

# POLICY BRIEFING

DEAR EAPN MEMBERS,

Welcome to the first EAPN policy briefing for the year. This year, we will produce 4 briefings following the European Council Meetings. In 2011, the baton has been passed from the EU year on combating poverty and social exclusion, to the EU year on Volunteering (see EAPN MAG on Volunteering and Inclusion). EAPN's main concern on policy this year, therefore, is to press to ensure that poverty remains on the agenda and to fight for a legacy from 2010 to be delivered at national and EU level, within a worsening political climate of austerity cuts and wage restraint. The first developments in 2011 have not been very encouraging. In January, the Commission's Annual Growth Survey and Economic Semester was launched, putting growth and competitiveness firmly in the driving seat, sidelining the social dimension, with weak stakeholder engagement and social input into the draft National Reform Programmes. The Commission's proposals on the European Flagship Platform against poverty have been widely debated, with EAPN providing a strong response, but currently lacking a clear Road Map for implementation or structure for engagement with stakeholders. EAPN, however, has been successful in getting the focus back on the Social OMC and the need to embed National Action Plans and National Strategies for social protection and social inclusion, which are now the subject of a consultation with the Social Protection Committee and the Commission.

This briefing follows the Spring European Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March, where Member States have just agreed a new Euro-Plus Pact and approach to Economic Governance, which looks set to further undermine social rights. The Conclusions agreed new mechanisms to enforce sanctions to drive closer economic coordination focussed on growth, competitiveness and fiscal consolidation – as well as a Pact for Euro countries (+6) which will attempt to drive down wages – decoupling them from wages and increasing the link to productivity, as well as to raise retirement ages. These developments make all the more urgent EAPN's coordinated action and lobbying at national and EU level, increasing engagement and participation, and building alliances for alternative strategies that can build a better life for all. The People Experiencing Poverty meeting in May, EAPN's General Assembly in June, as well as EAPN's joint conference on 23 September, on the Crisis in the context of Europe 2020, will try to help us progress on these concerns.

We also take this opportunity to welcome Susanna Vilkkamaa, from Finland who's our new intern with the policy team until the end of June.


Best regards,

Sian Jones, Policy Coordinator

with the Policy Team: Fintan Farrell, Amana Ferro, Vincent Caron, Claire Champeix, Tanya Basarab (Development Officer), and Micheline Gerondal.

## NOTE

*Policy Briefings/Updates give EAPN members the latest information on policy developments and EAPN Actions on each area of EAPN Policy Work. This tool is aimed at making it easier to follow and get involved in our common work.*

*Please pay specific attention to the items introduced by the following symbol  which means that you are expected to take action.*

*All EAPN documents, reports, position papers can be accessed on the EAPN website [www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu) > Publications section. Information on each area of EAPN Working Groups is also available in EAPN Members' Room.*

*This tool is meant to make it easy for members to engage in EAPN policy work. For any comment or suggestion of improvement, please contact Sian Jones at [sian.jones@eapn.eu](mailto:sian.jones@eapn.eu) or by telephone on 00 32 226 5859.*

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## 1. THE LISBON STRATEGY/EU 2020

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All Policy officers and working groups contribute currently together to this work.

EAPN groups in charge: EXCO, Social Inclusion Working Group, Employment Working Group, Structural Funds Working Group,

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

#### Spring European Council

On the 24-25 March, the Spring European Council agreed an economic governance package to stabilize the Euro, which represents, including through the Euro-Plus Pact, a major attack on social rights. This includes:

- **European Stability Mechanism (ESM)**, a permanent fund which in 2013 will replace the temporary one to support eurozone countries in the event of major economic difficulties.
- The **Euro Plus Pact**, which will step up economic coordination with the aim of improving competitiveness. (In addition to the eurozone countries, 6 other MS: Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania have decided to participate in the Pact, other EU member states can join(. The Pact aims to increase competitiveness, by putting pressure on wage levels, particularly in the public sector, – enforcing a link with productivity, and reducing social protection cover and pensions. The focus is on 4 objectives:
  - 1) Foster competitiveness: aiming to reduce unit labour costs, ie reduce or freeze wages, decouple wages from inflation and increase link with productivity.
  - 2) Foster employment: with a focus on supply side measures – flexicurity, reducing undeclared work and increasing labour market participation, reducing tax on labour.
  - 3) Enhance the sustainability of public finances, enforcing the Stability and Growth Pact with the main focus on sustainability of pensions, health care and social benefits – focussing on raising the retirement age and limiting early retirement.
  - 4) Reinforcing financial stability: launching a comprehensive reform of the EU framework for financial sector supervision – including bank stress tests and monitoring of private debt.
- Within the new framework of the **European Semester**, a six-month period during which member states' economic and budgetary policy will be monitored, including through Europe 2020, the European Council backed the priorities for fiscal

consolidation (cutting deficits, mainly through reducing public expenditure) and structural reform. All member states will have to translate these priorities into concrete measures to be included in their Stability or Convergence Programmes and National Reform Programmes, under threat of sanctions

The **pact** builds on the Commission's proposals on Economic Governance and the Annual Growth Survey in Europe 2020. Conflicts over the Commission's proposals were already emerging in early March at the Social Summit with Social Partners. However, as many of the detailed documents were not made public, it was difficult for civil society partners to engage adequately in these debates – see EAPN action.

See [ETUC Resolution on Economic Governance](#) (March 3 2011) raised the alarm bells about the content of the economic governance package and the Competiveness Pact (re-named the Euro-Plus Pact in the Council). Highlighting the aim to enforce wage cuts, increase flexibility, undermining national collective bargaining procedures, reinforced with a punitive sanction regime against MS who do not carry out its recommendations.

#### **4-5 April: European Parliament angry about economic governance plans.**

The EP held a debate, involving Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the Council, with a lot of dissatisfaction on the plans, but agreeing on the need to reduce deficits. The Greens as asked what “economic governance really means for citizens? We spent a lot of money creating what? Inequalities? [See report here](#)

#### **European Parliament: Draft Report on the financial, economic and social crisis: recommendations concerning measures and initiatives taken.**

A Special EP Committee (CRIS) has been established on the financial, economic and social impacts of the crisis, chaired by Wolf Klinz (Alde/DE), with a mandate until 31 July 2011.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March the Committee discussed the first draft of the own initiative report b Pervenche Beres (S+D, FR, chair of the Employment C'tee). Amendments need to be presented by the 13<sup>th</sup> April, with a Committee vote on the 30<sup>th</sup> May and to plenary in July.

The report calls for a comprehensive, socially inclusive and cohesive Reform Package, addressing fundamental causes of the crisis, and.. for the convergence of economic, fiscal and social policies across the EU. Beyond economic governance – EU needs a new economic governance model...[See draft report here](#) and summary of main points [here](#)”

#### **Annual Growth Survey and European Semester**

**On the 13<sup>th</sup> January**, the Commission published the **Annual Growth Survey** to launch the new European Semester for Europe 2020. (See EAPN reaction). This package of document made clear that Growth, fiscal consolidation (pressing MS to reduce their deficits fast within the demands of the Stability and Growth Pact) and social dumping by wage cuts, are to be the main driver of Europe 2020, undermining the supposed commitments to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to reduce poverty by at least 20 million by 2020.

See EAPN Note on the Annual Growth Survey and coming soon – EAPN Briefing on Europe 2020 and [Questions and Answers paper on](#) new architecture (gives a diagram and summary)

**The European Semester is a 6 month cycle starting each January:**

- **January:** Annual Growth Survey (and Progress Report on Europe 2020/Employment Report and Macro-economic report)
- **March:** Spring Council decides the main (macro-economic) challenges and gives advice to MS
- **Mid April** – Member States draw up their NRPs and send to the Commission for assessment
- **In June and July** the Council will make country-specific guidance whose “policies and budgets are out of line
- **In July** the Council will give policy advice to MS to finalize their budgets in the Autumn.

**New Annual Growth Survey (AGS)**

The AGS is presented as a package of documents with a mainly macro-economic message.

**The AGS Document Package includes:**

- 1) [Annual Growth Survey](#) – Also summary [of key economic messages](#)
- 2) [Progress Report on Europe 2020](#) – including the review of the targets.
- 3) [Macro-economic report](#)
- 4) [Draft Joint Employment report](#)
- 5) Proposal for a Council decision on employment guidelines

**The focus of the AGS is on:**

- 1) **Need for rigorous fiscal consolidation enhancing macro-economic stability** - through reducing deficits, mainly through expenditure cuts; correcting macroeconomic imbalances – through wage reduction; and new regulatory frameworks.
- 2) **Labour market reforms for higher employment** – focused on getting people into work flexicurity, and reforming pension systems.
- 3) **Growth enhancing measures** – mainly through promoting and removing barriers to expanding the Single Market – particularly in Services.

**Annual Progress Report – Targets and NRPs.**

- **The report** provides a partial assessment of the draft NRPs and the targets, but focuses mainly on how growth can be enhanced and address main economic challenges.
- **Targets:** All but 2 MS have set national targets (many provisional) but with a low level of ambition – ie low targets which won’t reach EU targets.
- **On Employment** – **Most MS set specific targets** (not NL and UK), but still falls short of 75%.
- **On Education and Training** - **All NRPs have set targets for reducing school leavers** (except UK and NL), but still falls short of 10% target.
- **On Social Inclusion and Poverty:**

P.9 Includes positive statements of “*No sustainable growth unless benefits accrue to all segments of society*”. *Inequality has been growing across Europe, with more and more people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Crisis has increased poverty or risk of poverty. – Ensuring that growth and social cohesion go together.*

- **But no targets on poverty** set yet by ES, DK, NL, SE, UK – only child poverty target, and others not ambitious, particularly Germany. Most national targets reflect 3 indicators (at risk of poverty, severe material deprivation and jobless households)

### **Joint Employment Report (See Employment Section)**

The Joint Employment Report under Europe 2020 provides a review of the proposals made by member states in their draft NRPs

### **Coming up**

#### **Next Steps in Europe 2020**

- **Mid April** – MS present their full National Reform Programmes, which will go on the web-site at the end of April.
- **June** - the Commission will appraise the NRPs, carrying out **macro-economic surveillance** ( ie assessing the effectiveness of delivery on the main macro-economic messages) as well as **thematic surveillance** related to the Guidelines, using the new **Joint Assessment Frame**, with recommendations and policy warnings which should go to the June European Council (24<sup>th</sup> June 2011)

See here for the [SPC/EMCO agreement](#) and the details of the [Joint Assessment Framework](#) itself including the **key policy priority areas** and proposed **list of indicators in the Annex which are particularly interesting.**

### **European Platform against Poverty (See OMC/Social Inclusion section)**

### **Agenda for new skills and jobs (See Employment Section)**

### Latest EAPN activities

EAPN has continued to lobby actively on Europe 2020 as well as the broader EU strategy on economic governance.

See **Social Inclusion** section for work on the Flagship Platform and the Social OMC, as well as the poverty sections of the Employment Guidelines and the Employment Report

See **Employment Section** for work on the Skills for Jobs Flagship and the Joint Employment Report (employment issues).

In terms of the **NRPs and new governance framework**, EAPN has been encouraging members to try to engage with the national process of drafting the NRP and the targets at national level. 13 national networks have managed to get invited to participate in the drafting of the NRP, although it's uncertain what this means, with a further 7 who have attempted to engage. However, there has been very little information or transparency about the process and minimal potential for engagement, according to member's feedback EAPN working groups discussed developments with Europe 2020 (see member's room SIWG for results). EAPN is preparing a **briefing** and a **questionnaire**, to review the full NRPs with members (see coming up).

EAPN has been lobbying hard with its members on the **broader strategic developments** related to the EU's approach to the crisis, economic governance and the new Euro Plus Pact, and working in alliance, particularly with trade unions.

EAPN Letter and Press Release to the Spring Council

**On the 18<sup>th</sup> March**, EAPN and members sent a letter to Prime Ministers and Heads of States, questioning whether they had been serious about the poverty target, and urging the Council to balance social with economic governance, and to ensure that the governance package and EU 2020 do not contribute to increasing poverty. See [here](#).

EAPN Letter and Press Release to the EPSCO: Social Rights cannot be scrapped!

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, EAPN and members sent a letter to the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO), (9<sup>th</sup>) to press Social Ministers to press for inclusive growth, in Europe 2020 and to defend the social dimension through the Social OMC, and national strategies for social protection and social inclusion, involving stakeholders. See [here](#).

EAPN Press Release on the Launch of the New Growth Survey

On the 14<sup>th</sup> January, in its PR, EAPN highlighted its dismay at the New Growth Survey and European Semester, launching the first phase of the implementation of Europe 2020, as

ignoring its commitment to inclusive growth, and focusing on growth first, competitiveness and fiscal consolidation. See [here](#).

23-24 February: EAPN Crisis report: Is the European Project moving backwards: social impact of the crisis and recovery package presented at ETUC/ETUI conference

EAPN launched its Crisis Report at a key EU conference organized by ETUC/ETUC conference on Austerity, Economic Governance and Social Reforms on the 23 and 24 February. The report is drawn from inputs from 17 National Networks and 5 European Organisations and provides an update on the 2009 report. It highlights that the crisis is far from over, and the worsening social impact, particularly for excluded groups, due to most Governments austerity measures. It highlights the need for the EU to take the lead to promote an alternative response – investing in social protection, decent jobs and services, and increasing redistribution. See report [here](#).

See details of ETUC/ETUI conference, including presentations [here](#) by Lazlo Andor and Maria Damanaki (European Commissioners), John Monks (President of ETUC), Karl Pichelmann, DG ECFIN and EAPN input.

GUE/NGL Conference: Social Europe – Crisis and EU governance the Left Response?

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March, EAPN actively participated in this major conference, which included speakers from the Commission, the European Parliament, Trade Unions and alternative economist groups and authors. See [here](#) for programme and presentations.

### **10<sup>th</sup> European Meeting of People experiencing Poverty**

The theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> EU Meeting: Employment, work and jobs: realities from people experiencing poverty, which will be held on the: 13 & 14 May 2011, in Brussels

4 Meetings have taken place of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting Organizing Committee involving the Hungarian EU Presidency, EU Commission, EAPN, FEANTSA, Danish Future EU Presidency, Polish future EU Presidency.

2 Preparation meetings: National Coordinators Meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and the Facilitation Meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2011

#### **Preparation Content:**

**Follow up of Previous Meetings:** This debate will be prepared by 3 short documents coming from: 1) EU Commission, 2) EAPN, which show how these actors have tried to follow up on the issues discussed at the previous European Meetings; 3) a short document will be prepared summarising the key findings from the research on the impact of the European Meetings. These four documents will meet the need for input at the start of this session so that immediately the session can start with questions from the delegates and representatives of the actors who have prepared the papers will be available to respond to the questions.



**Creative Presentations:** Each delegation will be given three minutes to make a creative presentation on the topic of the 'reality of employment, work, jobs for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

**Workshops:** Each workshop will follow the same format. The main topic for the workshop is the reality of employment, work, jobs, for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The delegates will be prepared to discuss and engage in this discussion including their proposals on what would help to improve the reality for them in relation to this topic. Each workshop should also count on the participation of representative's from: 1) The Commission, 2) the Parliament, 3) The Social Protection Committee and/or the Employment Committee 4) Social Partners, 5) Academics and 6) NGOs. The role of these representatives will be to interact with the discussion in the workshop, primarily to obtain a better understanding of the inputs been made by the delegates. They will also be expected to reflect on the implications for policies and for their work from what they have heard.

## Participation

EAPN attended a Belgian conference on participation, obstacles and impact and will participate (May) in a more in depth reflection on the results of participatory processes.

## Coming up

: **EAPN urges all members in national networks to:**

- EAPN is finalizing a **briefing** to help members engage at national and EU level. **Capacity building sessions will be carried out with the working groups in May.**
- Members should **contact their government representatives** to try to engage in the drafting of the NRP, if possible by making their own input and sending the secretariat a copy.
- EAPN is **finalizing a questionnaire**, which will be jointly developed by the EXCO and the Working Groups, so that members can review their NRPs which members should complete and return to the secretariat (Sian Jones, copied to Amana Ferro and Vincent Caron). This will be used to produce an EAPN evaluation of the first rounds of NRP. (See Member's Room)
- EAPN is **preparing a joint conference for the 23 September** (all 3 working groups) on the Social Impact of the crisis and the development of alternatives, within the context of Europe 2020.

## 2. OMC ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

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EAPN group in charge: Social Inclusion Working Group

### EU Policy developments

#### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2010: Commission launched European Platform Against Poverty proposal**

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2010:** The Commission finally published their proposal on the **European Platform against Poverty**. EAPN made and input in July and then a response in January (see EAPN section) and is providing input into opinions by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Parliament (EP). The Communication was discussed by the Social Protection Committee in January and February see [here](#), and endorsed by the EPSCO Council in March. See EPSCO Conclusions on the European Platform [here](#). The Conclusions emphasized:

- the need to prevent and reduce poverty and mobilize all actors and tools
- the importance of partnership, with a specific reference to structured dialogue between PEP and decision-makers.
- The need to strengthen social impact assessment and highlighting that social and territorial cohesion can only be achieved if growth and jobs “reach the most vulnerable.
- The important role of the EPSCO and SPC in monitoring impact on poverty in Europe 2020 and the need to reinvigorate the Social OMC.

**1<sup>st</sup> April, CoR approves Opinion on European Platform against Poverty (EPAP)**

The CoR opinion on the EPAP was approved in plenary. EAPN worked closely with the rapporteur: Christine Chapman (Wales), on this report and important references are made to the importance of the engagement of people experiencing poverty and NGOs, the need to tackle inequality and promote a new socio-economic model. It calls for a road map to implement Active Inclusion and a Directive to guarantee a minimum income for all above the poverty threshold. **See report [here](#).**

**18 February 2011: SPC presents social assessment of Europe 2020.**

The SPC also made their input on the **social assessment of Europe 2020** – which currently replaces the Joint Report, and provides a summary of the main trends on poverty and social exclusion, as well as social protection. This assessed the developments on the targets, and the initial NRPs and highlighted the main areas for action. **See Key Messages [here](#) and full report.**

**Main messages include:**

- The return to growth and well-designed employment/education and training measures are crucial, but also ensuring the sustainability and adequacy of Social Protection systems. “Vulnerable people shouldn’t bear the brunt of fiscal consolidation measures”. Calling for improved Social Impact assessment.
- The need to invest in integrated Active Inclusion strategies – also improving coverage and adequacy of minimum income.
- Priority to Child poverty, but focus on early childhood intervention.
- Combination of universal and targeted approaches

### March – Debates on Role of the Social OMC in Europe 2020

Meanwhile **the Commission** has undertaken a massive reorganization, which has delayed the implementation of the Poverty Platform. See [here](#) for new organigram of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. A major focus has been on the contentious issue of the role of the Social OMC, and its relation to the European Platform against Poverty and Europe 2020, and particularly whether the national strategies for social protection and social inclusion (and National Action Plans) will continue.

The **SPC decided to set up an adhoc group on the role of the SPC in Europe 2020**, chaired by Marie Keirle (France), to come forward with their own proposals. This will be debated by the SPC in April and approved by the EPSCO in June. EAPN has lobbied and made an input to this group (See EAPN section) and will participate in a stakeholder meeting with the group on the 12<sup>th</sup> April.

The Commission is still clarifying how it sees the role or process of stakeholder engagement. It held a stakeholder meeting on the 25 March, which EAPN participated in which also debated the shape of the new Annual Convention (set to replace the old Round Table), which will take place in Warsaw, around the 17/18 October.

### EP Report on Minimum Income published

The EP study on the role of Minimum Income in promoting social inclusion was published, following on from the Report on Minimum Income prepared by the Employment Committee (Fieguierido) and the Hearing. **Access report [here](#).**

### 5<sup>th</sup> April –European Framework for National Roma Integration strategies

The Commission launched the European Framework for National Roma Integration strategies to tackle the problems facing 10-12 million Roma. It aims to reinforce access to fundamental rights and progress on minimum standards. Member States have to develop National Roma Integration strategies by end of 2011, regularly monitored by the Commission, the EP and the Fundamental Rights Agency, and with the Social OMC, although this is not so clear. The main priorities are closing the gap in education, employment, housing and health. **See report [here](#).**

### 4<sup>th</sup> April – Public consultation on the future of PROGRESS launched

The Commission has launched a public consultation on the future of the EU funding programme PROGRESS – which has providing funding in the past for awareness-raising projects, studies, transnational exchange and social experimentation projects in the social inclusion field. EAPN is responding with the Social Platform. **See consultation [here](#).**

## 1<sup>th</sup> February - Communication on Early Childhood learning

In February 2011, the Commission set out the key issues for future European co-operation in early childhood education and care in a Communication with the aim to improve access and quality of services from birth to the start of compulsory schooling: "[Early Childhood Education and Care - providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow](#)".

## Peer Review Programme for 2011

The Peer Review Programme has been approved for 2011.

Date▲	Host Country	Topic	Peer Countries
31.3. - 1.4.2011	France	<a href="#">Building the tools to fight in-work poverty</a>	Belgium - Cyprus - Estonia - Greece - Ireland - Lithuania - Portugal - Slovenia - The Netherlands
12. - 13.4.2011	The Netherlands	<a href="#">Balancing the security and affordability of funded pension schemes</a>	Belgium - France - Germany - Ireland - Italy - Lithuania - Poland - Romania - Slovenia
---	Belgium	<a href="#">Developing effective ex ante social impact assessment with a focus on methodology, tools and data sources</a>	Austria - Cyprus - Finland - France - Greece - Ireland - Luxembourg - Norway - Spain
---	Germany	<a href="#">Effects of life courses on women's pensions</a>	Austria - Czech Republic - France - Hungary - Italy - Lithuania - Luxembourg - Portugal - Spain - Sweden - The Netherlands
---	France	<a href="#">Building a coordinated strategy for parenting support</a>	Belgium - Bulgaria - Croatia - Cyprus - Czech Republic - Denmark - Estonia - Germany - Italy - Malta
---	Ireland	<a href="#">The setting of national poverty targets</a>	Belgium - Bulgaria - Croatia - Finland - Latvia - Malta - Norway - Romania - Slovakia - United Kingdom
---	Portugal	<a href="#">Improving the efficiency of social protection</a>	Belgium - Croatia - Finland - Italy - Latvia - Lithuania - Malta - Romania - Slovenia - Spain
---	Sweden	<a href="#">Closing the Gap</a>	Bulgaria - Cyprus - Denmark - Estonia - Germany - Greece - Ireland - Luxembourg - Slovenia - United Kingdom

See Peer Review site [here](#).

If your country is participating, contact government officials to see whether you can participate as a non-governmental representative.

## EAPN activities

### FLAGSHIP PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY

**19 January - EAPN launched its response to the Commission's proposals** on the Flagship Platform against poverty, developed through the Social Inclusion Working group, with input from EWG and SFWG. EAPN has continued to lobby the Commission and the SPC, as well as the EPSCO and Spring Council. **See report [here](#)** and previous section on letters to EPSCO and Spring Council.

**Jan-Feb, EAPN worked closely with rapporteurs in the Committee of the Regions** (see earlier section) on their report, which was endorsed the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

**Feb- May: EAPN is also the expert appointed to the rapporteur in the EESC** (Maureen O'Neill). This report will be finalized at the end of May. EAPN is also working with the European Parliament Rapporteur – Frederic Daerdens (S+D, BE). But no timetable has been set as yet.

**Jan-March:** EAPN has written to ask for meetings with the new team: Commissioner Andor, the new Director General of DG Employment – Koos Richelle, Antonia Carparelli, acting Director of Directorate D. The meeting with Richelle will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> April.

### Role of the Social OMC

**Jan – now,** EAPN has been lobbying hard to defend the Social OMC and role of stakeholders in National Strategies and Action Plans, particularly focussed on sympathetic SPC members. BE and FR have played a particularly important role. With the setting up of an Adhoc working group, EAPN has prepared a more detailed input, based on debate in the last SIWG meeting. This input is being finalized for Mid April. See draft **here**. **EAPN will participate in the meeting with the ADHOC group on the 12<sup>th</sup> April.**


**18-19 February:** Social Inclusion Working Group Meeting in Brussels. See members' page. The meeting focussed on capacity building session on Europe 2020, particularly the role of the European Platform and the Social OMC, with interventions from the Commission – Marie-Anne Paraskevas, inputs from EAPN ES, and feedback on national engagement, follow up on the Crisis report and planning the Joint Crisis conference in September. Also work on the EAPN paper on volunteering which was drafted by the SIWG chair: Graciela Malgesin, follow up on Active Inclusion and Minimum Income campaign. The group evaluated positively the work of the group in 2010, and reviewed the work programme for 2011, and concerns related to the changes to the Strategic Plan.


**2 key products of the group** are being finalized – the wealth, inequality and social polarization explainer, and the active inclusion booklet developed jointly with the EWG and SFWG.


**EAPN position on volunteering** – has been drafted by the SIWG chair: Graciela Malgesini, and discussed in the SIWG meeting. A second draft is now being circulated and will be adopted by the EXCO in May.

**EAPN MAG on volunteering as a tool for inclusion?** – SIWG members contributed to the new EAPN MAG – out [now!](#)


### Coming up

 **27-28 May: Social Inclusion Working Group Meeting in Madrid. See members' page for agenda.** The meeting will be preceded by a seminar organized by EAPN ES on Europe 2020, and the meeting will focus on lobbying and engaging with the Flagship Platform and Europe 2020, the review by national networks of the NRPs and the EAPN report, and input and preparation for the crisis conference, as well as follow up on Services, and other key areas.

 **Lobbying to defend the Social OMC and national strategies** and platforms against poverty – members should lobby their SPC members before the 20<sup>th</sup> April to support the EAPN position.

 **Crisis Conference – 23 September:** Members will be asked to input into the background paper for the conference and in preparing the workshops. [Claire.champeix@eapn.eu](mailto:Claire.champeix@eapn.eu) and [Sian.Jones@eapn.eu](mailto:Sian.Jones@eapn.eu)

 **EAPN Volunteering Paper – Members are asked to respond the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft by the 8<sup>th</sup> April.**

 **Europe 2020 – NRP input and review** – Members are asked to engage and make inputs to their NRP, then to complete questionnaire by the end of May.

### 3. ACTIVE INCLUSION

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EAPN Working Group concerned: Social Inclusion Working Group and Employment Working Group and Structural Fund Working Group.

## EU Policy developments

### Latest developments

**13 January:** Active Inclusion is supported by the Joint Employment Report, unfortunately, only in the framework of fighting poverty and social exclusion, without promoting integrated approaches in other areas, such as employment. Please see the sections on Europe 2020, The Social OMC and Employment for more information.

### Coming up

A Communication on Active Inclusion is planned, focused on monitoring implementation, now for 2012 – this has been upgraded from the original proposal on the Commission Working Paper. This paper will focus on monitoring and implementation of the Strategy. See the Annex on the European Flagship Platform against Poverty in above section on Social Inclusion.

## EAPN activities


### Latest EAPN activities

EAPN has been actively lobbying on the need for full implementation of the Active Inclusion Recommendation, as well as specific proposals on a Framework Directive on Minimum Income and reinforced EU framework guaranteeing access to affordable quality Services of General Interest, as part of its campaign on EU 2020 - see sections (Europe 2020 and Social OMC).

### Coming up

The three EAPN Working Groups are collaborating to produce a joint booklet regarding Active Inclusion, as an integrated approach, but also detailing our position on each of the three pillars. The **draft of the Active Inclusion booklet is now being finalized**.

 National networks are invited to join EAPN's campaign for Adequate Minimum Income schemes – [www.adequateincome.eu](http://www.adequateincome.eu)

 Follow up with your own Governments the implementation at the national level of the Active Inclusion Recommendation and make inputs to your SPC and EMCO representatives, as well as feeding back to the Secretariat.

*For more detailed information about the three pillars of the Active Inclusion strategy, please consult the Social Inclusion section (for minimum income), the Employment section, and the Services section.*

## 4. EMPLOYMENT

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EAPN groups in charge: Employment Working Group

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

**13 January** – The European Commission put forward the Annual Growth Survey Package (see above for the Europe 2020 and Social Inclusion sections for details), comprising also the draft [Joint Employment Report](#). As Guideline 10 on Poverty and Social Exclusion is included under the Employment Guidelines, the Employment Report also assesses delivery in the NRP and makes recommendations on Poverty and Social Exclusion as well as employment. EAPN's analysis of this report is quite positive on employment, and significantly less so on delivery on poverty and social exclusion, which is primarily dealt with as an employment issue. We welcome, specifically:

- positive rhetoric on **need to reduce poverty** and on the **key role of social protection and minimum income**;
- **Active Inclusion** strategies are recognised as a crucial element to invest in, if the poverty and employment targets are to be achieved, although no in the employment sections;
- **Living wages** for those who work are clearly mentioned, although there is, unfortunately, no mentioning in the document of the persisting gender pay gap.
- There is an explicit stress on **job creation**, especially green and white jobs, as the scarcity of jobs is hardly compatible with active measures to increase labour supply.
- The report questions the **segmentation of the labour market**, underlining the **need for more security** and protection of **employment rights**, and **addressing undeclared work**.
- There are welcome references to the strengthening of the capacity of **Public Employment Services**.
- **Vulnerable groups**, including older workers, women and young people are explicitly mentioned in the Report, recognizing the need for integrated strategies, although not all elements are addressed to improve their professional and social inclusion.
- The report includes a comprehensive section on **education and training**, including considerations on access to training, quality of training, as well as recognition of informal and non-formal skills.
- **Child poverty** and the intergenerational transmission of poverty are extensively dealt with, including the recognition of the need for **childcare facilities**, for **family income support**, and for **early intervention**, although insufficient attention to affordability, children and parents' rights and empowerment.

However, EAPN was **dissatisfied** that:



- The tone and context continue to be that dictated by the Annual Growth Survey – i.e., viewing **employment and social policies primarily as tools for growth**, rather than as instruments to promote inclusion, combat poverty and ensure full participation based on fundamental rights.
- The report doesn't sufficiently balance **employment and social concerns**, as it should in accordance to its new mission
- **Employment is viewed as the only route out of poverty**, with little recognition of the need for multidimensional approaches focussed on access to rights, resources and services is Employment is seen as the "safest route of poverty
- **Quality of jobs and employment** is not clearly tackled, nor innovative measures proposed.
- **Active Inclusion** is viewed only as a tool for combating poverty and it is not referenced at all in relation to employment or other sections.
- There is insufficient focus on **putting in place effective anti-discrimination measures**.
- The **role of Structural Funds** and **Cohesion Policy** to support integrated pathways to active social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups is not mentioned.
- **Stakeholder involvement** in the development of the European Employment Strategy and the National Reform Programmes is not highlighted and **should be strengthened**.

**4 February 2011** - The European Commission's Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion published a new report, looking at the phenomenon of **in-work poverty** in the Member States. Please click [here](#) for the Synthesis Report, as well as the 27 national reports. Until now in-work poverty and labour market segmentation have not received sufficient attention in the EU's efforts to tackle poverty and social exclusion. However, given that the 17 million working poor in the EU represent about 15% of the new Europe 2020 social inclusion target, this is likely to become a more important issue in the future. The analysis of in-work poverty and labour market segmentation presented in the latest Network report is a first step to fill this gap and to suggest how progress can be made on this issue. It is also intended as a contribution to the monitoring of the EU "Active Inclusion" process, which was launched at the end of 2008 and which is a crucial part of the EU's efforts to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

**25 February 2011** – The Employment Committee (EMCO) has released its Work Programme for 2011. As process, the Committee will have a distinctive role in feeding into the Spring and June Council, within the evaluation process of the Europe 202 Strategy, based on the Joint Assessment Framework, and together with the Social Protection Committee and the Economic Policy Committee. As priorities, the EMCO will focus on: youth employment (in line with the priorities of the Hungarian Presidency) and follow-up of the flagship initiative "Youth on the Move"; labour demand/job creation (in line with the priorities of the Hungarian Presidency); intergenerational solidarity (in line with the forthcoming Polish Presidency); follow-up of the flagship initiative "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs"; information points on Commission proposals related to the New Multi-Annual Financial

Framework, Posting of Workers, the revision of the working time directive (legislative) or the White Paper on Pensions (non-legislative).

**7 March 2011** – The **EPSCO Council** put forward conclusions on the European Flagship against Poverty, the Joint Employment Report, and the Posted Workers Directive consultation mechanism. Regarding the first item, please see the section dedicated to Social Protection and Social Inclusion for more details. Regarding the Conclusions on the [Joint Employment Report](#), the document highlights the interdependence of targets for Europe 2020, the positive role of Active Inclusion and social safety nets, but doesn't pick up on quality of employment, comprehensive pathway approaches to the labour market (including flanking services), and only speaks about consultations with the social partners. Employment and wages are rather viewed from the competitiveness angle. Regarding the third document, please read here [Council conclusions](#) on the further development of an electronic exchange system facilitating administrative cooperation within the framework of the Posting of Workers Directive.

**30 March 2011** – The Commission's [Quarterly Labour Market Review – Spring 2011](#) is out. This edition takes a closer look at the labour market situations in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom. It also looks specifically at the impact of the crisis on young people, migrants and the low-skilled, as well as at labour market segmentation and the increased precarisation of employment. A special focus in this review analyses the case of the construction sector. A special section on the social climate reports that in many respects people do not feel any significant improvement in terms of social situation, as compared to 2010, though this was still better than 2009.

### Coming up

**28 April 2011** – Under the Hungarian presidency, a conference dealing with European Safety at Work will take place at the Budapest School of Business.

**30 April 2011** – The definitive National Reform Programmes for 2011 will be finalised by your Government by the end of April. Please watch your Government's website

**13-14 May 2011** – The European Meeting of People experiencing Poverty will be dedicated, this year, to the topic of employment and jobs. The aim of this year's meeting is to give an opportunity for the delegations of people experiencing poverty from the 27 EU Member States to be directly consulted on the reality of their work in lives.

**19 May 2011** – EPSCO Council in Royal Palace of Gödöllő, Hungary, mainly dedicated to EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

**23-24 May 2011** - Meeting of the managers of the European Employment Services (EURES) network.

**14 June 2011** – EPSCO Council, dedicated, amongst others, to discussing the Maternity Leave Directive (to the debate of which EAPN has contributed, together with the Social Platform) and the European Year for Active Ageing Promoting Solidarity Between Generation – 2012 (EAPN is part of the NGO coalition supporting this European Year).

## EAPN activities

### Latest EAPN activities

**7 February** – The EAPN Secretariat alongside organizations members of EAPN Netherlands were invited by Dutch Green MEp Marije Cornelissen to participate in a briefing, organized in the European Parliament, about the Employment Guidelines and their role in reducing poverty.

**10-11 March 2011** – EAPN attended the [Joint Social Conference](#), an initiative bringing together trade unions and social movements in Europe since 2009. EAPN has been involved in this venture since the beginning, and this is the third conference it is attending. One of the workshops was dedicated to Wages and Competitiveness, and EAPN made a presentation about the role of adequate minimum income as a catalyst for wages. If you wish to know more about this initiative, please contact the [Secretariat](#).

**20 February 2011** – EAPN published its [RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT JOINT EMPLOYMENT REPORT](#) (please see above for more details). This response, aside from being published on the EAPN website and printed, has been forwarded, to the Employment Committee and other actors, in order to inform their opinion on the draft JER.

**22 March 2011** – The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) published its Benchmarking Working Europe report, this year dedicated to a social stocktaking of the reaction to and impact of the financial, economic and social crisis as a means of feeding into the post-crisis and EU2020 debate. The report provides evidence to question the underlying foundation of the current growth model and its emphasis on deregulation and labour cost cutting. Please download the report [here](#).

**31 March 2011** – EAPN has attended a **peer review** organized within the Open Method of Coordination for social protection and social inclusion and dedicated to **in-work poverty**. The best practice discussed was the minimum income scheme in France (*révenu de solidarité active*) and its role in fighting in-work poverty. Participating countries were: Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, the Netherlands. More information on the event can be found [here](#). Please contact the [Secretariat](#) if you would like to review the peer review documents, including EAPN's contribution.

**March – April 2011** – The video project of the EWG is nearing completion. Shooting was finalized in three countries (BE, LT, BG) and is underway in the UK. The final product will most likely be finalized by end May.


**20 April 2011** – EAPN will publish its response to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, as a response to the European Commission's [FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE](#) with the same title. EAPN


welcomes that the role of social protection is emphasized, that job creation and quality of work are supported, that pathways to employment and security are mentioned, that due consideration is paid to vulnerable groups, including migrants and ethnic minorities, and that NGOs are present amongst stakeholders. However, main missed opportunities include integrated Active Inclusion approaches, social impact assessment, tackling job quality also in terms of wages and security, quality of training, as well as the crucial role of Structural Funds. This paper will form the basis for our work with the European Parliament, on the upcoming report on this Flagship Initiative. [Watch the EAPN website for the full position!](#)


**May 2011** – The EWG members are responsible for the upcoming EAPN Mag, which will be dedicated to Employment. Articles have already been sent in, don't miss this important issue to be released at the end of May on the EAPN website!


**Regarding EAPN's work on the European Employment Strategy and the NRP process, please read more in the Europe 2020 section of this Policy Brief.**

### COMING UP

 The **next EWG meeting** will take place on 27-28 May 2011 in Brussels. The meeting will include one half-day **capacity building seminar**, dedicated to Europe 2020, scheduled for the morning of the Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. The afternoon of the Friday, as well as Saturday morning (May 28<sup>th</sup>) till lunchtime will be dedicated to the usual EWG business.

 Please activate / initiate contact with your national representative(s) in the **EMCO**. The role of the EMCO has increased exponentially in the assessment of the NRPs. Both for acquiring information as well as for inputting in the process, contacts with the EMCO are crucial. Please consult the latest list of EMCO members [here](#).

 Members of the EWG are invited to coordinate with their colleagues in the SIWG and the SFWG, as well as with the EXCO, in order to respond to the **NRP Questionnaire**, which has been dispatched to you. There is a specific section dealing with Employment in the NRPs. Please see the Europe 2020 section for details. Deadline for submission is May 30<sup>th</sup>.

 Members of the EWG are invited to respond to the **Questionnaire on Quality Work**, which will constitute the basis of the upcoming Quality Jobs explainer. The Questionnaire has been circulated already, and answers are expected to [Amana.ferro@eapn.eu](mailto:Amana.ferro@eapn.eu) by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## 5. STRUCTURAL FUNDS

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EAPN groups in charge: Structural Funds Working Group

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

#### 6 April 2011 - National strategies for integrating Roma

The Commission has just presented an EU-wide framework for national strategies on integrating Roma. The framework will serve as the basis for national policies concerning Roma and will contribute to mobilising European funds available for this.

The Member States will be required to present their national strategies before the end of 2011, including clear objectives to be achieved in the areas of education, employment, health and housing. They are also invited to adapt their operational programmes co-financed by the Structural Funds in order to provide strength to the projects targeting the Roma population.

The European Commission will be holding a high level meeting 23-25 May this year in Slovakia (Bratislava and Kosice) on the contribution made by European funds to Roma integration. This event follows on from the 2008 European Roma Summit held in Brussels and other similar events organised in Hungary in 2009 and Romania in 2010.

More information can be found [here](#).

#### 31 Mars 2011 - Conference on the future of cohesion policy in Budapest

The politicians, experts from Member States and academics who attended the Budapest conference discussed specific aspects of the Commission's proposals on the future policy (results-orientation and thematic concentration), with a view to the Ministerial meeting which will take place in Gödöllő (Hungary) on 19-21 May 2011.

More information can be found [here](#).

#### 16-18 March 2011 - Debate on cohesion policy: analyses by academics

The European Commission, in partnership with the Regional Studies Association (RSA) and the Slovenian Government, organised a conference at Bled in Slovenia on the theme of "What Future for Cohesion Policy? An Academic and Policy Debate". A full set of conference analyses and presentations is available on the RSA website.

The conference offered a platform for exchanges between academics, specialists in regional issues and European Commission representatives. The Commission's recent proposals – contained in the [report on economic, social and territorial cohesion](#) – provided input for the debates.

More information can be found [here](#).

**15 March 2011 – The exploratory opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the future of the European Social Fund after 2013** has been adopted. In this Opinion, the Rapporteur Mr. Verdoorn has stressed the need to use the ESF as key instrument for supporting the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and for investing in human resources and promoting a high level of quality jobs and social inclusion with the framework of Europe 2020 Strategy.

More information can be found [here](#).

### **21 February 2011 – [Council conclusions on the Fifth Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion](#)**

The Council welcomed the **Fifth Cohesion Report** on economic, social and territorial cohesion and stressed that the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy can only be achieved in a sustainable manner if disparities between the levels of development in the European Union continue to be reduced as well as an overall harmonious development and economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union. A reinforced partnership in the framework of strategic programming is also welcomed. The concentration of Structural Funds on a limited number of priorities is also stressed but with enough flexibility to take into account specific national, regional and local needs and thus get ownership on the programmes but without mentioning the involvement of stakeholders such as trade-unions, civil society organisations. The Council also focused on how to ensure a greater effectiveness (through a more result-based approach with a concentration on a limited number of well-defined, easily measurable set of core indicators) and delivery of Cohesion Policy (through simplified rules of implementation including audit and control arrangements with the application of the proportionality principle). The Council acknowledged that further discussions are needed on the Development and Investment Partnership Contract, the list of priorities forming a basis for thematic concentration and the conditionality mechanism. The Council called the Commission to present its legislative proposals governing cohesion policy and its funds for the post 2013 implementation period at the latest before the end of June 2011.

### **3 February 2011 - Priorities of the Hungarian EU Presidency on Cohesion Policy**

The first half of this year will see several important meetings designed to prepare the **future cohesion policy** after 2013. These include:

- Cohesion Forum, 31 January – 1 February 2011
- Conference on the future cohesion policy, 31 March-1 April 2011
- Informal Ministerial meeting, Gödöllő, 19-20 May 2011

The role of **territorial cohesion** will also come under the spotlight at several events:

- Meeting of the network of Territorial Cohesion contact points, Budapest, 9 February
- Meeting of the Director Generals in charge of territorial cohesion, Budapest, 29 March
- Informal meeting of Minister responsible for territorial cohesion, Gödöllő, 19-20 May

#### Further information

- Hungarian EU Presidency [website](#)
- [Regional policy events](#) on Inforegio

#### COMING UP

19-21 May 2011 - **Informal Ministerial meeting** which will take place in Gödöllő (Hungary)

### EAPN activities

#### Latest EAPN activities

**28 March 2011** – EAPN has been involved directly and through the Social Platform in the drafting of a **consolidated proposal for amendments to the Draft Report on the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** prepared by the MEP, Mr Salvador Garriga Polledo (SURE Committee). EAPN proposed amendments aimed at translating in the new Multiannual Financial Framework the new social targets of the EU2020 Strategy including the Poverty Reduction Target. The architecture of the future of EU Budget should reflect the 3 pillars of EU2020 and ensure the mainstreaming of social inclusion in all of these pillars. EU Funds, especially Structural Funds and PROGRESS should be used as a powerful means to deliver on the social objectives of EU2020. See [www.socialplatform.org](http://www.socialplatform.org). For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

**16 March 2011** – EAPN attended a **public hearing organised by the permanent working group on the future of the European Social Fund** (set up within the EMPL Committee of the European Parliament) on the role and the impact of the European Social Fund. This meeting gave a first opportunity to Trade-Unions and NGOs (through the Social Platform) to make their voice heard on what should be the scope, how to ensure effectiveness of the ESF to promote high level of employment and social inclusion.

The **Agenda** of the meeting is available [here](#).

**18 February 2011** – EAPN participated in the **ESF Task Force on climate change and social justice** led by King Bandouin Foundation. The objective of this task force is to identify recommendations to strengthen the links between climate change and social justice in relation to the new ESF Regulation.



For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

### **31 January 2011 - EAPN participated in the 5th Cohesion Forum**

The Cohesion Forum, organised by the European Commission on the 31 January and 1 February, marked the end of a consultation exercise that began on 12 November 2010 to glean ideas and opinions from the member states, the regions, cities, economic and social stakeholders, civil society organisations, academics on the EU's cohesion policy and its future. EAPN was invited to speak in the workshop on the Inclusive Growth Pillar of the EU2020 Strategy and Cohesion Policy chaired by Laszlo Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Fintan Farrell put forward the main points developed in the EAPN Response to the 5th Cohesion Report.

More information can be found [here](#).

### **28 January 2011 – Publication of the [EAPN Response to the 5th Cohesion Report](#)**

EAPN published its response to the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion of the European Commission on 28 January, calling for social inclusion and the fight against Poverty to be a binding priority. The 5th Report of the European Commission on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion details progress on these areas and how the EU, national and regional governments have contributed to it. More importantly, it gives political orientations regarding Cohesion Policy after 2013.

In its response, EAPN calls for:

- An ambitious **budget** for Cohesion Policy to match the social targets of the EU2020 and the necessity to **mobilize Structural Funds to lift the most vulnerable groups** of people out of poverty and social exclusion especially in time of crisis and austerity measures,
- A **stronger link between Structural Funds and the new social OMC with National integrated strategies and plans on social protection and social inclusion** discussed within the European Platform against Poverty as basis for Structural Funds proposals focussed on the objective of reducing poverty and social exclusion,
- Ensuring a **comprehensive and integrated delivery** of the **social objectives of the EU2020 Strategy** by making **social inclusion and the fight against Poverty a binding priority** in all Operational Programmes primarily through active inclusion approaches (OPs),
- A **social conditionality and incentive system** aiming at ensuring progress towards the agreed targets,
- A **more social-friendly evaluation system** (social outcome indicators and social inclusion proofing system),
- The implementation of the **partnership principle as a binding requirement in the Structural Funds General Regulation** and the availability of global grants and technical assistance resources for NGOs in all OPs with a particular support for NGO-driven technical assistance services at EU and regional level. A minimum proportion of Structural Funds delivered by NGOs should also be established,



- The **Future of ESF should be maintained within Cohesion Policy** with an ambitious and distinct budget to achieve the social targets and not purely the financial Instrument of the European Employment Strategy.

**14 January 2011** – EAPN attended the second meeting of the **focus group on involvement of local actors** set up by DG EMPL (the first was held on 14 December 2010). The goals of this Group is to discuss a number of potential ideas which can feed the discussion on how to enhance the involvement of local actors in the ESF and to discuss how the partnership principle is currently applied in the ESF. The output of this group will be used as input to the assessment of the revision of the Structural Funds and ESF regulations in light of the upcoming programming period.

For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

**Agenda for new Skills and Jobs** - EAPN is finalizing its Response to the Flagship Initiative on the Agenda for new skills and jobs (for more details see below the employment section). The SFWG has contributed to the part on the role of EU Funds.

For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

#### **COMING UP:**

The next Structural Funds Working Meeting will take place in Brussels on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of May.

 The Members of the SFWG are invited:

**By the 1st of May**, SFWG Members are invited to:

- provide good practices for the leaflet on how to promote good practices of social inclusion through Structural Funds
- fill the questionnaire on Volunteering and Structural Funds

**By the 30<sup>th</sup> May**, to fill the questionnaire (checklist/scoreboard) for assessing National Reform Programmes with regard to the part on the role of Structural Funds in coordination with their EXCO Representative.

## **6. SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST/SOCIAL SERVICES**

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EAPN group in charge: Social Inclusion Working Group

### Latest developments

**23 March 2011** – The [Communication on the reform of the EU State Aid Rules on Services of General Economic Interest](#) and the Report on their application ([Commission Staff Working Paper on The Application of EU State Aid rules on Services of General Economic Interest since 2005 and the Outcome of the Public Consultation](#)) have been adopted by the European Commission.

Member States are free to decide which services are to be considered as services of general interest, the European Commission. However, the European Commission has to ensure that public funding granted for the provision of SGEI does not affect competition and trade within the EU single market. According to the Altmark ruling of the European Court of Justice (2003), payment by a government to a company for providing a SGEI constitutes state aid unless it is strictly limited to the amount needed to compensate for the public service obligation. The ruling gave rise to the post-Altmark package of 2005 that comprises the criteria that must be fulfilled so that the compensation does not need to be notified to the Commission. The SGEI Framework expires in November 2011.

This Communication aims at triggering the debate on which aspects that should be clarified. Competition Commissioner Joaquim Almunia said that although existing rules were necessary and appropriate, there is scope for improvement and a particular need for clearer, simpler and more proportionate instruments. the Commission proposes:

- to **clarify a number of key concepts**, related for instance to the distinction operated by the Treaty and the jurisprudence of the Court between economic and non-economic activities or to the limits Member State have when defining an activity as a service of general economic interest;
- to **offer a more diversified and proportionate approach to the different types of public services** : one element of this strategy could be to simplify the application of the rules for certain types of small-scale public services of a local nature with a limited impact on trade between Member States and for certain social services;

**Consultation of all the EU institutions as well as stakeholders** on drafts of the new SGEI Decision and SGEI Framework is currently envisaged by July 2011.

### **28 January 2011 – The European Commission published “Buying Social - A Guide to Taking Account of Social Considerations in Public Procurement “**

With its Guide to Taking Account of Social Considerations in Public Procurement, the European Commission aims to capitalise on this by (a) raising contracting authorities' awareness on the benefits of opting for goods and services delivering good social outcomes and (b) explaining the opportunities offered by the existing EU legal framework to take into account social considerations in public procurement. The Guide defines socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) before explaining its benefits. It looks at SRPP in relation to the EU social model and the legal and policy approach to the subject in the Union. The Guide

also elaborates an SRPP strategy and explains how to identify needs and plan procurement procedures. The Guide also explains from a legal perspective, how social considerations may be addressed at the different stages of the procurement process (from defining technical specifications and selection criteria, to awarding contracts and monitoring subsequent performance). National examples are provided to illustrate different steps within the process. The Guide is available in all the EU languages [here](#).

### **27 January 2011 – The European Commission published its Green Paper on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy**

Public procurement is confronted today with new challenges: high public deficits and thus the need for the most efficient use of public money but also the growing demand that public purchasing contributes to the achievement of overall societal goals (innovation, fighting climate change and promoting social inclusion). **The European Commission has launched a consultation till the 18<sup>th</sup> of April** to organize a public debate on how legislation could be updated to help public procurers cope with these challenges. The Commission will draw on the contributions to the consultation in preparing the future legislative proposal on the reform of the EU public procurement rules.

Among others, this green paper opens the discussion on how to better take into account social considerations to back the social targets of the EU2020 Strategy in the successive stages of a procurement procedure and also make a proper case about social services.

For more information can be found [here](#).

The guide is available [here](#) (EN/FR/DE).

## **EAPN activities**

### **Latest EAPPN activities**

**13 April 2011 - EAPN** (Katharina Klammkova, EAPN Czech Republic) **participated in a workshop on Access to Basic Banking Services** organised in the European Parliament at the initiative of the German MEP, Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL). She presented the EAPN view on how to fight against financial exclusion and gave an insight on the particular situation of new EU Member States regarding this issue.

For more information, please ask the Secretariat

**31 March 2011 - EAPN spoke during a Seminar organised by Eurodiaconia on Social Services of General Interest.** Please find the Agenda [here](#) and the toolkit for user participation and empowerment [here](#) (available in FR/EN/DE).

**24 March 2011 – EAPN contributed to the Social Platform proposal for amendments to the De Rosa draft Report on the future of social services of general interest.** The main amendments proposed aim at:

- clarifying the reasons underlying the necessity to provide legal certainty as the applicability of single market rules to the provision of SSGI

- better clarifying the need to promote the already existing alternatives to public procurement for the delivery of SSGI
- better clarifying how quality can be guaranteed through the application of public procurement rules
- stressing “affordability” and “users’ participation and empowerment” as essential quality principles for social service provision

More information can be found [here](#).

**28 February 2011 - EAPN contributed to the [Social Platform Response to the Single Market Act](#) aiming at:**

- ensuring the appropriate legal, financial, political and social environment to promote the development, legal certainty and growth of high quality, accessible and affordable SGI, including SSGI, by making full use of all Lisbon Treaty provisions and ensuring that the Single Market Act measures properly contributes to achieving the inclusive objective of the Europe 2020 strategy
- recognising through the appropriate measures the innovative potential of social economy in terms of growth, creation of sustainable employment, promotion of social cohesion and inclusion
- making full use of the structured dialogue with civil society throughout the whole policy cycle (not just in the preparation phase, but also during implementation and evaluation), including during social impact assessment

**😊😊😊 The Members of the SIWG are invited:**

The Members of the SIWG are invited to:

- contribute to the 2nd edition of the participation booklet by providing good practices of users’ involvement/ participation in social services.

## 7. EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING EYV 2011

### Latest developments

The **European Year of Volunteering** has four objectives, including:

- recognise and raise awareness on the value of volunteering;
- celebrate volunteering;
- empower people and volunteer organizations, and
- work towards the creation of an enabling environment for volunteering, including a volunteering infrastructure in the EU.

**EAPN** is part of the **Alliance on the European Year of Volunteering 2011**. The Alliance includes about 35 members and will, throughout 2011, facilitate the engagement of individuals and organizations with the EYV 2011 Year. The Alliance has also set up 6 working groups that are developing policy proposals, including:

- quality volunteering
- towards an enabling volunteering infrastructure in Europe
- tools of recognition
- the value of volunteering
- employee volunteering.

**EESC public hearing on 23 March: Volunteering: motivation, value and recognition.**

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-volunteering>

Other hearings are planned for the coming months, as well as an Agora-type event on volunteering to be hosted by the European Parliament in May-June.

To find out what is planned in your country and to stay informed on what is going on regarding the European Year on Volunteering, check the following useful links:

- EYV Alliance website and newsletter: <http://eyv2011.eu/newsletter>
- National and EU events, see the calendar on the European Commission's website: <http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/home2>.

### EAPN activities

EAPN is not part of the working groups on the Alliance, as it is not a founding member of the Alliance, but supports the work by participating in events organized together with EU institutions.

### See also

- **Special Issue of the EAPN Magazine Volunteering: A tool for inclusion?**  
[http://eapn.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2352%3Anew-eapn-mag-volunteering-a-tool-for-inclusion&catid=41%3Aanti-poverty-magazine-&Itemid=83&lang=en](http://eapn.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2352%3Anew-eapn-mag-volunteering-a-tool-for-inclusion&catid=41%3Aanti-poverty-magazine-&Itemid=83&lang=en)
- **EAPN Position on Volunteering and Social Inclusion** developed through the Social Inclusion Working Group, which will be agreed by the EXCO at the end of April.

For more information on the EU Year, contact Tanya Basarab, EAPN Development Officer.