



**ENGAGING IN THE LISBON
NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES
2008-10**

TOOL KIT

Brussels, October 2008

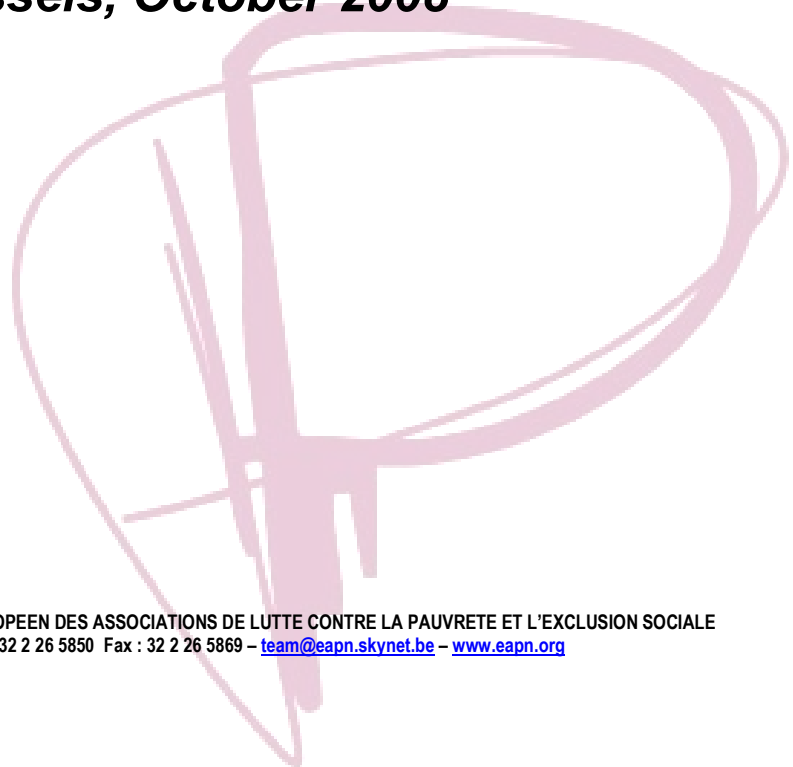


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1. Introduction

This tool kit is designed to help national networks engage with the National Reform Programme (2008-10) of the revised Lisbon Strategy. It primarily focuses on the Employment Guidelines but also makes reference to the macro and micro elements.

It first provides background information on the National Reform Programme (NRP) process as part of the revised Lisbon strategy and clarifies its link to the National Action Plans process of the European Employment Strategy. It draws on the EAPN Tool Kits developed for the European Employment Strategy and the EAPN Ireland support documents to the Lisbon process. It gives networks the key elements/timeline and key actors of the process and provides links to key documents/resources.

It then gives a summary of key actions and developments for the process in 2008-10. We give some tips for engaging in the new round, building on networks experience. At the end we make a proposal for key demands that EAPN would like to see in the National Reform Programmes. This will form the basis for our assessment of the NRP following its presentation on the 15th October. Please let us know whether the tool kit is useful and how we can improve it, to make it an effective tool for the networks to use.

2. Background to the Revised Lisbon Strategy

The '**Lisbon Strategy**' (also referred to as the Lisbon Agenda) is a way of describing the main priority objectives established for the EU for the period 2000-2010. It is called the 'Lisbon Strategy' because it was agreed at the Lisbon Council in 2000 when the Heads of State and Government of the EU agreed the following vision: "*To make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based **economy** in the world capable of sustaining more and better **jobs** and with greater **social cohesion**". Progress in reaching this objective is reported to the EU Spring Council in March every year, which decides the key priorities for following up on the Lisbon Agenda. The Gothenburg Council in 2001 made **environmental** protection part of the 'Lisbon Strategy'.*

However, in 2004, an evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy was launched. This evaluation was strongly influenced by the [report of the 'Kok Group'](#) which was appointed by the Council to prepare an input into the evaluation. It highlighted the failure of the Lisbon Strategy to deliver on its key targets, particularly related to slow growth, unemployment and lack of investment in research and development. This failure was partly blamed on the lack of ownership of the strategy by member states. [Communication to Spring Council: Working Towards Growth and Jobs: a new start for the Lisbon Strategy.](#)

This led to a **revised Lisbon Strategy** which was agreed at the Spring Council 2005. The revised Lisbon Strategy did not change the original intentions of the Lisbon strategy but it did decide that the future orientation of the strategy should focus on **Growth and Jobs** as a pre-condition for delivering other elements of the strategy including social inclusion. In addition it decided on a new method of governance for the Lisbon Strategy, involving the adoption in June 2005 by the Council of [Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs](#) (integrating the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines – divided between Macro and Micro Economic Guidelines- and the Employment Guidelines, formerly distinct), as well as an integrated reporting system (National Reform Programmes and National Reform Programmes implementation reports).

Once every three years these Guidelines can be revised. Last year the EU discussed proposals to update and revise the Guidelines. In the end, the Council decided not to change the guidelines. However some important changes have been made to the explanatory text. EAPN has been very actively involved in lobbying on these changes (See the next section on Employment Guidelines for more details).

The Link with the European Employment Strategy

Prior to the revision of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005, employment policies were specifically dealt with under the European Employment Strategy, which was launched in 1997 following the agreement to include a new employment chapter in the Amsterdam Treaty. This chapter recognised a new role for EU institutions in coordinating employment policies at EU level, through the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) although employment policy remained a core competence of each member state. The EES was designed as the main tool to ensure coordination, based on a set of common objectives and targets. The 1 components of the Open Method of Coordination on Employment have now been incorporated into the revised Lisbon Strategy. This is partly because the EES is treaty based and cannot be altered without unanimous consent of the Member States. The National Action Plans for Employment now become the Employment section of the National Reform Programmes, and the EU Joint Employment Report on Employment a specific chapter in the Annex of the Annual Progress Report.

Discussions are now starting on the shape of the Lisbon Agenda post 2010. Some proposals have been made (eg Jonathan Zeitlin) that the European Employment Strategy has been undermined in the current link with macro and micro guidelines and should be de-coupled and developed as a separate OMC once again. Discussions on this and other proposals will continue this year.

3. The Revised Lisbon Strategy (2005) : Key Elements

The new governance procedure for the Revised Lisbon Strategy involves the following **key elements** (these have been updated for the new cycle 2008-10)

- [Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs \(2008-10\)](#) . The “Integrated guidelines” were agreed by the Spring Council in 2005 for the period 2005-2008 and integrate the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (divided between Macro and Micro Economic Guidelines) and the Employment Guidelines.
- In 2008, the Council has made the decision to maintain the Guidelines unchanged for the period 2008-10, although some changes have been made to the interpretative text. See [EAPN briefing note on the new Employment Guidelines 2008-2010](#). The Council can still theoretically decide to make amendments to these Guidelines in the intervening periods (ie in 2009 and 10). This could come from a Recommendation from the Commission or from the Parliament. But they clearly plan to keep the Guidelines stable.
- [National Reform Programmes](#) (NRP) Member States produce national programmes based on the three areas of the Integrated Guidelines (macro, micro and employment) ie one chapter is dedicated to Employment. These programmes are for three years, but are meant to be updated and amended every year in line with the Council’s recommendations or changing circumstances (In 2006 and 2007 Member States produced Report of the implementation of their National Reform Programmes). These reports are coordinated by The **Lisbon National Coordinators (LNC)** who are government officials responsible for developing the “Lisbon process” in each member state.
- [Annual Progress Report](#)(APR) Each year the Commission analyses the Member States’ NRPs and makes an assessment related to the Guidelines. The report is divided into 3 sections.
 - Part I provides an executive summary and an overall assessment of how the NRPs have delivered the priorities. Good practice examples of individual member states are highlighted.
 - Part II provides the country annexes, which give the Commission’s assessment of each member state NRP.
 - The Annexes, provide an overview of how each guideline has been delivered. Part III of the Annex is the draft [Joint Employment Report](#) which is finally adopted as a Joint Report.
- [Recommendations](#) Each year the Commission can make recommendations to Member States about how they should improve their policies as part of the APR which are then confirmed by the Council. These should then guide the next round of NRPs. In 2006 and 7 **Country specific recommendations** were made, highlighting shortcomings on macro/micro and employment performance.
- [Spring Council Conclusions](#). Each year the Spring European Council confirms or amends the priorities put forward by the APR. These conclusions need to be taken on board by the member states in drafting their new NRP or implementation reports. The Spring Council also decides whether to amend the Integrated Guidelines or not, which will form the basis for the new round of NRPs.

Other Key Elements

Feeding in and Feeding out

The National Reform Programmes should contribute to the goal of social inclusion, through a process of **feeding in and feeding out** between the revised Lisbon strategy and the Open

Method of Coordination (OMC) on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. This phrase comes from the Communication *“Working together, working better”* where it stated *“separate reporting under the OMC on social protection and social inclusion will continue, with social protection issues relevant to the integrated guidelines also being reflected in the national reform programmes”*. Thus, the OMC should interact closely with the revised Lisbon Strategy – **“feeding in”** to growth and employment objectives while Lisbon programmes **“feed out”** to advance social cohesion goals”.

Governance and Participation

The Guidelines establish that MS should ensure *“good governance”*. Although NGOs are not specifically mentioned MS, through the national coordinators ([National Lisbon Coordinators formerly called Mr and Ms Lisbon](#)) are supposed to establish a “broad partnership for change, by involving parliamentary bodies and stakeholders, including those at regional and local levels” Although specific reference is made to social partners, member states are expected to engage civil society in the development of the plans, “in accordance with national traditions”.

Funding

Member states are supposed to mobilise all relevant national and EU resources to deliver the Lisbon Strategy. Key amongst these are **structural funds**. The European Social Fund is specifically the financial instrument for delivering the European Employment Strategy. The Commission has emphasized the need for these funds to be tied to delivering the objectives of the revised strategy.

Currently there is a new provision to oblige member states to **earmark** spending between 60 and 75% of structural funds (in the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness objectives respectively) on **“Lisbon-orientated”** areas. The definition of those areas, focuses primarily on growth and jobs-related areas, including research, energy, information society, transport. However, social inclusion was also prioritised, among others through line 71 *“Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combating discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market and promoting acceptance of diversity at the workplace”*.

The link between structural funds and Lisbon will be reinforced in terms of reporting and evaluation.

- Each year, Member State will include a specific section on the contribution of structural funds in the implementation report on the National Reform Programme. This will input in the Commission’s report to the Spring Council, which could lead to recommendations to Member States on how to improve the delivery of the funds.
- By the end of 2009 and 2012, the Member States will also provide concise reports, reporting amongst others on the funds’ contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon integrated guidelines (but also other priorities). In the years 2010 and 2013, the Commission will publish a strategic report summarizing the contributions from the Member States.

For more information on the link between structural funds and Lisbon, please see:

EAPN’s [briefing on structural funds and the Lisbon strategy](#)

The [Commission’s Communication](#) on structural funds’ contribution to the Strategy

Other Resources and Measures

The EU also allocates other resources through the Community Incentive Measures (EIM), in the field of Employment, and these are also designed to support the strategy. Chief of these is the [Mutual Learning Programme](#), which is supposed to enable member states to exchange good practice on employment policies through Peer Review exchanges, broader Thematic

Review seminars and Awareness-raising activities. This area is now funded under the new [PROGRESS](#) programme.

4. EU Objectives and Priorities

The **National Reform Programmes** (NRP) are supposed to reflect how member states are meeting the objectives and priorities agreed at EU level to deliver the “jobs and growth strategy” . Member States have to take into account the following 3 key elements when preparing their reports:

- a) [The Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs \(2008-10\) \(Macro/Micro and Employment Guidelines\)](#)
- b) **The Country Recommendations and Priorities set under the Annual Progress Report of the previous year.**
- c) **The priorities highlighted in the Spring Council conclusions**

a) Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs

The main basis of the National Reform Programmes is the detailed macro, micro and employment guidelines that together make up the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, since 2005. The EU has decided this year to keep the 24 Integrated Guidelines (2005-8) unchanged. However some changes have been made in the interpretative text – see next section.

INTEGRATED GUIDELINES FOR GROWTH AND JOBS (2008-2010)

Macroeconomic guidelines

- (1) To secure economic stability for sustainable growth.
- (2) To safeguard economic and financial sustainability as a basis for increased employment.
- (3) To promote a growth and employment orientated efficient allocation of resources.
- (4) To ensure that wage developments contribute to macroeconomic stability and growth.
- (5) To promote greater coherence between macroeconomic, structural and employment policies.
- (6) To contribute to a dynamic and well-functioning EMU.

Microeconomic guidelines

- (7) To increase and improve investment in R&D, in particular by private business.
- (8) To facilitate all forms of innovation.
- (9) To facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society.
- (10) To strengthen the competitive advantages of its industrial base.
- (11) To encourage the sustainable use of resources and strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth.
- (12) To extend and deepen the internal market.
- (13) To ensure open and competitive markets inside and outside Europe and to reap the benefits of globalisation.
- (14) To create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation.
- (15) To promote a more entrepreneurial culture and create a supportive environment for SMEs.

To expand, improve and link up European infrastructure and complete priority crossborder projects.

Employment guidelines

- (17) Implement employment policies aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
- (18) Promote a lifecycle approach to work.
- (19) Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job seekers, including disadvantaged people and the inactive.
- (20) Improve matching of labour market needs.
- (21) Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners.
- (22) Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage setting mechanisms.
- (23) Expand and improve investment in human capital.
- (24) Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence

We provide here more detail on the Employment Guidelines as a main focus of EAPN work.

Content of the Employment Guidelines

The revised Lisbon Strategy established three overarching objectives for employment:

- Achieving Full Employment
- Improving quality and productivity at work
- Strengthening social and territorial cohesion

These objectives are delivered through **8 Guidelines and 3 priorities**.

(Guideline 17-24). Each guideline is then broken down further into more detailed guidance followed by several paragraphs of explanatory text.

The first guideline encompasses the **three overarching objectives**:

Guideline 17: *“Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion”.*

Then the following guidelines are structured under priorities:

Priority 1: Attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernize social protection systems

- *Guideline 18: Promote a lifecycle approach to work*
- *Guideline 19: Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job seekers, including disadvantaged people and the inactive.*
- *Guideline 20: Improve matching of labour market needs.*

Priority 2: Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises.

- *Guideline 21: Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners.*
- *Guideline 22: Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage setting mechanisms.*

Priority 3: Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

- *Guideline 23: Expand and improve investment in human capital*
- *Guideline 24: Adapt education and training systems in response to new skills requirements.*

Key Targets

The Guidelines also establish **broad targets** for EU employment with 70% average employment rate, 60% for women and 50% for older workers.

Specific Targets established by the European Employment Strategy in 2003 have been re-confirmed with only one change with regard to young unemployed:

- Every unemployed person is offered a job, apprenticeship, additional training or other employability measure; in the case of young persons who have left school within no more than 4 months¹ by 2010 and in the case of adults within no more than 12 months.
- 25% of long-term unemployed should participate by 2010 in an active measure in the form of training, retraining, work practice or other employability measure, with the aim of achieving the average of the three most advanced Member States
- That job seekers throughout the EU are able to consult all job vacancies advertised through Member States' employment services.
- A increase by 5 years at EU level, of the effective average exit age from the labour market by 2010 compared to 2001
- Provision of childcare by 2010, for at least 90% of children between 3 and school , and at least 33% of under 3 years
- An EU average rate of no more than 10% early school leavers
- 85% of 22 year olds to complete secondary education by 2010
- EU average participation in Lifelong learning to be 12.5% of adult working age population.

b) The Annual Progress Report (2007) and Country Specific Recommendations

The Annual Progress Report is the report which analyses all the member states' National Reform Programmes and sets out recommendations and priorities for the following period. Last years [Annual Progress Report](#) "**Keeping up the pace for change**" (12 December 2007) highlighted that the new strategy had delivered visible results, particularly in terms of growth and employment, but the EU needed to keep up the "pace for change, *given the risk of global slowdown in growth*", making it *essential to press ahead with reform and increase the resilience of our economies*".

A **key new element** is the stress on Lisbon as part of the **EU's response to globalization**. At the Informal European Council in Lisbon 2007, the EU discussed a [Communication](#) prepared by the Secretariat General on this subject². The Communication highlighted that the Lisbon Strategy should be used to *shape globalisation in line with the EU's interests and values, but primarily focussing on helping EU "succeed" in globalisation*.

In November, the Commission published a package of documents related to the [Internal Market Review](#). One of the documents: "[New Social Vision for 21st Century Europe for the 21st Century](#)" set out President Barroso's vision of how the new social agenda should be shaped, linked to the much-vaunted consultation on the Social Reality stocktaking. The key priorities were highlighted to be the need to refocus the Social Agenda on priorities dealing with *access, opportunity and solidarity*". This theme is then picked up in Barroso's forward to the **Annual Progress Report 2007** emphasizing that the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy should help Europeans *prosper with an agenda of access, opportunity and solidarity which will enable us to benefit from being open to the wider world and shape globalisation to reflect European Values*".

Annual Progress Report 2007

Barroso emphasized the following **key actions**:

¹ Formerly 6 months

² "The European Interest: Succeeding in the Age of Globalisation" – COM (2007) 581

- reducing the number of early school leavers to ensure that no one is left behind in the age of globalisation.
- Give Europe a new “fifth freedom”, the free movement of knowledge.
- Roll out high- speed internet to stimulate innovation.
- Stimulate small and medium size enterprises through a small Business Act for Europe
- Improve substantially the energy efficiency of our buildings
- Reinforce the education-research-innovation triangle, notably through the establishment and operation of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology(EIT) and the Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI)

The 4 key priorities identified by the Spring Council in 2006, remain unchanged:

- 1) **Investing in people and modernising labour markets**
- 2) **Unlocking business potential, especially of SMEs**
- 3) **Investing in knowledge and innovation**
- 4) **Energy and Climate change.**

1) Investing in people and modernising labour markets

The focus in 2008 is on promoting a **life-cycle approach** in employment and education, to modernise labour markets and reinforce social inclusion.

Key Actions at community level

- The new **Social Agenda** – focussed on opportunities, access and solidarity.
- New Commission proposals on tackling the **skills gap**, and forecasting/monitoring skills requirements in EU.

New Commission proposals on a common policy for **immigration** in 2008-

At national level, MS are encouraged to:

- Implement the common principles on **Flexicurity**, by defining national pathways within their NRPs.
- Increase the **availability and affordability** of quality **childcare**, in line with national and EU targets
- Draw up action plans and set targets on reducing **early-school leaving** and improving basic reading skills

In the 2nd priority – Unlocking Business Potential

Whilst most of the priorities focus on supporting small businesses by reducing administrative burden (ie less regulation), a strong emphasis is given to “*strengthening the single market, increase competition in services...*” which members may feel is contrary to the interests of people in poverty, particularly in the guarantees over access to quality, affordable key services of general interest (eg social and health services, as well as energy, water, transport..)

The **3rd priority** focuses on making the “**fifth freedom**” the free movement of reality through promoting key framework conditions for developing innovation and research.

The **4th priority** on **Energy and Climate Change** is primarily focussed on climate change. The priority is to complete the internal electricity and gas market and climate change packet, primarily to achieve 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 20% share of renewables There is no mention or focus on Energy Poverty or the implications of the massive rises in electricity prices predicted in this period.

Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) and Points to watch (PTW)

In 2007, the EU agreed Country Specific Recommendations in its assessment of each member state's performance. These recommendations highlight where countries and have done well, and where they need to "do better". The areas for improvement are termed "Points to watch". The Commission has highlighted that these points will be a particular focus for evaluation.

c) The Spring Council Conclusions

The [Spring Council Conclusions 2008](#), confirmed the **4 priorities**, approved by the Annual Progress Report from the 2006 Council Conclusions. However, the proposals on **social inclusion and poverty** are noticeably weak this year (p3 and 4).

- Emphasis is given to the need to improve **governance** – exchange of best practice, involving stakeholders better, particularly at local and regional level.
- **Cohesion policy** should fulfil the objectives of Lisbon, recalling that cohesion funds should be targeted in support of the NRP (p.3)
- Emphasizes the importance of **macro-economic stability** – focussing on **public deficit and debt reduction**, and raising the "effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure" – *including cross-border tax evasion and "modernising public administration"*
- The only mention of the **social dimension** is made in p.4 – *"reconfirming the importance of the social dimension of the EU as an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy"* and in particular stressing the need to *"further integrate economic, employment and social policies."* But without any mention of the link to the objectives of the OMC on social protection and social inclusion.

Investing in people and modernising Labour market (p.9)

- The proposals by the Spring Council focus strongly on **education** – particularly reinforcing the education part of the "research-innovation- education" triangle.
- An emphasis is made on the new **Social Agenda** – highlighting key issues of promoting *"youth, education, migration and demography as well as intercultural dialogue"*.
- **Poverty and social exclusion** are finally mentioned only, in the context of *"promoting active inclusion and increasing employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market."*
- The Commission is asked to present a comprehensive assessment of **future skills requirements** up to 2020, taking into account the impact of technological change and ageing populations. In this context, **economic migration** is stressed to play a key role. (ie using highly qualified immigrants to cover skill shortages...)

These objectives and priorities are useful reference points to quote when national networks are arguing for improvements in their national NRP. The Commission also expects Member States to show explicitly how they are delivering on these priorities in the NRP.

5. Guidance Note for National Reform Programme– 2008-10

In this section, we outline the **key new elements** from the new Guidance note produced by the Secretariat General of the Commission to help Member States in developing the NRP for the cycle 2008-10. This is based on the Commission working document: *"The next cycle of the Lisbon Strategy: for growth and jobs (2008-10) Next Steps"*

National Reform Programme guidelines

Format and content

The Guidance note highlights that the starting point for the NRP should be the **Spring Council Conclusions** (see previous section), focusing on the 4 priority areas. Each country should then focus on the **Country-specific Recommendations** (CSR) and the **Points to watch** (PTW) (See previous section). The MS are expected to: “*set out detailed and concrete actions addressing their specific policy response to the country specific recommendations and points to watch in their NRP*”³

NRP Contents

The NRP should contain the following elements.

1. **A first chapter** containing a statement with detailed and concrete measures, including a timetable responding to the country specific recommendations and points to watch
2. **An update on previous NRP's**. Members can choose whether to only update or completely revise them. They must include relevant actions linked to the priority areas from the Spring Council, particularly stressing progress to **national Research and Development targets, internet expansion and flexicurity**.
3. **A description of the main reforms** over the last 12 months (again focussing on the CSR and PTW and Council Conclusion). A summary of actions should be presented in the preset table.
 - The **deadline** for delivery of the NRP is the middle of October 2008 (15th)
 - The document should also receive explicit **political endorsement** of the government in question (ie be discussed in Parliament).

Improvements on Methodology

The Lisbon Methodology working group (LIME) has developed a **Lisbon assessment framework (LAF)** for evaluating policy responses which cover all Lisbon fields (macro, micro and employment). This comprises 3 elements:

1) performance in the policy area, 2) priority of policy areas of jobs and growth, 3) adequacy of the policy response. However, key criticisms of this framework have been made by the EMCO for its overly economic focus and in particular the inadequacy of focussing on GDP per capita rates as the main criteria for evaluation of performance, when measuring areas like social and territorial cohesion and quality of work. The Commission therefore has been at pains to stress that this framework (LAF) will not be the only basis of the Commission's evaluation.(p.3/4)

Partnership and Governance (p.4)

The Commission highlights the need to make **key improvements** in this area:

- The demand to “*step up the exchange of **best practices on governance**” and “*to strengthen **involvement of relevant stakeholders**”*. However, although a reference is made to the importance of the involvement of regional and local authorities, social partners and other stakeholders, no specific reference is made to NGO's or people experiencing poverty. The exchange of best practices should be done at different levels. At EU level, exchanges between the **National Lisbon Coordinators** will be fostered, eg on the 26th May on **skills for jobs**.*
- The **National Lisbon Coordinators** (Mr/MS Lisbon), are also asked to become points of contact for other member states looking to exchange on specific policy areas. The Commission will also increase its liaison with MS on this point.
- A new emphasis is also made on **reinforcing the link with national political processes** highlighting that the document should receive “*political endorsement from the national governments*” ie be debated in their national Parliaments
- The Commission has also underlined that when assessing progress each year **they will “pay particular attention to the way stakeholders are associated”**

³ The next cycle of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs (2008-10), Next Steps. Commission Working document 2008

The Annual Progress Report (APR) 2009

The APR will be published by the Commission to be submitted to the 2009 Spring Council by the December Council and will consist as in previous years of 2 parts.

- 1) Short document with key messages
 - 2) An assessment of progress in each Member State
- A more detailed overview will be included in the **annex** (including the draft Joint Employment Report).
 - The Commission will also submit a **document reviewing progress** overall on the Lisbon strategy and key targets
 - A first annual report on **market access**, identifying countries and sectors where barriers remain to market expansion.
 - A first implementation report on the **Community Lisbon Programme**.

Changes to Employment Guidelines (explanatory text).

The Integrated Guidelines themselves remain unchanged. For most of it, the narratives also remain the same as they were 3 years ago. But there are however some changes and additions, **some of them being very interesting for EAPN**. Notably:

Governance of the OMC on Employment:

“Member States (MS)” are asked to conduct policies not only “in cooperation with the social partners” but also with “where appropriate other stakeholders (14)”. This reinforces the existing statement that MS “should establish a broad partnership for change by fully involving parliamentary bodies and stakeholders, including those at regional and local level and civil society organizations”

The gender dimension is explicitly reinforced with several references to the need to tackle gender inequalities and gender pay gap.

The narratives refer twice to Active inclusion:

- Under the priority “attract and retain more people in employment”, it is stated that “promoting the active inclusion of those excluded from the labour market is also important”.

- Under the guidelines 18, we read that “Active inclusion policies can increase labour supply and strengthen society cohesiveness and are a powerful means of promoting the social and labour market integration of the most disadvantaged”.

This is an important point since it is crucial that EU initiatives concerning inclusion and employment converge. However, what we read in the Employment Guidelines narrative is a less ambitious understanding of active inclusion than the one promoted by the Commission. This can be seen in the second paragraph after the guideline 18:

- active inclusion is here strongly connected to activation and a new opportunity of job, training or employability measure should to be given to unemployed people;

- here, the definition of activation insists on the need to keep people connected to the labour market (no notion of social integration activities not connected to the labour market);

- emphasis is strongly put on the 'Make Work Pay';
- the notion of 'personalised action plans' present in the last Commission communication of Active Inclusion is not taken on board here;
- they refer here to "affordable access to basic social services", which is less ambitious than the 17 October Communication on Active Inclusion refers to "better access to quality services";
- they refer to "adequate levels of minimum resources", also less ambitious than the "Income support sufficient to avoid social exclusion", headline of the 17 October Communication.

However, even if the wording is different, the fact that these 2 pillars of the Active Inclusion concept are referred to by the Employment guidelines is a step forward that is worth highlighting, and a good sign in the direction of more complementarities between employment and social policies.

Flexicurity

□ 2 new paragraphs are devoted to Flexicurity above the guidelines 21. They recall the definition of flexicurity ("the deliberate combination of flexible and reliable contractual arrangements; comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, effective active labour market policies and modern, adequate and sustainable social protection systems", and invite MS to "implement their own flexicurity pathways, based on the common principles adopted by the Council. These principles serve as a useful basis for reforms, framing national policy options and specific national arrangements in the field of flexicurity. There is no single pathway and no single principle is more important than another".

The general objectives of flexicurity are presented in the introductory paragraph devoted to the full employment priority: "An integrated flexicurity approach is essential to achieve these goals. Flexicurity policies address simultaneously the flexibility of labour market, work organization and labour relations, reconciliation of work and private life, and employment security and social protection"(I 10,11,12).

Integrated Social and Employment Policy

□ The need to ensure consistency between social and employment policy is stated clearly:

- "Strengthened cooperation interaction is needed with the Open Method of Coordination in Social Protection and Social Inclusion" (I 20)
- "MS are encouraged to monitor the social impact of reforms" (I 39)

□ New emphasis is also put on mobility of workers (cf paragraph above the guideline 20)

□ A strong focus is put on the need to increase the employment rate to address the demographic challenge, especially concerning specific groups, including:

- Parents and "especially single parents, who are usually exposed to higher poverty risks", through developing childcare provision;
- Older workers (with the objective to increase the effective average exit age from the labour market by 5 years by 2010 compared to 2001)
- Young people: MS are also now invited to improve "occupational health status with the goal of reducing sickness burdens, increase labour productivity and prolonging working life".

**Key Steps and Time Line: on the development of the
National Reform Programmes 2008-11.**

March 2008	Spring Council Conclusions agreed no change to guidelines and established priorities for NRPs Presidency Conclusions underline the need to strengthen the social pillar in the Revised Lisbon Strategy.
June/September 2008	Commission carries out bilateral meetings with each Member State. This year the Secretariat General has urged more stakeholder involvement.
Autumn 2008	Commission presents first annual report on market access
15 October 2008	National Reform Programmes should be presented by each Member State
13-14 November 2008	Multilateral Surveillance within the Employment Committee– Cambridge Review of employment aspects of NRPs, focusing on country responses to last year recommendations, and flexicurity pathways. A report of this review is forwarded to the EPSCO
December 2008	Adoption of the Commission annual “Employment in Europe” analytical report – Discussion of this report in the Employment Committee
December 2008	Adoption by the Commission of the annual “Lisbon Package” including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Progress Report (including key political messages; assessment of progress by each Member States, and as an annex a more in depth analysis including the Joint Employment Report) - first implementation report on progress made in the Community Lisbon Programme - a document bringing together relevant data
January 2009	Discussion in the Employment Committee and other relevant Committees (Social Protection Committee, Economic Policy Committee) of the APR presented by the Commission Discussions in Council formation
February 2009	Discussion in the Employment Committee of the key messages paper (work towards a joint position with the SPC)
March 2009	Adoption of Joint Employment Report and Country Recommendations by EPSCO <i>European Spring Council endorses Annual Progress Report.</i>

6. Engaging at National Level: Key Steps

We offer some possible steps for engaging in the National Reform Programme Process at national level. The degree to which you are able to respond to the process, will largely depend on your capacity, resources and experience as well as the openness of your Government. .

1. Know your national process and potential for involvement

The immediate step is to contact immediately the Lisbon National Coordinators (LNC) to find out how they are developing the process and what the potential is for engagement. The LNC are government representatives (formerly known as Mr/Ms Lisbon) who have responsibility for coordinating action on the NRP response. You'll want to know whether you can make an input to the draft report, invite representatives to a meeting, respond to the draft NRP Report, or comment on the final report. You should also ask who is involved in the bilateral meetings, carried out between the Commission and representatives of your Government, and whether you can participate. You could also try to establish a meeting with the EMCO and/or your SPC members. See list in contact section. *You then need to decide what time commitment you are able to make and the level of response which is feasible based on your current resources.*

2. Get informed

All the information at EU level is easily available from the Europa – Growth and Jobs site and are listed in detail in section 2. (National Reform Programmes, the Integrated Guidelines, Annual Progress Report, particularly the country assessments, the country recommendations as well as the Joint Employment Report, and the Spring Council conclusions) Section 2 gives you a summary, to help in the process. 14 EAPN national networks were involved last year in assessing their countries NRP Implementation report.. The EAPN report “**A Future Worth Having**” provides a vital overview of key weaknesses from different member states perspectives as well as highlighting key messages for improvements in the National Reform Programme. Also see EAPN report on the [2007 Implementation Reports](#) and on the [Annual Progress Report and Joint Employment Report](#). Other important EAPN reference documents are also listed in this section.

3. Analyse and develop key messages

It will be important to clarify the key weaknesses of your countries NRP against a list of what you consider key requirements. In the next section we propose some key areas that could be included, which are built around our report last year. It is also useful to refer to the Commission's documents (see previous section), which will strengthen your argument, and to the key priorities in the Joint Employment Report/Council Conclusions if relevant. It is important to give **simple messages**.

4. Brief members, promote debate

If you are going to be able to make a submission or contribution, it is important to stimulate debate with other members of the network and other NGOs and stakeholders.. This brings a lot of added value to any response you might want to make. Many networks try and include the **direct participation of people in poverty**. This means briefing participants, using this tool kit and the other examples, and developing additional information from your national context. Having analysed your NRP, and developed some ideas of key weaknesses and demands, you could hold a meeting/s to further develop this position and to consider developing a lobbying strategy. EAPN has powerpoint presentations on the Lisbon Strategy which may be useful. (contact Secretariat)

5. Making a submission/contribution

The kind of submission/contribution you make, will depend on the capacity of your network and the openness of your government representatives. It could range from a letter highlighting key messages, a more detailed analysis/position as an input to the NRP, or a response to the draft NRP. Even better, if this can be backed up with a stakeholder event. Or you could invite the representatives to participate in a meeting organised by yourselves. **Please let EAPN Brussels know of any action taken, and documents sent, in any language!**

6. Developing a Lobbying Strategy.

Some groups may have the capacity to build on this work and make a more effective lobbying strategy. This could involve:

- Identifying and contacting possible allies (other NGO networks, social partners, politicians. exchanging information, establishing where there are common elements which you can jointly press for, clarifying joint actions.
- Jointly contacting key actors in the National Government, Regional and local governments as well as MPs and MEPs.
- Using the media – working with allies to target national and local media, focussed on joint key messages.

7. Respond to the NRP Implementation Report

Once the NRP Implementation Report is presented (15th October officially). It will be important to write to your national government to highlight the weaknesses identified. Copies of your contributions should also be sent directly to the **Commission Desk officers**, for information. We would also like you to take part in the EAPN overall assessment at EU level. EAPN will circulate a questionnaire, to help you assess the key points. Any action taken should be flagged up to the media, and to other stakeholders/organisations.

7. Some Examples of National Networks Action on NRP

Approach/Process followed by EAPN Ireland 2005/2006:

EAPN Ireland convened an **employment policy group** (with the National Women's Council, Pavee Point Travellers Centre, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, Migrant Rights Centre and Dublin Employment Pact) which monitored and worked to influence the NAPs Employment in the past and now the National Reform Programme.

Unlike the NAP Employment, where our submission was annexed to the Plan, we were not invited to make a submission and in fact the NRP was largely a secret exercise. On the basis of the information from EAPN (Europe) the Employment Policy Group planned the following (largely carried out by EAPN Ireland staff):

- **Written briefing** for members and the anti-poverty sector generally '[Briefing on European Employment Guidelines and National Reform Programme 2005-2008](#)'). Distributed by e-mail (about 1,000 copies with EAPN Ireland Flash). This drew heavily on materials from EAPN (Europe) and on previous briefings on the Irish National Employment Action Plan. Backed up by a special webpage (www.eapn.ie/policy/48)
- **A small workshop, with about 20 national anti-poverty organisations.** Short papers were presented, each by a national representative organisation, on the issues identified in the guidelines and in the Commission Recommendations to Ireland on the last NAP Employment (activation and training, childcare, gender pay gap, in-service training, migrant workers, asylum seekers, disabled people, Travellers entrepreneurship, life-long-learning etc.) Each presenter was asked to name one demand with a short justification., These were discussed in turn by the group

- **A draft submission** on the NRP was drafted on the basis of this discussion.
- **Three regional seminars** (one-day, total about 70 people) were held to inform and consult members and allies. These involved briefing in the morning and small group discussion in the afternoon (what has changed for the better and worse in employment, what should the Government do) followed by discussion and amendment of the draft submission (above)
- **An amended submission** incorporating the views of the regional seminars was re-circulated to participants, members and allies for final views. The final version was then sent to the responsible Government Department and the European Commission and publicised widely among politicians, members, social partners etc.
- A submission to the **Oireachtas (Parliamentary) Committee** on Enterprise and Small Business. [The papers, submissions, transcript etc, are on a special web-page.](#)

Positive outcomes/results:

- **The process of discussion** was useful for raising awareness of the process among member NGOs; building alliances with trade unions, unemployed centres etc. passing mutual learning and support between groups facing different challenges and issues
- **The policy paper**, based on a strong mandate from grass-roots organisations, has provided material for inputs to other processes such as the NAP Inclusion, the consultation on the new Rural Programme, the Structural Funds etc.
- **The Oireachtas (Parliamentary) Committee** debate created opportunities for public discussion. It was agreed that:... *"the presentation be sent for comment to the Departments of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister); Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Education and Science; and Social and Family Affairs. The joint committee will meet again to discuss the matter when the Departments' replies have been received."*

Lessons learnt or hints for other networks:

- Information is power –EAPN collectively has a lot of information on processes and your members have a lot of information on issues and solutions
- The main (only?) added value of NGOs to the policy process is authentic information from the ground, so we need to constantly consult, even if we think we know the answers
- Politicians need our information as much as we need their 'platform'
- The media and politicians are interested in policy (unemployment, childcare, education etc.), not process, but the process gives a reason to talk about policy at a particular time
- Resources are always short in NGOs, so we need to use imagination, energy (often voluntary) and persistence
- Setting up a system to influence policy is different, but when it is done once (in our case the briefing materials on the NAP Employment) it is easy to adapt it to a new process
- Use the web as a communication tool
- Plagiarise shamelessly from other EAPN networks or anyone else!
- Make alliances strategically

Relevant Documents (letters/ press-releases/web site links)

Our webpage on employment has links to all the major documents on www.eapn.ie

Some key documents:

- Documents from the Round Table on the 'Developmental Welfare State' 6th April 2006 (Ireland's version of the 'flexicurity' debate)
- Presentation to Oireachtas Committee: "New employment policies needed to support marginalised." Page with full report of debate, copy of presentation, press release and lots of other background papers.
- EAPN Ireland and Community Platform Joint Submission to National Reform Programme 2005-2008
- EAPN Ireland Briefing on European Employment Guidelines and National Reform Programme 2005-2008 Updated 3 April 2006

Some positive developments for national networks in 2007

- **Sweden:** EAPN is involved in an NGO platform (Network against Exclusion) which was invited to a high level meeting on the NRP. Although nothing could be added to the text, the Network was able to add an appendix. They also received the copy of the final report but did not have time to respond.
- **Czech Republic:** EAPN participated in the formulation of the NRP (2006-8) and in the Implementation report. “ We did our best to make involving people experiencing poverty, the basis for the Government’s proposals”. EAPN lobbied politicians through the Mainstreaming social inclusion publication at local, regional and national level.
- **Austria:** NGO’s were not invited to participate in the written consultation, unlike social partners but were invited to a meeting in the Ministry. This was the first time that NGOs were consulted on Lisbon. A list of NGO recommendations was handed over to the Commission during their bilateral meeting.

8. EAPN Demands

Each national network will be focussed on their own national agenda and key demands. However, EAPN would like to work towards clarifying a set of key common demands in relation to the National Reform Programmes. This section builds upon the key conclusions drawn from the EAPN report, based on the evaluations by 15 national networks "[A Future Worth Having](#)". These focus primarily on governance, mainstreaming social inclusion and feeding in and out to the OMC on social protection and social inclusion, equalities and discrimination and promoting inclusive employment for those furthest from the labour market..

Areas	Key Demands
Governance, Visibility and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visible/transparent and high-profile governance process involving all stakeholders • Effective horizontal coordination between Economic, employment and social Government departments and with other stakeholders, through the Lisbon National Coordinators (Mr and Mrs Lisbon) • Active participation of NGO's and people experiencing poverty at all stages of the process and in monitoring/evaluation.
Overarching principles: Poverty and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion/cohesion stated as an overarching principle • Clear reference to the objectives and priorities of the OMC on social protection and social inclusion, particularly the NAP Inclusion and how the NRP will help to achieve these. • Evidence of how the NRP will help to eradicate poverty • Clear reference made to the feeding out and feeding in to the NAP inclusion process ie how Lisbon is contributing to the eradication of poverty and the objectives of the OMC and the other way round.. • Confirmation of the role of Structural Funds in delivering social inclusion objectives and analysis of delivery of Lisbon-related priority 71 ("<i>pathway to integration and re-entry into work...</i>")
Positive macro-economic context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance of investing adequately in public funding for effective social protection systems, rather than a sole concern to reduce public deficit.
Supportive microeconomic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action to ensure that fundamental rights are not being undermined by the extension of the Internal market (ie liberalisation and privatisation of basic Services (SGI) • Recognition of the role of the social economy, and/ local employment partnerships.
Equalities and Discrimination	<p>Effective measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle discrimination/harassment and promote inclusion of specific groups: Immigrants/migrants/asylum seekers and refugees, ethnic and religious minorities; gender discrimination and equalities concerns; disabled and long-term sick, older and younger people as well as the discrimination against poor/and long-term unemployed • Defend rights and access to support and other services: • Evidence of mainstreaming Equal principals or practices

Employment, and Human Capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support for Good Active Inclusion, this should include: ○ Positive Activation measures to support those furthest from the labour market into work, without punitive sanctions or conditionality of benefits. The measures should include personalised and targeted pathway approaches, guidance, job search, training and job placement, after-care services with particular reference to the low-skilled.. ○ Access to good quality services ie affordable quality childcare, employment services as well as housing/healthcare etc. ○ Explicit commitment to provision of an adequate minimum income for a dignified life and supportive social protection strategies that provide a secure base for those who have not got work., and removal of the conditionality of benefits. ○ Explicit measures to create quality jobs, to improve low pay/working poor concerns ○ Balanced approaches to flexicurity which ensure increased security to all, not only in transitions between jobs, and strengthen employment protection ○ Pro-active measures to support lifelong-learning and to recognize non-formal education and in-work experience.
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Delivering on the EAPN Social Inclusion Scoreboard (2007)

Last year (2007) EAPN evaluated the NRP Implementation reports in terms of their contribution to inclusion and the eradication of poverty. Networks can also use this **checklist/scoreboard** to assess their NRP. This will help then in responding to the questionnaire that EAPN will finalise and send out by the end of June.

<p>The EAPN Social Inclusion Scoreboard How far does Lisbon deliver on Social Inclusion⁴</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How far has the social dimension been strengthened, delivering the objectives and priorities of Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion.? 2. Does the macro-dimension ensure inclusion by strengthening social protection systems and promoting a fairer redistribution of wealth? 3. Does the micro dimension help to create quality jobs including for people in poverty and ensure access to affordable quality public services? 4. Are the Employment policies helping the excluded access quality jobs and implementing a positive integrated active inclusion approach which benefits people in and out of work? 5. Is a balanced Flexicurity approach in evidence? 6. Are human capital approaches promoting life-long learning that will benefit people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. 7. How far are Structural Funds being used effectively to promote inclusion and deliver on Lisbon-related priority 71 ("<i>pathway to integration and re-entry into work...</i>")? 8. Is Lisbon developed and owned through a dynamic partnership/governance approach involving all stakeholders (including NGO's and people experiencing poverty/)

⁴ [Social Inclusion Scoreboard](#): EAPN response to the National Implementation Reports 2007 (Executive summary and full report) See www.eapn.org.

9. Key Contacts and Links

The main focus of national networks action will be focussed on national level.
We provide here the main contacts within the Employment field of the Lisbon Strategy.

Institution	Contact
National Level	Each MS has named a single point of contact, called the National Lisbon Coordinators (formally known as Mr and Ms Lisbon) Click here for the latest list.
EU Level	
European Commission, Secretariat General	Gerrit Gerrard de Graf, Head of Lisbon Task Force: 02 296 8466 James Allen, Officer (previously in DG Employment) 02 296 6899
DG Employment	Robert Strauss, Head of Unit D2: This unit provides the main input on the Employment Strategy element of the National Reform Programmes: Robert.Strauss@cec.eu.int . Cecilia Palm is responsible for developing the proposal on the Integrated Guidelines: 02 295 4510
	<p>Desk Officers: Individual country desk officers will be providing the liaison on the country reports on the National Reform Programme. See units Directorates A/B/C on left of organigram: Here are the Heads of Units who will identify the specific desk officer:</p> <p>Bulgaria, Hungary, Netherlands: Filip Busz, Head of Unit A2, +(32) 2 2990923 , filip.busz@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Germany, Austria, Slovenia: Helene Clark, Head of Unit A3 +32.2.295.2957, helene.clark@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Luxembourg, Portugal, Czech Republic: Szilard Tamas, Head of Unit A4, +(32) 2 2963560 , Szilard.tamas@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Italy, Malta, Romania: Philippe Hatt, Head of Unit B1, , +(32) 2 2956701, Philippe.hatt@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Belgium, France, Slovak Rep: Aurelio Cecilio, Head of Unit B2, +32.2.296.2806, aurelio.cecilio@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Sweden: Michel Laine, Head of Unit B3, +(32) 2 2958138, michel.laine@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Ireland, Latvia, Britain: Santiago Loranca Garcia, Head of Unit C1, +32.2.296.6800, santiago.loranca-garcia@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Cyprus, Greece, Poland: Georges Kintzele, Head of Unit C2, +32.2.295.2539, georges.kintzele@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Denmark, Spain: Antonella Schulte-Braucks, Head of Unit C3, +32.2 2957159, antonella.schulte-braucks@ec.europa.eu</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment_social/staffgui/org_en.pdf</p>
European Parliament	There is a Group of MEP's that follow the Lisbon Strategy. Contact EAPN for more details.

10. Key Documents and Links	
Document	Link
European Commission	
Broad Integrated Guidelines (2008-10)	http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines_en.pdf
Broad Integrated Guidelines (2005-8)	http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated_guidelines_en.pdf
Proposal for Guidelines for Employment Policies 2006	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_205/l_20520050806en00210027.pdf
National Reform Programmes (2005-8) Implementation Report 2006,7	http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/nrp_2005_en.pdf http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/nrp2006_en.htm http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/national-dimension/member-states-autumn-2007-reports/index_en.htm
Annual Progress Report 2005 2006, 2007	http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/annual-report_en.htm http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/annual-report-1206_en.htm http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/national-dimension/member-states-autumn-2007-reports/index_en.htm
Joint Employment Report 2006, 2007 and 2008	http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/employ_en.htm http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/employ_en.htm http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st07/st07169.en08.pdf
Spring Council Conclusions 2006/7/8	http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st07/st07775.en06.pdf http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/93135.pdf http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/european-councils/index_en.htm
Mutual Learning Site	www.mutual-learning-employment.net/
Guidance Note – NRP 2008-10.	EAPN members site: www.eapn.org
EAPN	
EAPN Response to the Annual Progress Report and the Draft Joint Employment Report 2007 – Growth Jobs not Inclusion. 2006	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=3173 http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=2395
Social Inclusion Scoreboard - EAPN report on Implementation Reports of the NRP 2007	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=3174 http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=2338
A Future Worth Having	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=1890
EAPN letter to the Spring Council 2008	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=3301

EAPN response to Consultation on Active Inclusion (2008 and 6)	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=3297 http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=1956
Powerpoint on revised Lisbon Strategy.	EAPN Member site: www.eapn.org
The EU We Want:	http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=1822
Policy Briefings: Lisbon section	EAPN Member site: www.eapn.org