

## **EAPN GLOSSARY: JARGON BUSTER**

March 2013

### **Active Inclusion**

The European Commission put forward, in 2008, a Recommendation on the Active Inclusion of People Furthest from the Labour Market. To this end, the Commission recommends that the Member States draw up and implement an integrated comprehensive strategy. The strategy should be composed of the following three strands: sufficient income support; inclusive labour markets; access to quality services. The actions should support the employment of those who can work, providing the resources required for a dignified life, and promote the social participation of those who cannot work. Member States were invited to implement integrated strategies, combining the three strands, and include all relevant actors in the development, implementation and evaluation of the strategy. See full text [here](#).

### **Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion**

Informally called the “Convention”, it is the successor of the previous Round Table against Poverty and Social Exclusion. It is an annual two-day meeting, involving national stakeholders, including NGOs, social partners, organized through national organisations, aimed at reviewing the progress made towards the headline target of reducing poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020 and the implementation of the European Platform against Poverty, highlighting new priorities and promoting mutual learning. Its key objective is to give visibility and political weight to the European Platform against Poverty and build support across various policies and institutions, different levels of government and civil society actors, and build political momentum for delivery on the poverty target. The first Convention was held in 2011 – see more details [here](#). The second Convention was held in 2012 – see more details [here](#).

### **Annual Growth Survey**

The Annual Growth Survey is the main tool for EU-level economic policy coordination, and it ensures that Member States align their budgetary and economic policies with the Stability and Growth Pact and the Europe 2020 Strategy. It is the basis for building a common understanding about the priorities for action at the national and EU level, and should feed into national economic and budgetary decisions, which Member States will set out in Stability and Convergence Programmes (under the Stability and Growth Pact) and National Reform Programmes (under the Europe 2020 Strategy) in April. These programmes will form the basis for the European Commission's proposals for Country-Specific Recommendations in May.

### **Annual SPC Report**

The Annual Report of the Social Protection Committee (SPC – see below) reviews the current trends, on the basis of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (see below), and key developments related to the delivery on the Common Objectives of the Social OMC (see below), with particular reference to pillars 2 and 3 (pensions, health and long-term care), which are not well covered in the National Reform Programme. It replaces the old OMC Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, but it is now only produced by the

SPC, without the European Commission. Where a third of Member States (9) share the same key trends, they will be highlighted as new key priorities (called *recent positive trends*, or, if they are negative, *trends to watch*). See more information in the Social Protection Performance Monitor definition below.

### **Capacity - Building (Structural Funds)**

Mechanism which aims at reinforcing the general organizational skills of beneficiaries (including NGOs) through a wide range of aspects (resources, networking, planning...).

### **Cohesion Fund**

A fund for transport and environmental projects (including infrastructure) in poorer Member States.

### **Cohesion Policy**

Also called “regional policy”, it is the European Union’s concerted effort to improve the economic well-being of regions in the EU. This European policy is intended to narrow the gaps in economic and social development among the regions and Member States of the European Union. Representing more than one third of the EU budget, the funds underpinning Cohesion Policy constitute substantial financial assistance, which shapes the long-term development of the recipient countries and regions. See more [here](#).

### **Committee of the Regions (CoR)**

It is an advisory body representing local and regional authorities in the European Union. It issues reports (‘opinions’) on Commission proposals, but has no decision-making power. The Commission, the Council and the Parliament must consult the Committee of the Regions before EU decisions are taken on matters concerning local and regional government (for example, on employment policy, the environment, education, or public health). The Committee of the Regions currently has 344 members (and as many alternate members), appointed for a five-year term by the Council, acting on proposals from the Member States. The members are either elected, or represent key players from local or regional authorities in their home region. See more information [here](#).

### **Common Objectives of the OMC**

In the context of the Open Method of Coordination applied to Social Protection and Social Inclusion (see below), Member States have agreed on common objectives, translated into national policies through National Action Plans (2008-2010). They are free to choose how they appropriately achieve the common objectives. See more information [here](#).

### **Common Social Indicators**

Progress of anti-poverty measures in different Member States is monitored and evaluated through the use of common European indicators, which allow for comparability of national data and trends. The broad methodological framework consists of a list of primary and secondary indicators, for an overarching portfolio and the three strands (Social Inclusion, Pension, Health and Long-Term Care). See more information [here](#).

### **Common Strategic Framework (CSF)**

Strategic document helping Member States in setting their investments priorities for all Structural Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. This document will help Member States prepare their partnership contracts with key actions for each thematic objective and Fund, ensuring a better combining of various Funds.

### **Community-led development approach**

A specific tool for use at the local level, led by local action groups (made up of representatives of local public and private socio-economic partners including NGOs, local authorities, neighborhood associations, groups of citizens...), which encourages them to develop integrated bottom-up approaches, focusing on building community capacity and stimulating innovation (including social innovation), while promoting community ownership by increasing participation within local development.

### **Community Initiative Programme (CIP)**

It is a Europe-wide funding programme found in earlier Structural Funds (like EQUAL), focused on supporting innovative, transnational projects aimed at tackling discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market.

### **Country-Specific Recommendations**

These are documents prepared by the European Commission for each Member State, analyzing its economic situation and providing recommendations on measures it should adopt over the coming 12 months. They are tailored to the particular issues the Member State is facing, and cover a broad range of topics: the state of public finances, reforms of pension systems, measures to create jobs and to fight unemployment and poverty, education and innovation challenges, etc.

### **Directorate General (DG)**

The European Commission is divided into departments known as Directorates-General (DGs), each covering a specific policy area and headed by a Commissioner. There are currently 27 DGs in the European Commission, corresponding to 27 Commissioners (one per Member State). The DGs cover similar policy areas to Ministries in national governments. EAPN works mostly with "DG Employment" - full title: DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. See full list of DGs [here](#).

### **Earmarking (Structural Funds)**

Obligatory allocation of a minimum proportion of Structural Funds in each country to support the delivery on the Europe 2020 Strategy and its 5 headline targets (including the poverty reduction one).

### **Employment Committee (EMCO)**

The Employment Committee is a Treaty-based Committee, formally created by a Council Decision in January 2000. It plays an important role in the development of the European Employment Strategy, through preparing discussions in the Council each autumn on the Employment Guidelines, Joint Employment Report, and Recommendations on the implementation of national employment policies. The EMCO also formulates Opinions and

Contributions at the request of the Council, the Commission or at its own initiative. Each Member State and the Commission nominates two Members and two alternates. Please see more information, including list of members, [here](#).

### **EMPL Committee**

The Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (called EMPL) is mainly responsible for employment policies and all aspects of social policy, working conditions, vocational training and the free movement of workers and pensioners. The committee consists of 50 full and 50 substitute members, representing the various political families in the European Parliament. Each political group appoints a coordinator to take part in organizing the Committee's work. The EMPL Committee works with the Council of the European Union and the European Commission to implement the legislative framework in the areas for which it is responsible. See more details [here](#).

### **EPSCO**

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) is composed of employment, social protection, consumer protection, health and equal opportunities ministers, who meet around four times a year. Please see more information [here](#).

### **Euro Plus Pact**

The Euro Plus Pact is a 2011 plan, in which some Member States of the European Union make concrete commitments to a list of political reforms, which are intended to improve the fiscal strength and competitiveness of each country. The Euro Plus Pact has four broad strategic goals: fostering competitiveness; fostering employment; contributing to the sustainability of public finances; reinforcing financial stability; tax policy coordination.

### **Europe 2020 Strategy**

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, agreed by the European Council in 2010. It relies on five headline targets for the EU to achieve by the end of the decade. These cover employment (75% employment rate); education (reduce the early-school-drop-out rate below 10% and foster tertiary education); research and innovation; climate/energy; social inclusion and poverty reduction (lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion). The Strategy also includes seven "Flagship Initiatives", providing a framework through which the EU and national authorities mutually reinforce their efforts in areas supporting the Europe 2020 priorities. For more information, see [here](#).

### **European Code of Conduct on partnership (Structural Funds)**

EU document that should guide Member States when organizing the participation of all the relevant partners in the different stages of the implementation of the Structural Funds, by laying down minimum requirements for National Authorities, to ensure a high quality involvement of partners, including NGOs.

### **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

It was established in 1957 as a forum to discuss issues regarding the single market. The EESC gives Europe's interest groups – trade unionists, employers, civil society organisations – a

formal say on EU legislative proposals. It is a consultative assembly, issuing opinions to the larger institutions – in particular the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament, but has no decision-making power. The EESC has 344 members drawn from economic and social interest groups across Europe and is divided into three groups: 1) Employers, 2) Trade Unions and 3) Other interests, which include an increasing number of civil society representatives. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable 5-year term. See more about the EESC [here](#).

### **European Platform Against Poverty (EPAP)**

This is one of the seven Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above), which sets out actions to reach the EU target of reducing poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million people by 2020. It is based on 5 areas of action: mainstreaming across all policy areas, use of EU funds, evidence-based social innovation, working in partnership and harnessing social economy, and better policy coordination between Member States. Key actions: improved access to work, social security, essential services (healthcare, housing, etc.) and education; better use of EU funds to support social inclusion and combat discrimination; social innovation to find smart solutions in post-crisis Europe, especially in terms of more effective and efficient social support; new partnerships between the public and the private sector. For more information, see [here](#).

### **European Programme for Social Change and Innovation (EU PSCI)**

The EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation is the new EU Programme encompassing [Progress](#) (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – see below), [EURES](#) (European Employment Services) and the [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#). The EU PSCI will support policy coordination, sharing of best practices, capacity-building and testing of innovative policies, with the aim that the most successful measures be up-scaled with support from the [European Social Fund](#). The engagement with EU policies of EAPN and several other European networks is funded from Progress programme and should continue under this pillar of the future EU PSCI.

### **Forum on Social Services of General Interest**

Since 2008, as a positive development linked to the Social OMC (see below), regular forums are organized on Social Services of General Interest (SSGI – see below) at the EU level. An EU report assesses the current state of play in Member States, together with national and EU actors.

### **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

This 7-year Fund is mainly used for “hard” projects and infrastructure, like roads, bridges, railways – but it can, and should, be used also for social and community facilities, neighbourhood services, and community development. For more information on the current ERDF 2007-2013, see [here](#). The draft ERDF Regulation 2014-2020 can be found [here](#).

### **European Social Fund (ESF)**

This Fund originated as a re-training fund. It is seen as the ‘softer’ Fund, used for human resources, training and educational activities and social inclusion. For more information on the current ESF 2007-2013, see [here](#). The draft ESF Regulation can be found [here](#).

## **European Semester**

The "European Semester" is a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination within the EU, occupying the six-month period from the beginning of each year. It begins with the Annual Growth Survey (in November of the previous year), in which the Commission provides an analysis on the basis of the progress on Europe 2020 targets, a macro-economic report and the joint employment report, and sets out their approach to recovery and growth, concentrating on key priorities. This cycle forms the basis for ex-ante economic coordination at EU level, while national budgets are still under preparation, and will be discussed by Council formations and the European Parliament ahead of the Spring meeting of the European Council in March. At the Spring Council, Member States, essentially on the basis of the Annual Growth Survey priorities, and implementation of the previous Country Specific Recommendations (see above), will identify the main challenges facing the EU, and give strategic advice on policies. Taking this guidance into account, the Member States will present and discuss their medium-term budgetary strategies through Stability and Convergence Programmes and, at the same time, draw up National Reform Programmes, setting out the action they will undertake in areas such as employment, research, innovation, energy or social inclusion. These two documents will be then sent in April to the European Commission for assessment. Based on the Commission's assessment, the Council will issue Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) by June and July. Each July, the European Council and the Council of Ministers will provide policy advice before Member States finalise their draft budgets for the following year, during the autumn (the so-called "national semester").

## **European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)**

This is an instrument aiming at collecting timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. This instrument is anchored in the European Statistical System (ESS). It was launched in 2003 and it currently covers all 27 Member States, plus Turkey and Switzerland. Implementation in Croatia is being discussed. It provides cross-sectional data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period with variables on income, poverty, social exclusion and other living conditions, as well as longitudinal data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, observed periodically over, typically, a four year period. See more information [here](#).

## **Eurostat**

Eurostat is a Directorate-General (DG) of the European Commission. Its key role is to supply statistics and data to the Commission and other European Institutions, so they can define, implement and monitor Community policies. Data is supplied in all areas: economy, finance, labour market, agriculture... Eurostat also publishes statistical books, as well as very useful short analytical thematic documents ('Data in focus' and 'Statistics in focus' collections and 'Statistics explained' articles). See more information [here](#).

## **Fiscal Compact**

The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (also known as the Fiscal Compact) is an intergovernmental treaty introduced as a new, stricter version of the previous Stability and Growth Pact. It was signed on 2 March 2012 by all Member States of the European Union, except the Czech Republic and the United

Kingdom. Ratifying Member States are required to have enacted laws requiring their national budgets to be in balance or in surplus, within the Treaty's definition. These laws must also provide for a self-correcting mechanism to prevent their breach. For more information, please see [here](#).

### **Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development**

Also called Framework Programmes, or abbreviated FP1 through FP7, these are funding programmes aimed at supporting and encouraging research in the European Union. The specific objectives and actions vary between funding periods. The programmes, up until Framework Programme 6, covered five-year periods, but from FP7 on, programmes will run for seven years. The 8<sup>th</sup> programme will not be called "FP8", but is known under the name of "Horizon 2020". See more details about FP7 [here](#).

### **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAMD)**

Recent initiative of the European Commission, which has proposed to set up a Fund to help the most deprived persons in the EU. The Fund would support Member State schemes providing food to the most deprived people, as well as clothing and other essential goods to homeless people and materially-deprived children. The proposal is currently being negotiated in the European Parliament and the European Union's Council of Ministers. See more details [here](#).

### **Global Grants (Structural Funds)**

A mechanism through which the Member State or the Managing Authority (see below) may entrust the management and implementation of a part of an Operational Programme to one or more intermediate bodies (including NGOs), and may provide small grants to NGOs with 100% financing.

### **Independent Social Inclusion Experts**

The Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion assists the European Commission in monitoring and evaluating the situation with regard to poverty and social exclusion and the policies that are relevant in this respect in the Member States and accession countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Iceland). Each year, experts provide two reports on their respective countries, with regard to a specific subject that is being examined in the context of the EU social inclusion process, and an independent (non-governmental) assessment of an official policy document (the social inclusion strand of the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion or an official reply to a Social Protection Committee questionnaire on a specific topic). The Network Core Team produces synthesis reports, bringing together the main results of the analysis across countries. For more information and list of experts, see [here](#).

### **Integrated Guidelines**

These are a set of 10 guidelines, developed by the European Commission, aimed at helping Member States to implement the 5 overarching targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above). While the first 6 are macro-economic guidelines, the final 4 (numbers 7 through 10) are the so-called "employment guidelines", and underpin the employment, education, and poverty-reduction targets of Europe 2020. The Guidelines are supposed to provide a basis

for the National Reform Programmes elaborated annually by Member States under Europe 2020.

### **Macro-economic conditionalities (Structural Funds)**

Conditions that are currently prior to the disbursement of Funds, and which might be introduced in Structural Funds 2014-2020. For Member States facing excessive budget deficit and, thus, not complying with the Growth and Stability Pact rules, Structural Funds could be suspended by the European Commission.

### **Managing Authority (Structural Funds)**

Body set up by Member States at national, regional or other levels, in charge of the detailed management of programmes which receive support from Structural Funds. Its main attributions are to inform potential beneficiaries, select the projects, and generally monitor implementation. You can access information about Managing Authorities by country [here](#).

### **Mid-Term Review (Europe 2020)**

Evaluation of the progress achieved in reaching the five headline targets of the Strategy, and of the implementation of the seven Flagship Initiatives, as well as the approach and priorities of the Strategy. It is scheduled to take place in 2014.

### **MP / MEP**

An MP is a Member of a national Parliament. An MEP is a Member of the European Parliament.

### **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**

It is an inter-institutional agreement (European Commission, European Parliament and Council), which sets out the spending priorities of the EU budget for a 7-year period. It gives the maximum amounts (ceilings) for each broad category of expenditures (headings). The negotiations about the next programming period 2014-2020 are currently underway.

### **National Reform Programmes (NRPs)**

These are annual plans submitted by the Governments of the 27 Member States in April of each year, for the duration of the Europe 2020 Strategy (2010-2020). They are meant to show how Member States are implementing the overarching targets of Europe 2020 (translated into national targets), while taking into account the Integrated Guidelines (see above), as well as the priorities of the Annual Growth Survey (see above) and the Spring Council Conclusions.

### **National Social Reports (NSRs)**

These are the successors of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion and the National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. They represent the annual reporting of Member States on their strategies and progress achieved towards the Common Objectives for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (see above), and support the assessment of the social dimension of Europe 2020. The input should cover policies and measures in the three strands of the Social OMC (see below) and ensure synergies with the Europe 2020 policy cycle and national reporting requirements. These national reports feed into the SPC Annual Report (see below), which includes the annual assessment of the social

dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy, to input into the Annual Growth Survey (see above) and EU policy guidance, as well as into the assessment of progress achieved by Member States in the context of the European Semester (see above), including as part of the multilateral surveillance.

### **National Social Reports - Questionnaire**

The NSRs are likely to be submitted every other year. In the year in between, the Social Protection Committee will address Member States a Questionnaire, meant to monitor progress in between formal reporting. 2013 is the first year when the Questionnaires will be used.

### **National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)**

Reference document for the programming of Structural Funds at national level.

### **Operational Programme (OP) (Structural Funds)**

An Operational Programme (OP) sets out a region's priorities for delivering the Funds. The region's priorities must be consistent with the Member State's National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF - see above). There is an Operational Programme for each region in the EU. These OPs, just like the NSRF, have to be approved by the European Commission before implementation.

### **Partnership (Structural Funds)**

The concept that Structural Funds should be planned and managed by a combination of government, different levels of authorities, social partners, NGOs and civil society.

### **Partnership Contracts**

Also referred to as Partnership Agreements, these will be introduced for the first time for the next programming period of Structural Funds (2014-2020). These are global agreements between a Member State and the European Commission on the use of Structural Funds. This is a new strategic document, drafted by Member States in cooperation with partners, detailing the indicative amount of SF money by thematic objective at national level, for each of the SF, to deliver on each of the Europe 2020 headline targets.

### **Poverty (Reduction) Target in the Europe 2020 Strategy**

The poverty-reduction target is one of the 5 overarching objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above). It aims at lifting, by 2020, at least 20 million people in the EU out of poverty and social exclusion. Progress is measured according to three key indicators, explained below, but avoiding double counting (that means, a person who is at risk of poverty/and or exclusion (AROE) is somebody who is captured in at least one of the following indicators:

- ***At risk of poverty***

One of the three indicators underpinning the poverty-reduction target of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The at-risk-of-poverty rate is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers. See more [here](#).

- **Severe material deprivation**

One of the three indicators underpinning the poverty-reduction target of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Severe material deprivation refers to a state of durable economic strain, defined as the enforced inability (rather than the *choice* not to do so) to comply with at least four of the following items: pay rent, mortgage or utility bills; keep the home adequately warm; face unexpected expenses; eat meat or proteins regularly; go on holiday away from home; own a television set; own a washing machine; own a car; own a telephone). For more information, see [here](#).

- **Low work intensity**

One of the three indicators underpinning the poverty-reduction target of the Europe 2020 Strategy. People living in households with very low work intensity are people aged 0-59, living in households where the adults worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year. This indicator is sometimes referred to as “jobless households”. For more information, please see [here](#).

### **Presidency of the European Union**

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union is responsible for chairing the meetings of the Council, determining its agendas, setting a work programme, and facilitating dialogue both at Council meetings and with other EU institutions. The Presidency is not an individual, but rather the position is held by a national government, and it rotates among the Member States of the EU every six months. The current Presidency is held by the Republic of Ireland (see their website [here](#)), and it will be followed by Lithuania (second half of 2013), Greece, Italy (2014), Latvia, Luxemburg (2015), Netherlands, Slovakia (2016), Malta, United Kingdom (2017), Estonia, Bulgaria (2018), Austria, Romania (2019), and Finland (2020).

### **Priority axis (Structural Funds)**

An Operational Programme (see above) consists of several priority axes. A priority axis concerns one Fund for a category or region, it corresponds to a thematic objective, and comprises one or more investment priorities of that thematic objective, in accordance with the Fund’s specific rules.

### **Progress Programme**

The PROGRESS programme is a financial instrument supporting the development and coordination of EU policy in the following five areas: employment, social inclusion and social protection, working conditions, anti-discrimination, gender equality. PROGRESS is open to EU countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries, EFTA/EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). For the period 2014-2020, Progress will continue its current activities (analysis, mutual learning and grants) and will have a specific budget for social innovation and experimentation, ie, testing of innovative policies on a small scale, with the aim that the most successful ones can be up-scaled, including with ESF support. The total funding for the next period remains the same, ie, EUR 574 million. Of these, EUR 97 million will be allocated to experimental projects. More information can be found [here](#).

### **Quality Framework on Social Services**

Through the Social OMC (see below), a Voluntary European Quality Framework on Social Services (2010) was developed by the Social Protection Committee (see below), together with the Commission. See more information [here](#).

### **Quarterly Review**

The DG Employment (see above) of the European Commission regularly publishes analyses of the latest developments in society and the labour market across the EU. These analyses provide the background to underpin the Joint Employment Report (part of the Annual Growth Survey – see above), as well as other instruments key to the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above). Key outputs are: Annual Report *Employment and Social Development in Europe*, EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet, analytical working papers.

### **Services of General Interest (SGI)**

Services of General Interest are defined as the basic services that are essential to the lives of the majority of the general public, and where the State has an obligation to ensure public standards. These cover a wide range of activities linked to big network industries (energy, telecommunications, transport, postal services), but also include vital services at the heart of the EU social protection system (education, health, housing, social services, water and waste management). At the EU level, these have been further divided into:

- **Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI)** are defined as essential services where state regulation is deemed necessary to ensure adequate delivery, but which are considered to have an economic nature (mostly linked to the existence of a market, such as electricity, gas telecommunications).
- **Social Services of General Interest (SSGI)** are defined as essential basic services which are provided in the public interest, but are essentially social in their character, and are often linked to national social welfare and social protection rights. The European Commission has distinguished two types of social SSGI: 1) statutory social security schemes, linked to main life risks (ageing, health, unemployment, retirement, disability); 2) personal services, such as social assistance, employment and training services, social housing, long-term care. A Social Service of General Interest can be considered to be economic in nature or not, depending on whether they are supplied through the market.

### **Social Investment Package**

The Social Investment Package is a comprehensive set of documents, released by the European Commission on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It builds upon the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, and is supposed to complement other recent Commission initiatives to address Europe's social and economic challenges, namely the [Employment Package](#), the [Youth Employment Package](#), and the [White Paper on Pensions](#). It is an integrated policy framework, aiming to ensure social and economic returns on social spending, focusing on: 1) Increasing the sustainability and adequacy of social systems through simplification and better targeting; 2) Pursuing activating and enabling policies through targeted, conditional and more effective support; 3) Ensuring social investment throughout the individuals life. The Package consists of a main Communication, setting out the policy framework, concrete actions to be taken by Member States and the Commission and guidance on the use of EU funds to support reforms. It is accompanied by:

- A Commission Recommendation on *Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage*, containing an integrated policy framework to improve children's opportunities;
- A Staff Working Document (SWD) containing evidence on demographic and social trends and the role of social policies in responding to the social, economic and macro-economic challenges;
- A Staff Working Document following up on the 2008 Commission Recommendation on Active Inclusion for people excluded from the labour market;
- The 3rd Biennial Report on Social Services of General Interest to help public authorities and stakeholders understand and implement the revised EU rules on social services;
- A Staff Working Document on Long Term Care, presenting challenges and policy options;
- A Staff Working Document on confronting homelessness, explaining the situation of homelessness in the European Union and possible strategies to consider;
- A Staff Working Document on Investing in Health, containing strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health systems in a context of tighter public healthcare budgets and discussing how health can contribute to increasing human capital and social inclusion;
- A Staff Working Document outlining how the European Social Fund will contribute to implementing the Social Investment Package.

See the EAPN [briefing](#) prepared by the Secretariat about the Package's contents.

### **Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC)**

For policy areas where the European Union cannot adopt European legislation (ie, areas which remain the responsibility of national governments), there are soft law methods, which are used to promote cooperation between EU countries. The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is one of these soft law methods. The OMC provides a new framework for cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this intergovernmental method, the Member States are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to monitoring and facilitating. Member States since 2000 co-ordinate their policies for combating poverty and social exclusion through the Social OMC, through agreed Common Objectives (see above), which include the mobilization of all stakeholders (including people experiencing poverty), Common Social Indicators (see above) and common reporting and mutual exchange mechanisms. Since 2005, the Social OMC has included 3 pillars: 1) Social Inclusion 2) Pensions and 3) Health and Long-Term Care. Since the advent of the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above), the role of the Social OMC has been under debate, but was re-confirmed by the Social Protection Committee (see below) in 2011, as a key instrument to underpin the social dimension of Europe 2020, including through National Social Reports (see above). See more information [here](#).

### **Social Protection Committee (SPC)**

The Social Protection Committee was established in 2000, in order to serve as a vehicle for cooperative exchange between the European Commission and the Member States, about modernising and improving social protection systems. The Committee consists of two representatives appointed by each Member State, and two representatives of the Commission. The national delegates of the SPC provide a voice for national Governments in

the framework of the EU strategy for social inclusion and social protection, and monitor closely the initiatives launched in this process. See more information [here](#).

### **Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM)**

This important new instrument, developed through the Social OMC (see above) and the Indicators Sub-Group of the SPC (see above), aims to reinforce coordination of social policy and multilateral surveillance. The SPPM will strengthen the monitoring of the social situation in Europe by the SPC (according to Art. 160 TFEU), identifying the main common social trends and reinforcing the multilateral surveillance capacity of the SPC, enhancing the Committee's role in the European Semester, and helping the EPSCO (see above) have a stronger and more powerful voice in defending social issues in the European Council. It will make full use of the EU portfolio of indicators on social protection and social inclusion, which will be the main source for the indicators. See also the definition of the SPC Annual Report above.

### **Spring European Council**

Meeting of the European Council (comprising the Heads of State or Government of the 27 Member States of the European Union), which usually takes place in March of each year. Among other issues, it issues Conclusions meant to provide guidance to Member States for their economic, financial, and social policy, to be reflected in the National Reform Programmes.

### **Structural Funds Regulations**

Structural Funds are financial tools set up to implement the Cohesion/Regional Policy of the European Union (see above). The current Regional Policy framework is set for a period of seven years, from 2007 to 2013. The Structural Funds are made up of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. Structural Funds are guided by two types of Regulations:

- **The General Regulation** is released by the Council of the EU and it defines common principles, rules and standards for the implementation of the three cohesion instruments, ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund. Based on the principle of shared management between the Union and the Member States and regions, this regulation sets out a renewed programming process, based on Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion and their follow-up, as well as common standards for financial management, control and evaluation.
- **The Implementing Regulation**, issued by the European Commission, represents a set of detailed rules on the management of the financial instruments of Cohesion Policy.

For more information in the Regulations for the period 2007-2013, please click [here](#). The draft Structural Funds Regulations 2014-2020 can be found [here](#).

### **Technical Assistance (Structural Funds)**

Mechanism which aims at supporting the smooth running and management of Structural Funds' operation, for instance by covering studies concerning the operation of the Funds, the exchange of information and experience, reaching out to final beneficiaries, as well as support to organizations in preparing funding applications and implementation, if given to NGOs.

**Thematic objectives (Structural Funds)**

Each Structural Fund shall support the thematic objectives, so as to contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Thematic objectives shall be translated into investment priorities for each Structural Fund. For 2014-2020, the European Commission proposed 11 thematic objectives, out of which 4 defined the scope for the ESF, and all 11 for the ERDF (see above).

**Troika countries**

Also called “Programme countries”, these are Member States of the European Union who have received bail-out funds managed by the “Troika” – the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The arrangements are governed, in each country, by a Memorandum of Understanding, setting out the conditions or repayment. These often entail very harsh austerity measures. Troika countries are, for the time being, Greece, Ireland, Portugal. Cyprus and Spain might join soon. Romania, Hungary and Latvia are not Eurozone members, which means they receive bail-out money from the IMF under the supervision of the European Commission, but the European Central Bank is not involved.