**Policy Task Force: Stakeholder Dialogue**

**18th September**

**Minutes**

Present: Sian Jones (EAPN Policy Coördinator), Kalle Laane (EAPN Estonia), Macej Kucharczyk (AGE Platform), Paul Rosiers (BAPN), Isabella Allende (EAPN Spain), Reka Tunyogi (Eurochild), Natasha (EAPN Macedonia), Tanya Basarab (EAPN), Elke Vandermeerschen (BAPN)

Excused: Sonja Wallbom (EAPN Sweden)

1. **Introduction**

*(Warmer: talk in pairs then introduce our colleagues)*

Kalle/ Estonia has outstanding experience in the social field, in the city of Talin, but also in different parts of Estonia. He is retired now, but was a social worker, Kalle worked on family & activation of unemployed people. He is now a member of the Management Committee of Estonian EAPN. He works with the municipality of Tallin, which is complicated. He is involved with the TF, he has experience with giving a voice to vulnerable people.

Macej/AGE- Platform is 40 years old. He has practiced in France, lives in Brussels, he has a broad spectrum, one side is policy, other side is work with older people in Poland, which makes him a very good expert on these task force;

Paul/Belgium has direct experience of poverty. He became poor at 47, was self employed, lost work, got debts. He has been involved in EAPN for 10 years, he is based in Antwerp. He is very concerned to be active on the rights of people experiencing poverty, the right to speak, the right to be engaged,…

Sian/EAPN secretariat grew up in Scotland. She has experience of poverty. She worked in London on social inclusion, particularly the right to housing and employment. After that she worked in Spain for 14 years with woman experiencing poverty in rural areas. She organized actions to improve their lives. She has now been working for 8 years with EAPN. She is currently the policy coordinator.

Natasha: from Macedonia is a laywer and has own practice, but involved for 15 years in NGOs and for a year and a half in EAPN. She’s in a Task Force on MI, which is very necessary. This is her first EAPN meeting, replacing somebody else but very happy to learn and work together.

Elke is from the Belgian Network, she’s policy officer for European policies, she has experience with the Spanish French & Portuguese network on projects on participation, she is enthusiastic.

Reka is from Bulgaria, she’s working for Eurochild, she’s not working directly with children, but with policy, she’s coming to Mallorca. She’s in this group to learn more how to link better the national level to European politics concerning children.

Isabelle is the national coordinator of EAPN Spain, almost 5 years, before she worked directly with people experiencing poverty, now she works more with NGO’s except for the participation meetings. She’s here to bring the Spanish experience on Stakeholder involvement.

Tanya is Development Officer of EAPN, she’s been working trying to build better direct participation of people experiencing poverty inside the EAPN practice, to enforce the national networks in this & bring this to the policy team.

1. **Sharing Expertise/experience: Participation in Stakeholder Dialogue (EU, national, regional), including people with direct experience of poverty.**

***Introduction: Sian***

This Task Force is really focused on stakeholder engagement in EU processes and EU instruments on the national level, how national networks try to engage. It’s really about structural civil dialogue.

It’s not about participation in general, but stakeholder dialogue in the context of EU policies.

(organisations, pep talking directly to governments).

Isabelle (EAPN Spain):

At the Spanish level we are working with the government on NRP’s, they asked us for input in 2010, and we were working closely with the government. In 2011, they didn’t ask anything, but we worked on this and presented input and lobbied the government so last year they asked us for input.

Last year it was fine, we are getting more & more close to the government, not in ideology, but in contact, particularly over the National Social Report. However, this is not compulsory. It is written by EAPN & the Ministry, it’s the national inclusion plan.

(note: previously every country had to do a NAP Social Inclusion, some countries are still doing it)

We are working really closely with our government, the main part of the document is done by EAPN. They ask EAPN to make input and then we ask all our organisations to make input.

They accept a lot of what we propose, they pass us the draft, and we comment on that. It’s a really close dialogue. The same processes are visible in the regional EAPN’s (In Spain: There are 19 regions with 19 EAPN regional networks). In some part of Spain the dialogue is really good, in others it isn’t. Eg. In Castilla de La Mancha it’s really difficult, in Madrid it depends.

Type of input: Both written and dialogue with the decision makers. The we have our own meetings to prepare the input, although the bigger organizations write more.

We have voices from people in poverty, but they are not in the dialogue meetings.

At national level, we make a big platform, composed by EAPN. It’s a voluntary platform, social NGO’s platform, organisations of disabled people, Red cross, Caritas, blind people… These 7 platforms unite together to make a big platform, that is in dialogue with the Minister. We are building the same kind of structure in all the regions. In this platform we have a structured dialogue, because of the fact that we are working together with strong partners.

It’s difficult to include People with direct experience of poverty. In Spain we have good meetings with People in poverty, eg. This week the Secretary of State will be in the Congress, but we have not a lot of people in the Task Force in Spain, so it’s difficult to have them in this kind of structured dialogue.

We alsohave the social NGO National Council that is part of the social services Ministry, made up of EAPN and other big organisations. When the Ministry made the national plans for social inclusion, they ask this council officially for input. This council has a working group that is coordinated by EAPN. (inside the Council and inside the ministry),/ From that we ask our members (who are also council members). However, the Social Ministry is the least important in the government, so there’s not enough money to finance the proposals.

Macej (AGE):

To include People Excluding Poverty in the dialogue is the most difficult challenge, with permanent dialogue. This should be a question that’s treated separately. We are trying to phrase and formulate some recommendations. We speak on behalf of them but we all have our own ideas, so that’s not enough. When they speak we realize that what we say, it’s not their language.

Kalle (EAPN Estonia):

We need a definition of target group, when we are speak about involvement of pep. It’s a very large group. People experiencing poverty can represent themselves,.But we need contact with people who have the capacities, they need to have some values, responsibility, it’s not so easy, to find these people. Do we want to develop this through mediators ?

In Estonia, we are in development as post-soviet country, I ‘m in this NGO sector for 20 years, I observe these developments. I have a different picture from the mainstream picture. In Estonia we have ‘change democracy’, not all social groups participate in this social dialogue, our government tries to show to Europe a very good picture (following their favorite policies eg austerity,…) but the price is that big groups of the population are excluded from these processes, it has impact on the development of Estonian EAPN. We need to look at the development of these organisations. The discussions with the Ministry & Parliament on Social Affairs, they are not well structured, I don’t understand the structure. They had a lot of contacts, but what is the content & the result ? There’s a mix of development & control. If a small group of people that are in charge, it’s not in balance. The organizations are not for people in poverty, they have different target groups. That’s why they are not focused on poverty in general. Mainstream attitude is ‘poverty is your fault, shame on you, it’s their problem…’

In strategic goals, poverty is not a strategic goal. For me it’s a question about social capital, education. I see a lot of clientelism in our society, on political level, but also in NGO’s the general model is model of mediators, people who speak for others. On the NRP, I don’t know if EAPN is involved.

Reka (Eurochild):

For Eurochild, child poverty and wellbeing is our key priority, we have members working directly with children, on different issues, a wide variety of types of members, but it’s also a challenge. In some countries we have several, in others not.

We have identified this as a key opportunity, we are working together with our members, to see the overlap what they are doing at national level, we try to improve their capacities and give them more support.

We have been analyzing the NRP’s, we asked our members their level of consultation in the process, it was very disappointing, only 4 countries their organizations were involved, but quite negative, tokenistic, short deadlines, no result…

This year 5 countries have been to some extent consulted, children & young people not at all

We went back to our members on CSR, asked them for alternative proposals, we got 11 responses, 8 suggestions could make the European publication, EAPN. We were very happy this could happen, are members have little capacity. It’s difficult sometimes to keep them engaged, …

I agree that involving people themselves is very important. We have other examples in other processes, but not in EU 2020. We could learn from the good examples, with different groups, different targets. We don’t only have to influence the policies, but also improve the capacity of NGO’s themselves.

Our Scottish member is routinely included, and the Scottish government have stakeholder involvement, others are consulted, but It’s not seen in the report.

Natasha (EAPN Macedonia):

Macedonian anti-poverty platform has produced a few reports on poverty & social inclusion, we included activists from NGO sectors, and Ministry for Social Affairs. Mostly the problems are well known. The work is ended when we put the problems on the paper, but nobody continues to solve those problems.

Society is politics, the politics influence all the decisions, when the government gives financial support to NGO’s, they give priority to NGO’s that are closest to their politics, so the NGO’s are forced to work not on the real problems. So we know the problems, but are not dealing with the problems. The government just says there’s no budget, there is no political will. We try to put minimum income into the strategy of the government. They come with some statistics to the people, which represent not the real situation. The government gives other statements, we are in progress,…

We have meetings with some employers of the Mnistries who are dealing with these issues. They hear all opinions, but they don’t include them in their plans, so it’s without results.

Most people in Macedonia are experiencing poverty, so they are always included in our meetings.

The government says the average salary is 350 euro’s, but that’s not the real situation. In the private sector, the salaries are lower, but they are not included in the statistics. The state is the biggest employer, but even the salaries of people working for government are even not high enough.

Social rights are a difficult issue in Macedo nia, everybody knows how to survive, people are poor but are ashamed to show it.

Paul (EAPN Belgium):

We have a Belgian Network, there are 3 workers, and many people from different organizations that work with pep from all over Belgium. We participate, we come to Brussels, we discuss the problems we are facing, and we discuss the points from EAPN and the Government, and we discuss how we think about it. That’s how we participate in Belgium. We prepare different meetings with the government and we participate in the national plans. That’s not always easy for us. If you work a long time, you know you are repeating yourselves, & there is no response from the official side.

The Belgian Platform has people from all over Belgium, 2 languages, French & Flemish.

The Belgian Platform Against poverty and social exclusion EU 2020 is a consultative body, which representatives from the regional govt should attend, but don’t always.Itconsults on the NRPs and the National and Federal Anti Poverty Policy. We prepare this with our group with People experiencing poverty. We give a presentation, and get a lot of time. Eg last platform we made comments on the CSRs and discussed with PEP and then made a presentation. This is the dialogue structure - the President is the Federal Minister. There are also social partners – but not very active, with different levels. We meet every 2 months.

The NRP is not under the Ministry of Social Affairs, but under the Prime Minister who is not involved in the Platform, we asked them to invite him. We discussed the NRP, so we tried to have a separate meeting with the Minister and his cabinet, and we had some meetings – formal /and informal but seen little results in the NRP. For the National Social Report, Belgium made one, supposed to be every 2 years, this year just a questionnaire, but Belgium said they would do a report, but just did a questionnaire. We did a statement – it was sent afterwards, when the discussions were finished.

We didn’t get a reaction from the PM, the Belgium Platform is not really having an influence. There was a call to ask a question to the PM , for people to send a video. So we made a funny video, in 2 languages with 3 people from our working group ( Flanders, Walloon and Brussels).. we made points about reality of poverty and the failure on the poverty target and got a 2 hour meeting with the Head of Cabinet.

* Now it is more difficult for us than before, after the last election it’s a step backwards.

Macej (AGE platform):

Our members are different, not all our members are working explicitly in the fight against poverty, but indirectly they do, social protection, income problems, access to services, pensions, dignity in old age, … it’s related to the fight against social exclusion. They do not have a very elaborated strategy in how to involve themselves & their people, there are little formalized structures, it’s learning by doing, sometimes it’s a small initiative. They do not stick to EU 2020. This whole involvement around EU 2020, we had to explain to them from the European level, otherwise they would not directly refer to it. This process is not well known on the national level. They consider other processes more effective, they don’t want to work on EU 2020, but prefer the channels they are aware of, eg the Local Councils. Others say the overall ombudsman office is more effective, to put forward the questions of discrimination & exclusion. The ombudsman have a very specific role, and are very visible & effective. That can be more effective then to talk to the Ministry of Social Affairs;

AGE as a platform implemented a project 3 years ago, the objective was a guide for civil dialogue on promoting social inclusion. Based on work in organizations in 7 countries. We made our definition of what we consider as civil dialogue, then we looked what channels can we use on national level, we made our recommendations, … All those obligations that we have in front of people we want to represent, we also make those recommendations to our selves, and then to policy makers on national and other levels. Simple but practical solutions. We try to link the 2020 work to this broader idea of what should be the civil dialogue. Both processes at EU & national level can mutual re enforce, and lessons can be learned.

There is no interlinking between different levels, different governments, eg. Between local and national level.

Sian (EAPN):

This is important for EAPN, since 2000 we are trying to help our members to be involved with these EU Inclusion strategy processes, before under the Social OMC and now as well under Europe 2020. The EUISG tries to work on this, we have a report each year with evaluation from all the members. The report from this year will be launched on the September conference. Like AGE & Euro child we try to get more involved with the CSR Recommendations. Now these CSR’s have much more weight than before. It’s part of our strategy to influence social policies, it’s crucial that the organizations are involved.

1. **Scoping the Task Force**

*Name of the TF*:

‘guidelines’ is a policy term, general instruments would be appropriate, the aspects of capacity building are also important

‘General principles for promoting Effective Participation..’

Agree to call the Task Force- Promoting Effective Participation and Stakeholder Dialogue

*Objectives*

The group discussed the different options posed in the scoping note.

**Agreed to 3 main outputs**

-1 product that incorporates good practices, key principles, tips, with its main target audience: decision makers at different levels.

- A capacity building session with the EUISG

- A launch event

**Target Audience**: The target people are the different policy decision-makers, at the different levels (EU, National and sub-national.). It should be clear, no matter the level that we are giving advice and principles on how to involve pep and their NGOs in shaping policy to promote social inclusion through stakeholder dialogue.

**On the product: Key Points from the Discussions:**

* This would be the “first time we focus on decision makers”, rather than stakeholders. This could be an important added value.
* We have to plan some learning processes to use these tools and instruments, also for people in need, if we are talking about changes.
* Agreed that 1 product for decision-makers is best, it’s more clear, but we also need to do some document/kit for EAPN members on how to use the document, how to approach their governments and advice on how to use it.
* EAPN is involved in a broad alliance on capacity building & tool kit related to the CSRs and the European Alliance. This could be for our members.
* If the decision makers want to be active on engaging stakeholders on poverty issues, they should be able to find Recommendations on how to go about it.
* It should be clearly identified that there can be different recommendations at different levels, from EU level down to the local level. General principles could be a preamble, that gives you a background and justification on why stakeholder involvement is important and necessary.
* We should also think about dissemination, beyond our members.

**On the capacity building**:

* There will be no extra money for capacity building with EAPN Members, so this will only take place in the EUISG group, next year. We will decide when is most appropriate.
* We must build on existing EAPN practice and work. This should also be quoted in the scoping note..

***Conclusion:***

1 product, targeting decision makers at different levels, to be used by our members to pressurize decision makers , with an additional note/simple tool kit on how to use it. This means that our main focus will go beyond merely producing the product, to developing a strategy on how to empower and enable our members to use the product in orderto get improved dialogue processes.

***Main Activities and Timeline:***

**Key Discussion Points**

* How will the EUISG be involved? you need at least 2 discussions in the big group. It’s probably more realistic to plan a capacity building session in the May meeting, and to discuss the drafts in the February meeting. In October, we will merely introduce the work done so far.
* We have been mandated to do this work, so there must be some sharing responsibilities. It’s not controversial; but it’s useful to present it.
* What should be the timing/content of the 3 meetings? The proposal is to have a first draft by November, but it was felt that 2 months was too short for a complete first draft
* We could ask the national networks to contribute with a small questionnaire.
* Should we consider the format of an Explainer? On the whole it was felt that this was not appropriate, as the Explainer was targeted to the general public, where this is targeted to decision-makers.
* It will also be important to raise awareness of the general public, not to use jargon, explain things in simple terms. But this should not mean marginalizing professional knowledge. The language can be simple and direct, even if the proposals are very concrete. Above all we should produce something useful!.
* We should draw on the experience of members who have experience at the national level in doing this kind of shadow approaches. It will also be important to talk to the policy makers themselves to hear their views on what would be most useful.
* 5 years ago, there was always talk about direct participation, but a lot of organisations were afraid to do it. It took 5 years of discussing to get people interested at all. There’s a big diversity of activists, pep, social workers, academics… everybody understands things differently. We asked our members what was your most successful experience and lot of our members talk about this. We should use this.
* On the other hand, we should recognize that it is not a positive political context for greater participation or dialogue, in the context of growing democratic and participative deficit at EU and national level.
* Same thing for civil dialogue questions, we don’t have to write something new, but the person working in the government should be able to feel more confident to begin to engage in this work, also the NGO people in proposing it. This will contribute to the common understanding. We cannot say there is no civil dialogue, but it’s not regular and people are not happy with it. By showing that it can have an impact, we are giving confidence and giving more clarity why EAPN is asking for participation & civil dialogue.
* The Task Force is not only about the product, but what you do with it, what the impact is;..

***Conclusion***

***Revised Timeline***

***Working method:***

In previous Task Forces, there have been some difficulties over job roles, and who takes responsibility for the overall writing. The aim is to move away from Secretariat doing this work, and giving more profile and ownership from members, whilst trying to value and reward the work.

**Proposal**: one person takes the lead, writes the overall document, everybody contributes.

**Key Points from the Discussion**

* What will be the responsibilities of the overall coordinator and everybody else? The coordinator would work with secretariat backing and edit the overall document. But everybody in the group would participate and give input, and perhaps different sections.
* There are also 2 different responsibilities: your role individually & how you organize your network related to this TF… (eg. Eg if you are drafting a section, you will need to think how you will involve your network, not just writing the section yourself.) There will be concrete tasks.
* Getting ownership – although many of the EAPN documents are very good, but they are often not realized in practice. So we need to develop the process and these discussions so that the information has contact with the ground.
* Part of the discussion should be on what can I take back to our network ?

**Conclusion**: BAPN will coordinate the writing, with EAPN secretariat support but everybody will contribute. Sian will check with the Finance Officer and the new Director to clarify what amount of consultancy money can be made available.

*Launch of the Product/Strategy*

Key Discussion Points:

* It will be very difficult to find a separate budget for the launch costs.
* We could look for other possibilities combined with other projects, sometimes it’s two sides of the same coins, it can be launched as part of a broader event
* Not only the product, but also the process is important. An event on civil dialogue is as important, it could be a capacity building event with decision makers, targeting different people from national governments.
* If there is a launch it would be interesting if our members are involved to give good national examples.
* Timing: March April, more or less same time that NRP’s are submitted, but it could also overlap with CSR launch which is in May. The election timing is also important, preferably before.
* The content could overshadow the process, it’s better to do it afterwards to say, this is how you do it.
* The EU launch is important, but so is the national process and dissemination. One function of the national organizations could be supporting of this dialogue (decision makers + people/stakeholders), it means practical activities, it could be a part of functioning of national organization – ie linked to the MASS.
* We should be promoting civil dialogue on social inclusion, not only on EU 2020
* We must use the reference to the Communication on the European Platform Against Poverty, and refer to the promise by the EU to develop guidelines
* We could also see how we could present it to the SPC
* We need to explain to national decision makers how it’s important to involve us in the dialogue, in order to have impact on the EU dialogue.
* Also the MEP’s: they are making the link between EU & national levels.
* We could use 2020 as an example, but also get examples from beyond to inspire decision-makers.
* Eurochild identified 3 objectives: gathering, improving policy reforms & improving capacity of NGO’s
* There ‘s no budget for translation, national networks will have to find the money for themselves.
* If the language is very concise, it is possible to make the first translation with google translation. This could be part of the advise to members.

1. **First Discussion on the Content of the Outputs/Products**

**Key Discussion Points**

* We should start with why it’s necessary/justification
* People experiencing Poverty have knowledge, live experiences.
* General principles (1 page)
* Representation vs direct participation
* Results and Impact !
* Feed back in the dialogue process is crucial
* People don’t know/care about EU 2020 – how do we deal with this?
* Capacity of the NGO is also important, how can this be built?
* Lack of resources to engage – both money, but also people with sufficient capacity and time.
* Language, cultural differences, communication difficulties
* Goal should be practical solutions and better policies not just a talking shop.
* Scope: we should be clear what can you do and what you can’t.
* People should be empowered by the process, not undermined and devalued.
* Dialogue, many governments also know the problems.
* Dealing with resistance and lack of interest: Sometimes the right decision-makers don’t come to the meetings, neither do NGO and people in poverty.
* Decisions are also often made elsewhere not in these dialogue meetings. Within each administration there is another agenda driven by the different levels and ministries;
* The officers involved often do not have the capacity to influence the decisions
* Many stakeholders feel its dangerous to criticize, and prefer to try to save the atmosphere of collaboration
* The biggest challenge/obstacle is not being taken seriously (not the arguments but ‘opposition’).
* How to reach the other stakeholders? Is is very important how we work together.
* Officers often hear but don’t listen, or the opposite- How to change this?
* Focus & themes are chosen without any consultation – ie in the setting of the agenda – how can this be changed?
* You need to start from basics – what is poverty, the causes, processes and solutions, otherwise it’s impossible to build consensus on any meaningful dialogue.
* Language issues are crucial – both interpretation, but also technical/non-technical
* Timing, preparation is vital to enable people to participate meaningfullyl
* How to give ownership to the people consulted, follow through and feedback, and results. It is crucial the feeling that people have impact (being consulted on the draft, but get a view on how it is published, get another meeting, monitoring, different stages…)
* Lack of good methodology is a big obstacle, also the lack of any real commitment. It’s not seen as important. Most governments not interested in being accountable in this way.
* We need to draw on good practice, for example in the Developing World, eg participative planning, even examples led by the World Bank, which recognized the need for legitimacy.
* Social dialogue with trade unions etc have stronger dialogue with governments, they have decision powers. We are actors not agents, difference between civil & social dialogue.
* There’s a lack of general idea or vision of what is needed – even before we say how.
* We also need to get over the idea of what dialogue is really about: cooperation, partnership , building consensus not conflict and competition.

***Obstacles: external + internal***

***Internal***

* Lack of self confidence about what we want, and can offer
* Big threshold for national organizations (isn’t this too big for us ?)
* Mistrust in politics & democracy, learning & empowering process
* Shortcomings in direct representation of people experiencing poverty within the EAPN network and organisations
* Limited access to information

***External***

* Inadequate legal environment – no legal requirement to consult.
* Resistance by governments and powerful interests to share power
* Little interest/reluctance by government to having direct contact with vulnerable groups,
* Underestimate capacity and value of pep, not taken as equal actors
* Limited power of such dialogues: We ask for this, for that,… the problem is there is no budget, it’s ideological, economical ministry doesn’t support social ministry, no budget
* Attitudes in society, pep are stigmatized & marginalized, not popular target group, distrust, no confidence
* Misunderstanding, lack of knowledge on poverty and what it means for people
* Lack of motivation to involve stakeholders in general, and more interest in more powerful stakeholders like industry
* Lack of competencies in social worker system
* Stereotypes about people in poverty.
* Cultural differences in education
* More focus support for practical activities, practical solutions for special target groups rather than to invest in participation – little understanding of why it’s important.

***Initial Proposals for Structure/Contents***

1. What: What is meaningful structured dialogue with stakeholders, including people experiencing poverty and their NGOs.
2. Why ( both justification and added value – ie why it’s needed and what benefit/added value will it bring?)
   1. Added value for stakeholders & decision makers
   2. NGO has capacity & experience & mutual learning
   3. Knowledge from the ground for effective solutions
   4. Political motivation, decisions will have citizens approval, consultation brings political support, credibility, accountability which is currently lacking.
   5. Public Relations, the chance to communicate & explain what you’re doing
   6. Efficiency and effectiveness: good policies that actually respond to real needs
   7. Have to (reminding them that they have already committed themselves – ie in EU and national legislation, treaties, documents, orally),
   8. Evidence of failure: Lack today (figures and also qualitative assessments – eg EAPN etc)
   9. Usefulness of Feedback process for validation.
   10. Not only asking but offering information, offering expertise

Examples: Get heard in UK , politicians get inspired (testimonies of politicians)

1. Who
   1. Name different type of stakeholders who should be involved, but give detail on civil society
   2. Empowering civil society: government should recognize however small the organization, it’s equal, we can be organized in different structures, all type of organisations of movements; regardless the level of experience and the knowledge.
   3. Involving people with direct experience of poverty – but not just as individuals, who can be easily manipulated, but through organized civil society. Eg Anti-poverty organisations.
   4. By involving us, they will empower us
2. Legal environment
   1. Legal framework for civil dialogue, creating the conditions for participative initiatives, need for formalizing civil dialogue – examples/compacts etc.
3. Enforce common quality standards for civil dialogue
   1. Provide common principles for meaningful engagement
   2. How can they be better prepared to listen ?
4. Strengthening transparency & accountability
   1. Publicizing & disseminating about what exists
   2. Give us access to information & agenda, contacts
   3. Be pro-active with this information- ie responsible officers etc

**Other key issues**

1. The importance of Feedback

* Even when our proposals were not taken into account, the feedback is vital on why the proposals were not taken up. It shows respect and means continuing constructive dialogue

1. Financial support to NGOs working with PEP is crucial, if engagement is to be effective and sustainable..
2. Support should go beyond money = strengthen organizations, training, capacity building.
3. Changing Mindsets, the citizen (pep) as an equal partner, need to train own civil servants & decision makers about the role of participation and how to relate..
4. Getting political backing is crucial - If the minister is not interested, it’s useless, just lip service
5. Need to get results – such a dialogue, demands a lot of people, so need to see real impact.
6. Important to stress the need to be realistic & honest – a genuine dialogue is better than a sophisticated process, which is just a show.
7. The dialogue forums can become more a space of real political dialogue. It should be an opportunity to exchange groups/interests perspectives and to make political demands,
8. There should always be space for personal stories. These can impact powerfully on politicians and policy makers – the trick is to make the bridge between the personal and the political, moving from the individual to generic messages and recommendations.
9. Methodology is very important**:** creating a constructive, equal and participative work culture, it should involve real exchange on the basic issues, as well as evaluating impact, giving information for next steps, not only giving comments on draft documents,: this is what the quality standards should involve. The method should go beyond plenaries, or even small working groups, to different workshop formats and methodologies: buzz groups, role plays, simulations, projects, fish bowls etc with lots of concrete examples,
10. Having an organic/flexible approach. No one size fits all, but common principles. Also not fixed for ever, but should evolve over time, responding to needs and demands of stakeholders and as part of a learning environment.
11. Involve the right people (ie people in power as well as technical people), as well as all relevant stakeholders, choose the right partners.
12. Impact – how can this be evaluated and agreed?
13. The direct voice of pep must be heard, not sidelined nor manipulated.
14. Proposing a Partnership approach. In reality governments rarely see civil society as valuable partners in eyes of the government. How can we raise awareness (personal level: buddy system ?)
15. Institutional support is crucial, beyond the dialogue process – particularly the role of economic, prime minister etc offices.
16. Giving people time to prepare it properly – so has implications for the time/process and schedule
17. Crucial to highlight positive experiences of dialogue, eg pep meeting, awareness raising & participatory democracy initiatives, parallel initiatives – show the feedback from government officers as well as NGOs and pep.
18. A key initiative could be to name people within the government as a civil society relation point, someone who is responsible for these processes. This person not only formal dialogue meetings, but visits the NGO’s, having a contact person for the organization,

Graphic: what are elements of good civil dialogue, who is involved

***Organizing the Contents Page***

Suggestions:

* First principles
* Then: detail, step by step in the process

Ideas, inspiring examples (also drawn from EAPN booklets)

* 2006 progress project led by EAPN Ireland, on the value of participatory policy making,
* UK Get Heard projects
* Sweden: national conferences, now 3 years, impact on different levels
* Norway: organize social forums, from those meetings, they find people who get more engaged
* Expand our reflections beyond civil dialogue, build broader coalitions with industry, academics, so our proposals become more legitimate
* Civil dialogue is about shifting the power

*Structure:*

***Proposal 1:***

**A Introduction**

**General principles**

1. What
2. Why (justification + added value)
3. Who

**B Common guidelines (all levels)**

+Tips box & good practices

**C Specific guidelines each level**

Subnational level

National

EU

***Proposal 2:***

What

Definition

Principles (ex) (quotes)

Why

Justification)

Added value

Who

Government

Stakeholders

How

Steps to making it happen

* Legal framework
* Methodology/model
* Resources
* Coordination
* Evidence/feedback

Now/ Next Steps

- concrete actions/recommendations

- what is needed now- ie short term

- action plans or road maps.

Myth sections ?

Conclusions

Bibliography or Information on Further Reading/contacts.

*Next Steps:*

* Elke will send a proposal for the structure (based on proposal 2), everybody puts the input in the structure
* We start also from what already exists (eg existing EAPN and other documents)

Timeline:

* 7th October: minutes + draft of the structure and updated scoping note (Elke/Sian)
* Input before the 18th of October – both on content and on the structure (Everybody)
* EUISG- 25/26 October – brief presentation of scoping note and process. (Elke/Sian)
* First draft before the 15th of November (Elke/Sian)
* Comments before the 12th of December (Everybody)
* Meeting on the 16th of December to discuss 1st Draft. (Everybody)
* Following Meeting, second Revision by January 31st
* Second draft will go to the EUISG in February
* Final draft finalized March/April
* Launch (April/May)
* Capacity Building with EUIS – May

Homework: everybody talks to a policy makers: to find out what would be the best kind of advice, what are their special needs of policy makers? And feed this back.

*Evaluation*

*Kalle: I think that we understand each other and that’s important, I have a good feeling*

*Macej: we will make something concrete and straightforward, this will be new, this is the first toolkit for the policy makers, but it’s really important that Sweden is involved.*

*Meeting structured & productive*

*Natasha: the meeting was very good, a very positive experience, fruitful work, useful, it’s very new for us, this kind of work, conversation,;..*

*Reka: it was a really good meeting, a lot of clarity on the work of this taskforce, the variety is refreshing, maybe the structure is not completely clear, but we’re getting there, happy to be involved in this group*

*Paul: it was a good meeting, but I miss more people with experience with poverty, each of you should have someone with experience of poverty with you so you have a larger ground of experience,*

*(quotes & testimonies from pep is also important)*

*Sian: I really enjoyed meeting everybody, it’s a nice mixture, I’d like things more tied down, but think we got a long way. We will have to work equally hard in the next meeting,*