

INTERNATIONAL DAY
17 FOR THE **ERADICATION**
OCT. OF **POVERTY**

**ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH
LOCAL & NATIONAL STRATEGIES**

FRANCE

**POVERTY WATCH
2025**



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK



**Funded by
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**Robert Bosch
Stiftung**



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

EAPN FRANCE - Poverty Watch 2025

SCENARIO A: Your country has adopted NAPS & LAPS

1. Mapping and general description of existing National and Local Anti-Poverty Strategies (NAPS & LAPS), including:

a. Scope and Priorities

- Working definition of poverty used by the NAPS/LAPS

In the official *Pacte des Solidarités* document, the government does not provide an operational or quantified definition of poverty. It does not mention any monetary threshold, statistical indicator, or formal qualitative definition. The term appears to be used in an implicit and commonly understood way, which weakens the conceptual clarity of the text.

For a formal assessment, one must refer to official definitions provided by institutions such as *INSEE* (60% of the median income) or others like the or the *Observatoire des Inégalités* (50%).

- Main policy areas addressed and priorities, (e.g. income support, employment, housing, health, education, child poverty, homelessness, etc.)

The 2023-2027 *Pacte des solidarités* is structured around four main pillars:

1. Preventing poverty and combating inequality from early childhood

- Strengthening the early childhood sector, including the creation of new daycare places and support for innovative initiatives
- Support for parenting
- Improving access to culture and leisure activities
- Tackling school dropout
- Identifying and supporting young people in situations of disconnection, particularly NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

2. Expanding access to employment for all

- More targeted support for people who are very far from employment and experiencing precarity
- Removing barriers to employment (childcare, housing, health, mobility)

This pillar is closely linked to the ongoing *France Travail* reform.

3. Combating severe exclusion through access to rights

- Expanding local access-to-rights initiatives, with stronger coordination and proactive outreach approaches
- Enhanced support for the most vulnerable groups: people in extreme poverty, elderly people living in precarity
- Preventing evictions

4. Building a socially just ecological transition

- Access to quality food
- Development of inclusive and supportive mobility
- Combating energy poverty
- **Links with other national frameworks (i.e. recovery plans)**

The 2023-2027 Pacte des solidarités is built around 25 key national measures, supported by four major national reforms:

1. **Early Childhood Public Service Reform (Pillar 1)**

- Early Childhood Innovation Fund (FIPE) → support for experimental projects aimed at improving care for young children
- Emergency Plan for Homeless Children
- Free school breakfasts
- "Pass colo" (support for access to holiday camps)

2. **France Travail Reform (Pillar 2)**

- AVIP nurseries (aimed at supporting professional integration): a tool for reconciling employment pathways and parenting
- Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée (TZCLD): a place-based experiment for reintegration through employment
- Support programmes for disconnected youth

3. **"Solidarity at the Source" Reform (Pillar 3)**

- Non-Recourse Zero Territories (TZNR)

- Mobile France Services Units

As well as the “Housing First Plan II”:

- Eviction prevention
- Housing and support services
- Improved inter-service coordination

4. Green Transition Reform (Pillar 4)

- "Better Eating for All" Programme (MMPT): improving access to healthy and sustainable food
- €1 school canteens and Egalim bonus: financial support for school meal services for children from low-income families
- Energy vouchers: support with energy bills for households in poverty

- **Specific attention to an intersectional approach and marginalised communities**

The *Pacte des Solidarités* does not include any formal intersectional approach, that is, no explicit strategy that takes into account the overlapping of factors such as gender, origin, social precarity, disability, etc. The document only refers to certain specific groups (*vulnerable women, single-parent families, disconnected youth*), without establishing an analytical framework that combines multiple dimensions of vulnerability simultaneously.

- **Alignment with EU and international social rights frameworks (e.g. European Pillar of Social Rights, Sustainable Development Goals).**

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b. Indicators

- **Which indicators were used to assess progress of the NAPS/LAPS, and their limits?**
- **Who/what is missing? Who has been included?**

c. Governance mechanisms and consistency amongst policy actors

- **National vs. regional/local implementation: identification of existing gaps or disparities, are the NAPS/LAPS covering identified gaps? What are the missing gaps?**
- **Steering committee or other body monitoring the implementation of the NAPS/LAPS (methodology? participation of PEP?)**

Governance is structured as follows:

→ National oversight is provided by the Interministerial Delegation for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty (DIPLP).

→ Territorial implementation is carried out by a Regional Commissioner for the Fight against Poverty, appointed to each regional prefect. The Commissioner is responsible for translating national priorities into territorial actions regarding poverty prevention and reduction. They ensure that public policies are adapted to local specificities and support the implementation of the commitments outlined in the Pacte des solidarités.

In line with an interministerial coordination approach, the Commissioner brings together all relevant stakeholders (state services, local authorities, civil society organisations, and social partners) to ensure the efficiency of measures and to deliver a coordinated response tailored to the needs of the affected populations.

- **Which ministries oversee adopting, implementing and evaluating the NAPS?**

Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity; Ministry of Ecological Transition; Ministry of National Education; Ministry for Overseas Territories; Ministry for Territorial Authorities.

- **Involvement of diversity of stakeholders: academia, civil society organisation, trade union, representative of diverse policy areas...**
- **Specific attention to urban, rural, and remote areas, geographical cohesion.**

d. **Timeframe**

- **Duration and periodicity of strategies (e.g. short-, medium-, or long-term),**

The Pacte covers the period 2023-2027 (five years), and came into effect on January 1st, 2024.

- **Monitoring and revision timelines**

X

- **Continuity beyond political cycles: is it synchronised with elections? Why? Long-term guarantee of continuation of NAPS and LAPS after this policy cycle.**

No explicit reference is made to any alignment of the *Pacte des Solidarités* with electoral cycles (presidential or legislative). The 2024-2027 Pact falls within the current mandate (2022-2027), but it is acknowledged that a future government may revise, renew, or transform its commitments. There is no constitutional or legal basis ensuring its automatic continuity beyond the current five-year term.

3. Identification of good/promising practices

Please summarise the good or promising practices identified in your assessment in a separate table or section within the chapter. Please provide at least 5 good/promising practices.

Practice	What it consists of	What it changes concretely	Why it is structurally transformative
Zero Long-Term Unemployment Territories (TZCLD)	Permanent contracts offered to people long excluded from the labour market, employed by Employment-Oriented Enterprises (EBEs) funded by reallocating unemployment costs.	Stable return to employment for excluded persons, improved well-being, social utility of activities, reduction of stigma.	Rejects the logic of individual activation and implements a vision of work as a right. Redefines employment policies, mobilizes existing resources, and shifts the paradigm on the role of affected people in public action.
Zero Non-Take-Up Territories (TZNR)	Territorial initiatives to identify and reduce non-take-up of rights through shared diagnostics, proactive outreach (“going towards”), and inter-actor cooperation.	Increased use of rights, reduction in benefit interruptions, improved trust in institutions, better adapted responses to real needs.	Places the effective exercise of rights at the core of social action. Values experiential knowledge, transforms professional practices, and combats institutional injustice and systemic mistrust.
AVIP Nurseries	Nurseries reserving places for parents in integration pathways, combined with support towards employment or training.	Access to stable childcare, removal of a major employment barrier, family stabilization, increased autonomy for women.	Provides a structural response to gendered and child poverty. Bridges social, educational, and integration policies. Implements an integrated approach to family poverty.
€1 School Meals and Free Breakfasts	Free or low-cost meals in schools for children from low-income families, in willing	Improved attendance, concentration, and well-being; reduction of food and	Makes access to food an effective social right. Strengthens the protective role of schools. Tackles child

	municipalities, especially in priority education zones (REP) and rural areas.	educational inequalities.	poverty through a universal, non-stigmatising approach.
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1. Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée - Zero Long-Term Unemployment Territories (TZCLD)

The TZCLD experiment represents a paradigm shift from traditional employment policies, which are typically based on conditionality, forced activation, and the individualized responsabilization of the unemployed. It starts from a counter-hegemonic premise: that employment is a right, and long-term unemployment is not the result of individual failure but a social and institutional construct.

By offering open-ended, part-time contracts (CDIs à temps choisi) at minimum wage to individuals who have been excluded from the labour market, and employing them in non-profit organizations specifically created to meet unmet local needs, TZCLD brings together three often disconnected dimensions: economic inclusion, social utility, and territorial transformation.

Funding is based on a reallocation of avoidable unemployment-related costs (such as minimum income benefits, emergency housing, healthcare, and social isolation), thereby shifting social spending toward human investment.

The scope of TZCLD goes far beyond job creation: it serves as an experiment in local democracy, where people affected by long-term unemployment co-design the activities, participate in governance, and help reshape social recognition norms. In doing so, TZCLD directly addresses the symbolic and status-related dimensions of poverty - social relegation - and repositions marginalized individuals as agents of transformation, within a framework of structural empowerment.

2. Territoires Zéro Non-Recours - Zero Non-Take-Up Territories (TZNR)

Non-take-up is not merely a marginal effect of the social protection system, but a deep symptom of its opacity, complexity, and above all, the institutional mistrust it generates. The TZNR initiatives treat non-take-up as a systemic failure of public action to ensure the effective access to rights.

By building local alliances between institutions, social workers, service users, and civil society organisations, these approaches enable the development of shared territorial diagnoses, the identification of administrative grey zones, and proactive outreach (aller-vers) through a logic of strengthened social presence.

This marks a genuine shift in the design of social action: moving from desk-based services to fieldwork, from administrative processing to capacity-building.

In this light, TZNR is a promising practice, not only because of its direct results (increased access to rights, fewer benefit interruptions), but because it challenges the implicit norms of public services and redefines social citizenship.

3. AVIP Nurseries (Nurseries for Professional Integration)

AVIP nurseries provide a structural response to a frequently underestimated driver of persistent poverty: the lack of social infrastructure adapted to the needs of low-income parents, particularly single mothers.

By reserving nursery places for parents engaged in professional integration pathways and combining childcare with individualised socio-professional support, these nurseries offer a concrete solution to key barriers to employment, while ensuring quality early childhood care.

They help to break down silos between social, educational, and employment policies, and allow support services to be redesigned to better align with people's actual life trajectories.

In a context where single-parent families (the vast majority of whom are women) continue to experience disproportionate poverty, AVIP nurseries show that fighting poverty requires a gender-responsive, integrated, and place-based approach to public policy.

4. Free Breakfasts and €1 School Meals

These measures address one of the most intimate dimensions of poverty: food insecurity, along with the shame, unequal treatment, and early marginalisation it generates. By guaranteeing a daily meal for children from low-income families, especially in priority education zones (REP) and rural areas, they serve a dual purpose: meeting a basic physiological need and reinforcing the school's role as a social safety net.

Documented effects are numerous: improved school attendance, increased concentration, a better classroom atmosphere, and reduced stigma. These measures act as levers for the concrete universalisation of social rights, countering stigmatising targeting approaches. They contribute to making school a place of justice, not just a place of learning.

4. Recommendations to your national decision-makers

What are your recommendations to your national decision-makers on how to improve the NAPS and LAPS of your country? Please provide at least 5 recommendations spelling clearly to which level of decision-making they are addressed to.

France's NAPS, as implemented through the *Pacte des solidarités*, largely continues the trajectories of previous policies, with limited adjustments but no fundamental

transformation - neither in terms of rights nor of resources.

Its effectiveness is undermined by a narrow focus on activation through employment, at the expense of a systemic, rights-based approach. These policy choices are not neutral: they generate exclusion, mistrust, and social harm. They discredit people facing hardship and perpetuate an unequal social order.

In this regard, we put forward five priority recommendations to be addressed to national authorities, with the aim of guiding a thorough revision of the NAPS and LAPS frameworks in France.

1. Move beyond the dogma of employment as a universal remedy for poverty

The narrowing of social policies to a sole focus on labour market integration - particularly through the reform of the RSA (minimum income) and the rollout of France Travail - reflects a reductive, ineffective, and stigmatising vision of poverty.

Although this approach has dominated policy ideologies for decades, it is not supported by conclusive evidence: the decline in unemployment observed between 2016 and 2022 did not lead to a significant reduction in poverty, a fact that is well documented.

This disconnect can be explained by the rise in precarious work, underemployment, involuntary part-time jobs, and the growth of the working poor - structural realities that the current strategy fails to adequately address.

The national strategy must stop viewing poverty solely through the lens of activation. Acknowledging the importance of access to decent work does not mean ignoring the fact that work alone no longer protects against poverty. Today, low-paid workers account for a growing share of people living in poverty.

⇒ **We recommend breaking with the ideology of activation and refocusing the strategy on the effectiveness of social rights, the security of life pathways, and the structural fight against the casualisation of work.**

2. Increase social minimum benefits and guarantee their unconditional accessibility

The level of social minima in France remains well below the poverty threshold, effectively institutionalizing a form of state-accepted poverty. The RSA, the main safety net, caps at less than €630 per month for a single person (compared to a poverty threshold of €1,288 in 2023). Additionally, the RSA is not accessible to those under 25 years old, an unjustifiable inequality given the widespread precarity among young people.

Even worse, recent reforms tend to tighten obligations (for example, requiring 15 to 20 hours of “activities” to receive minimum income), following a punitive and conditional logic that contradicts the spirit of social rights. This trend contributes to the delegitimization of beneficiaries and weakens their access to unconditional support.

⇒ We call for the immediate increase of social minimum benefits to at least the poverty threshold, their indexation to the real cost of living, the extension of RSA eligibility to young people under 25, and the removal of conditionality and sanction mechanisms that further marginalize the poorest.

3. Provide the fight against poverty with structural funding commensurate with needs

The current funding for the *Pacte des solidarités* is notoriously insufficient given the objectives set and the scale of needs. In 2024, the budget allocated to its implementation amounts to €190.7 million, of which just over half is dedicated to contracts with departmental councils, and the remainder to specific schemes (food aid, €1 school meals, health mediation, etc.). For 2025, the forecasted budget increases to €253.9 million, which remains far below the initial ambition of the plan and the level of effort required to address structural poverty affecting nearly 10 million people.

Moreover, the widespread use of competitive calls for projects is a funding method poorly suited to the structural challenges of fighting poverty. This short-term logic forces associations to multiply their applications, weakens the continuity of actions, and undermines local strategic planning. On the side of local authorities, especially departmental councils, intervention capacities are hindered by cuts in grants and financial levies imposed by the State, expected to exceed €2 billion in 2025.

This underfunding undermines the strategy itself. It prevents any real scaling up of planned measures, weakens the operational capacities of local authorities and civil society actors, and perpetuates chronic underfunding of social work, the medico-social sector, and comprehensive support services. The *Cour des Comptes* itself, in its observations on solidarity policies, highlights the limits of a fragmented budget management relying on often fragmented, non-permanent, and poorly coordinated credits.

Finally, at the territorial level, governance is weakened by the lack of human resources. Regional Commissioners for the Fight against Poverty, as the State's interlocutors in each region, are tasked with coordinating local authorities and associations, monitoring the LAPS, and managing cross-cutting programs. In practice, they are often alone, without dedicated teams, and with a scope of action disproportionate to their responsibilities. This imbalance between ambition, demands, and human resources greatly limits the effectiveness of public action.

⇒ We recommend a significant increase in the budget, to ensure a gradual but real scaling up of resources deployed under the *Pacte des solidarités*.

We also recommend ending the systematic reliance on competitive calls for projects to finance basic social actions. It is essential to move towards structural funding, directly allocated to local authorities and associations, to guarantee the stability and continuity of actions.

4. Build a genuinely evaluable and politically accountable strategy

In France, the NAPS is never debated in parliamentary assemblies, nor publicly presented by any government member. It is not subject to any detailed annual report on its outcomes, nor to clearly defined quantitative targets. This absence of political debate and monitoring schedules severely weakens the strategy's political impact and prevents any accountability of the State before the national legislature.

This political disconnect results in a technocratic management, compartmentalized between central administrations, regional services, and operators, without overall coordination or strong public leadership. It leaves local authorities, associations, and affected people in persistent uncertainty about the objectives pursued, the priorities set, and the resources truly mobilized.

At the same time, existing evaluation tools remain limited to management indicators - such as uptake rates, number of beneficiaries, and exit rates - which do not allow measurement of the real impact of policies on living conditions. This administrative framing contributes to rendering the concrete social effects of policy choices invisible, to the detriment of a qualitative understanding of results.

This double deficit (political and methodological) today prevents any citizen mobilisation around the strategy, any public pressure on its outcomes, or any systemic transformation dynamic. It contributes to entrenching the idea that poverty is either inevitable or a technical issue reserved for experts and programme managers.

→ **We recommend anchoring the national strategy in a robust evaluation framework, including:**

- **quantitative targets with clear deadlines;**
- **indicators based on living conditions;**
- **an annual presentation before Parliament to guarantee democratic debate on results and necessary adjustments;**
- **and the creation of an independent, pluralistic body with adequate resources, tasked with producing an in-depth social evaluation and issuing binding recommendations.**

5. Rebuild the governance of the strategy to make it democratic and bottom-up

The management of the NAPS & LAPS remains largely technocratic and top-down. Designed primarily as an administrative coordination exercise, it perpetuates hierarchical implementation and control logics, without creating the conditions for real and structured participation of the people concerned.

Certainly, the voices of people living in poverty are increasingly mentioned as a matter of legitimizing social policies. But in practice, this input is often solicited marginally, through occasional or consultative processes, without deliberative power, continuity, or

recognition. Making participation a mere democratic ornament without guaranteeing the conditions for its meaningful exercise effectively renders experiential knowledge invisible, depoliticizes decision-making, and deprives the strategy of one of its most powerful levers for adjustment and transformation.

⇒ **We recommend significantly strengthening the direct participation of PeP at all levels of governance of the strategies (national and local steering committees), with dedicated resources for their training, support, and remuneration.**

This participation should be legally framed, sustainably funded, and facilitated by actors skilled in empowerment development.