International Day for the Eradication of Poverty Campaign

A common thread across all these efforts was the need to shift the narrative and counter the weaponisation of people experiencing poverty, under the banner: **“Fight Poverty, Not the Poor.”**

Each campaign aimed to expose how poverty is rooted in structural and systemic design — not personal failure — pushing back against narratives that blame individuals instead of challenging the systems that perpetuate inequality.

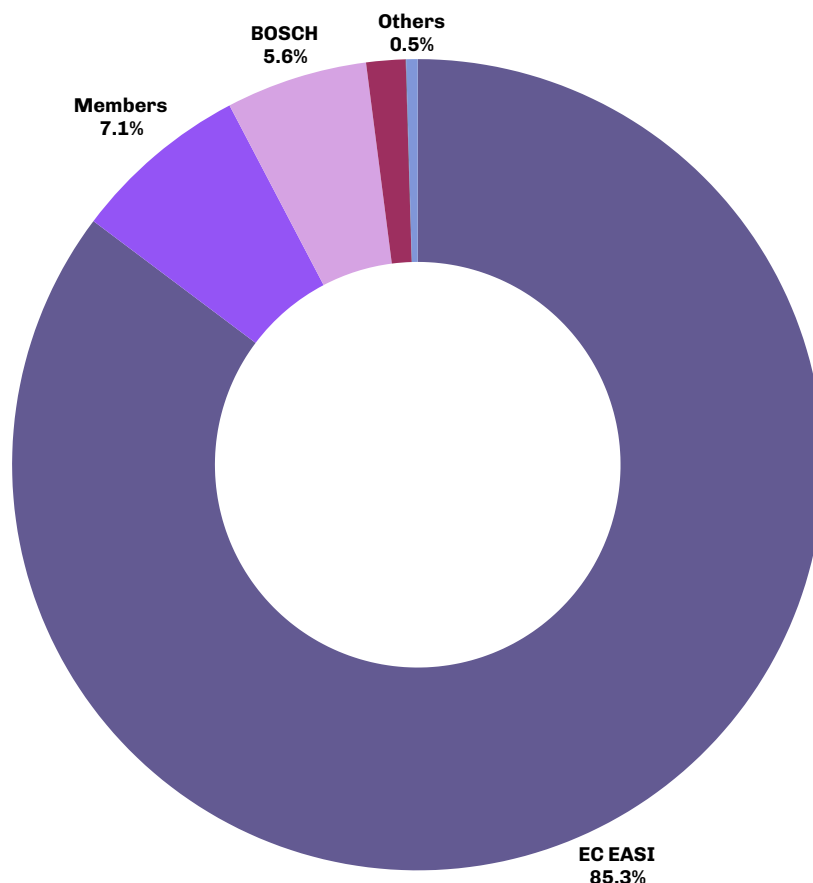
Believing in the power of collaboration, we launched a new communications community event: Epic Fails. This initiative creates a space to openly share lessons learned from failure and to strengthen collective knowledge across teams. Following a successful debut, the event will return in 2025, laying the foundation for an ongoing community with regular gatherings. Communication must go beyond the idea of increasing EAPN's visibility. For the network, it's a powerful tool to shape narratives, shift mindsets, and influence policy. When rooted in justice and lived expertise, communication becomes a driving force for real social change.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM

European Commission (EASI)	1.061.286,95€
Members	87.949,00€
BOSCH Stiftung	70.264,55€
Subvention 2024 Belgian Presidency	19.433,08€
Others	5.669,14€
European Social Network (ESN)	250,00€

Total income: 1.244.834,72€

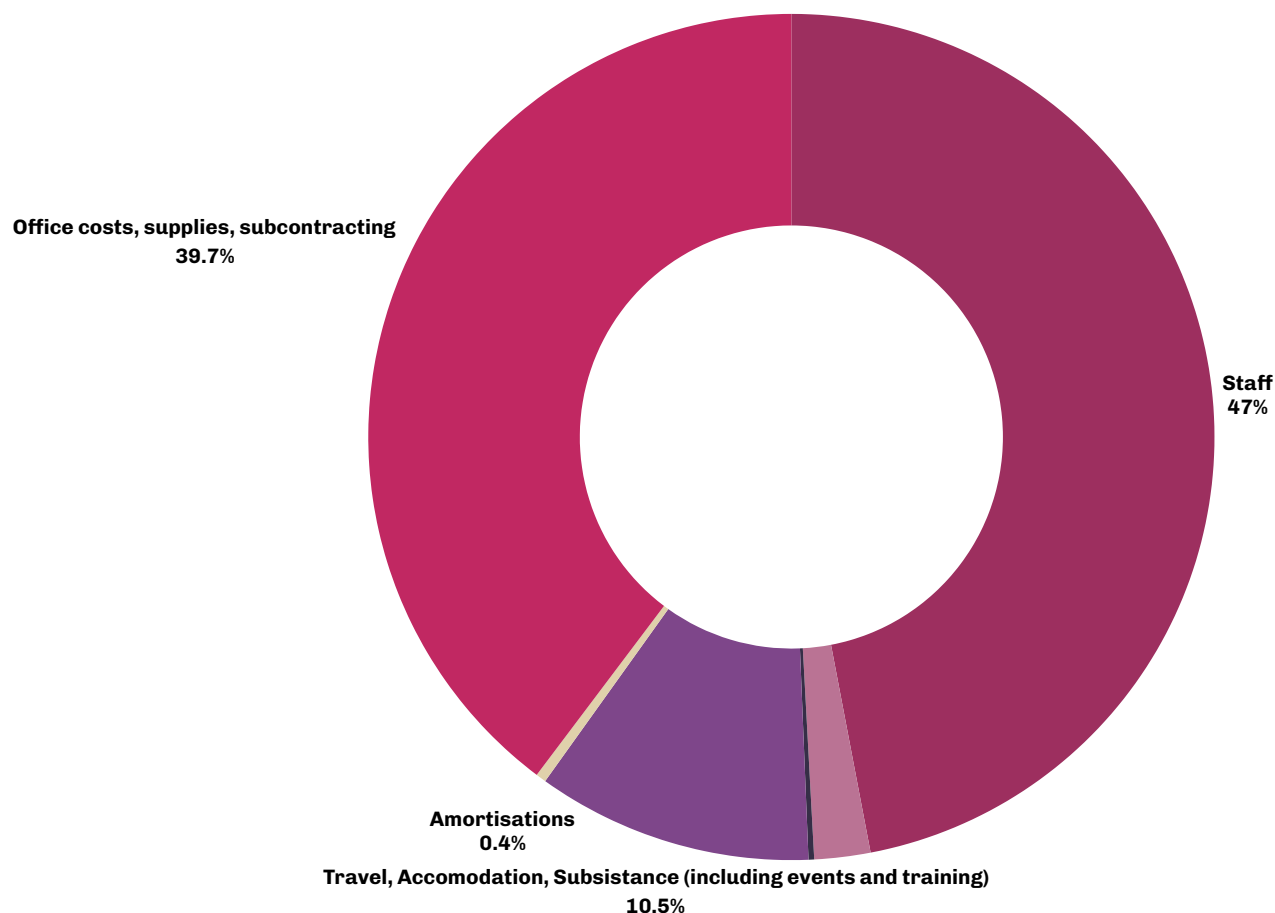


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

WHAT WE SPENT IT ON

● Staff costs	609.843,49€
● Office costs, supplies, subcontracting	515.382,80€
● Travel, Accomodation, Subsistance (including events and trainings)	136.633,71€
● Insurances	27.764,67€
● Amortisations	5.136,97€
● Overheads	2.787,34€

Total expenditure: 1.322.636,98€



CONCLUSION: A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

EAPN is entering a new phase of growth, financial sustainability, and transformation. As the political and social landscape across Europe becomes increasingly complex, we are laying the groundwork to ensure our work remains ambitious and impactful. **This roadmap reflects our commitment to strengthening the network from within and increasing its influence across multiple levels of governance**, from local to EU institutions. It will allow us to coordinate more effectively, influence decision-making processes, and build stronger alliances that amplify our voice in policy debates and firmly position us in the fight against poverty. While our reputation as a key player in this fight continues to grow, we must maintain high standards to ensure that our network can transcend the current policy agenda and push back against an increasingly hostile political environment. Real societal change can only be achieved by amplifying the voices, participation, and representation of people with lived experience. There is nothing about them without them.

To respond to EAPN's current and future needs, we have defined an integrated strategy for the coming years, **built around five interlinked priorities**:

1. Strengthening our internal structures

We aim to make the network more resilient and effective by improving coordination, collaboration, and mutual support across members. This will reinforce EAPN's ability to act collectively and respond quickly to emerging challenges.

2. Advancing the eradication of poverty

At the heart of our mission is the fight to end poverty. We will pursue bold and ambitious advocacy at both EU and national levels, using every available tool to push for structural change and social justice.

3. Addressing poverty in all its dimensions

Poverty is deeply intertwined with other social issues. We will tackle its intersectionality by expanding beyond traditional social policy, integrating fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democratic participation as core pillars of our work.

4. Securing fair and sustainable funding

We will strengthen our advocacy for fair taxation and just economic policies that fund social inclusion. This includes ensuring that EU and local funding mechanisms prioritise the eradication of poverty and actively reduce inequality.

5. Shifting the narrative to build power from the ground up

Changing how poverty is understood is key to changing how it is addressed. We will continue to challenge stigma and promote lived experience as expertise. By streamlining our communications and ensuring the participation of people experiencing poverty in all our activities, we aim to foster mobilisation and build a truly bottom-up, community-driven movement.

The present and future challenges also demand a strong focus on fundraising — not only to sustain our own activities but to strengthen the capacity of our network and amplify the voices of those most affected by poverty. Strategic fundraising will ensure that our advocacy remains independent, impactful, and people centred.

This forward-looking strategy is a call to action. **By strengthening alliances, investing in our collective capacity, mobilising communities, and shifting the narrative on poverty, EAPN is laying the groundwork for lasting change.** Guided by our values and driven by our mission, we remain committed to eradicating poverty and empowering those most affected to lead the way.



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