EAPN Tool Kit: Engaging with the NAP Inclusion 2008-11

Introduction

2008 marks the end of the first cycle of the integrated **Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (OMC SPSI)** and the beginning of a new three year cycle aligned to the parallel cycle of the revised **Strategy for Growth and Jobs**. This new stage will offer many new opportunities for NGOs to engage in EU processes and to influence policy developments at national and EU level.

This tool kit aims to provide useful information and ideas to support national EAPN networks in engaging with the National Reports on strategies for social protection and social inclusion (SPSI) and particularly the NAPs Inclusion at national level, facilitating the exchange of practices and experience.

As we realize that many new members have joined EAPN, we start from basics, explaining what the OMC is and how it has developed before giving detailed information and timelines on the current year. We then provide information and examples of EAPN actions to date at national and EU level to provide tips and inspiration. A final section gives useful links and contacts.

As this Tool Kit will be placed on-line, you will be able to go straight to the parts that interest you.

Contents

Back to Basics

• What is the OMC?

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is the 'community method" of "soft law" which has been developed by the EU as a way of coordinating policy development between member states, without resorting to the regulation of hard law. Although the method was first developed for the European Employment Strategy, in 1997 it has since been transposed to an ever-increasing range of policy fields including social inclusion and pensions. In this tool kit we describe the history and process of the **OMC on social protection and social inclusion**

At the **Lisbon European Council of March 2000,** the EU agreed to take steps to *"make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010"* and fixed the Union's ten year strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Fighting poverty and social exclusion was seen as a key element in this commitment.

A decision was made for Member States to co-ordinate their policies for combating poverty and social exclusion on the basis of the process of known as the 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC), following the model developed for the European Employment Strategy, involving establishing common objectives and indicators, developing national action plans and reports, promoting policy exchanges and mutual learning.

From 2001 to 2005 this method only focused on **social inclusion** and was developed around a set of four objectives on the fight against poverty (amended in 2002)
1. Access to resources, rights, goods, services and employment.
2. Prevention of poverty.
3. Addressing situations of poverty
4. Mobilising all actors including NGOs.

Since 2006, based on the Commission's Communication "Working together, working better: A new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies in the European Union" the European Council adopted a new **"streamlined"** framework for the social protection and social inclusion process. This framework brought together the existing open methods of coordination in three fields: **social inclusion, pensions, and the process in the field of health and long-term care.** As a result, the existing objectives were condensed into the New Common Objectives covering the streamlined process.

For more information on terms used in this document relating to the social inclusion process see the Commission's Glossary of Terms.

2006 Common Objectives on Social Protection and Social Inclusion

The overarching objectives of the OMC on social protection and social inclusion are:

a) Social cohesion, equality between men and women and equal opportunities for all through adequate, accessible, financially sustainable, adaptable and efficient social protection systems and social inclusion policies;

b) Effective and mutual interaction between the Lisbon objectives of greater economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy;

c) Good governance, transparency and the involvement of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policy. :

The specific objectives relating to poverty and social inclusion relate to ensuring:*A decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion through:*

d)) access for all to the **resources, rights and services** needed for participation in society, preventing and addressing exclusion, and fighting all forms of discrimination leading to exclusion.

 e) the **active social inclusion** of all, by promoting participation in the labour market and by fighting poverty and exclusion.

f) that social inclusion policies are well **coordinated** and involve all levels of government and relevant actors, including people experiencing poverty, that they are efficient and effective and **mainstreamed** into all relevant public policies, including economic, budgetary, education and training policies and structural fund (notably ESF) Programmes.

This is followed by 3 objectives for:
- Adequate and sustainable pensions
- Sustainable health care and long-term care.

See full objectives in 20 languages: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/common_objectives_en.htm
These are also quoted in full in the annex
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_inclusion/2008/supporting_appendices_guidance_en.pdf

• What are the main elements of the OMC process?

The OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion provides a framework of political coordination without recourse to "hard law" like Regulations or Directives. In this process the Member States agree to a **cycle of actions** in support of the commonly agreed objectives.

<u>The cyclical process currently includes 5 key elements</u>:

1) Agreeing EU-level <u>common objectives</u> (see above)
2) Developing <u>common indicators</u> to measure progress towards objectives and comparability
3) Developing <u>National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion</u>, which translate these objectives into policies at national level. The National Action Plans on social inclusion (NAP/incl) remain self-standing Plans and make up one of the sections and are expected to be developed through an active planning process involving all stakeholders.
4) A <u>Community Action Programme</u>, underpinning and reinforcing the process: financing of EU stakeholder networks, peer reviews, independent experts network, round table, EU meeting of people experiencing poverty, transnational and awareness raising projects, studies, etc.. Since January 2007, this has been replaced by <u>PROGRESS</u>, the new integrated programme for employment and social solidarity delivering the goals of the Social Agenda and contributing to the jobs and growth strategy.
5) Evaluating progress and outcomes through European <u>reports</u> (Joint Reports by the Council and the Commission) and highlighting the key challenges ahead.

4
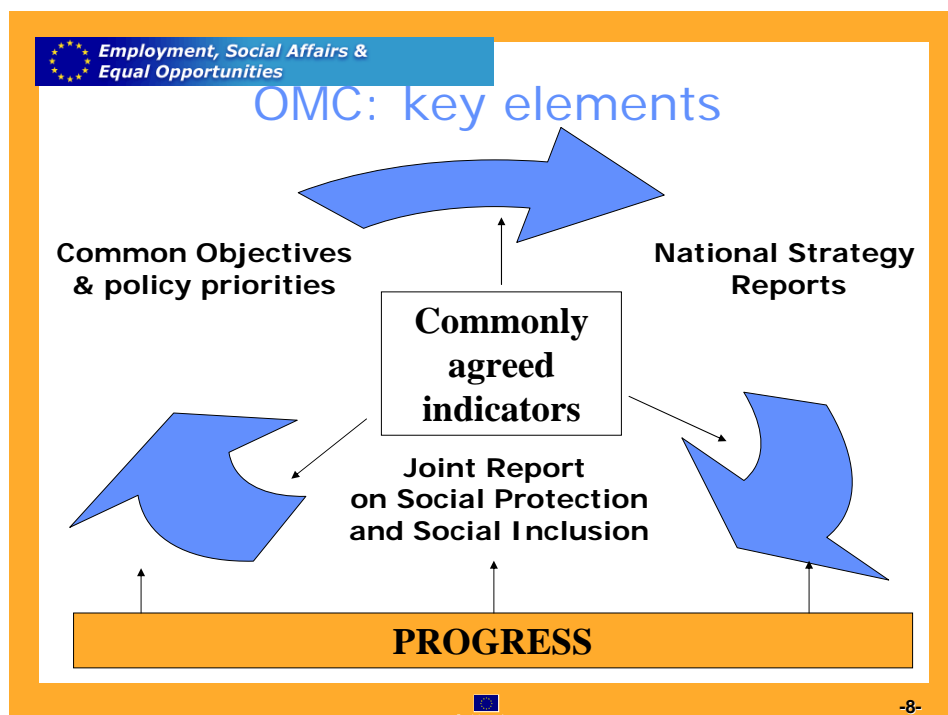
• Historical Background to the OMC

Launch of the Anti-Poverty Programmes   At the beginning of the 70's, EU institutions decided to launch the First European Programme for the Fight against Poverty (1975). Three specific anti poverty programmes were piloted to develop new strategies to fight poverty and social exclusion, contributing to common approaches to the fight against exclusion in an enlarging EU[1].

Single European Act: counter-balancing market integration -The Single European Act in 1986 reflected the need to counter-balance potential negative effects of market liberalisation through a wider range of social policy tools. These included social dialogue, the new possibility of setting "minimum requirements" in working conditions and others. The SEA was followed by the European Social Charter in 1989, non binding but enshrining economic and social rights in the EU "acquis". Although the anti-poverty programmes expanded, developing specific measures targeting excluded groups, efforts to introduce a 4th programme were blocked by British and German governments who successfully challenged the legitimacy of the EU in this area.

Amsterdam, a milestone? The Amsterdam Treaty is often seen as a milestone in the development of social Europe, with the integration of the Maastricht Protocol on Social Policy, bringing in new measures in the social field; the first coordination of Member States' policies to fight social exclusion (without minimum requirements), new steps towards European social dialogue (enhanced consultation and possibility of binding agreements), and an extension of qualified majority voting in the social field. It also included: the introduction of the European Employment strategy, a new title on employment, the principle of gender mainstreaming in all EU policies, new articles in the field of non-discrimination (article 13) and fundamental rights.

Development of new tools in early 2000s: Lisbon and OMC on social inclusion – Despite the Amsterdam Treaty, the last decade has been marked by an increasing difficulty in making progress of a binding nature on social issues, perceived primarily as a domain of national competence. Alternative policy tools have been developed as part of the wider "Lisbon" framework. These include the Open Method of Coordination on Social Inclusion, launched in 2000. In 2005, social inclusion, pensions, health and long term care were merged into a single process, the OMC and Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

---

[1] For more information about the Poverty Programmes, please see *From Lisbon to Lisbon – back to Lisbon and Social Inclusion*, 2007, European Anti-Poverty Network/Portugal www.reapn.org

• New Developments. What will change in the OMC SPSI: 2008-11?

Main Developments in the OMC SPSI 2006-8
- **In 2006**, the first **National Strategic Reports** were produced covering all three strands: social inclusion, pensions and long-term health care for the period 2006-8.
- **2007** was treated as a thematic **Light Year**, where member states were asked to focus on a specific theme. In the social inclusion strand **child poverty was chosen**.
- The **key actions** included:
  - A Social Protection Committee Questionnaire on Child Poverty and Well being
  - Task Force of the Indicators sub-group of the SPC on monitoring child poverty and well-being.
  - Reports by independent experts on social inclusion on child poverty.
  - Contributions of EU stakeholder networks
  - SPC Peer Review on 4 October 2007.

The results can be seen in the **Joint Report 2008**, where recommendations were made on child poverty and strengthening the OMC. It however remains to be seen what follow up will be done.
In the **2008 Joint Report**, the Social Protection Committee (SPC)[2] and the Commission proposed to keep the Common Objectives unchanged in the new cycle. The Commission has just published a new **Guidance Note** for preparing the National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion in the new cycle (2008-11).

Guidance Note for the National Strategic Reports 2008-10: **Main** elements
In the 2008-11 period, the OMC process will be aligned with the 3 year parallel EU strategy and process: the revised Lisbon Strategy for jobs and growth. The aim is to more closely promote the synergies between the two processes (known as feeding in and feeding out), although this also reflects a new risk to the independence of the OMC process. (See EAPN section). Although the general changes are minor some important gains have been by EAPN and other NGOs.

These include:
- More emphasis on **feeding out** (how far the Economic and Employment policies covered by Lisbon Strategy are contributing to Social Inclusion) and links to Sustainable Development.
- A clear demand to link the **Plans and Report** to the objective to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010, through specific poverty targets, referring to the Indicators Sub group Task Force proposals.
- A much improved section on **governance**, which details guidance for quality engagement
- A renewed emphasis on **implementation,** specifying budget allocations and relationship with Structural Funds (ESF)

---

[2] The Social Protection Committee is a Council formation involving 2 high-ranking civil servants, representatives from each member state that meet regularly with the Commission to promote exchange and to support the OMC to deliver its objectives.http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/social_protection_committee_en.htm

Overview of the Guidance Note

This guidance note provides a framework for Member States to use in drawing up their reports. The note is not obligatory, although the Commission will strongly encourage MS to follow the format and priorities. In order to "*strengthen the effectiveness of the Open Method as a vehicle for exchange and mutual learning, thereby promoting more efficient policies at EU and national level, and to reinforce the interplay between the Open Method of Coordination and the Strategy for Growth and Jobs*"[3]

The Note itself consists of

Guidance note for preparing national strategy reports on social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Supporting appendices to the guidance note including info on common objectives and targets.

Manual for Gender Mainstreaming Social Inclusion and Social Protection Policies

Discussion Paper from the Disability High Level Group on Disability Mainstreaming in the new streamlined European Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process

How the Strategic Report and NAP Inclusion should be structured.

The National Strategic Report should not be longer than 65 pages and should consist of 4 parts.

Part 1	Common Overview and summary messages	Max10 pages
Part 2	National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAP-Inclusion including succinct progress report)	Max 20 pages
Part 3	National Strategy Report for Pensions, including succinct progress report	Max 20 pages
Part 4	National Strategy Report for Healthcare and Long-term care, including progress report	Max 15 pages.

Member States can also provide more detailed annexes (ie a full National Action Plan on Inclusion). The data and indicators should be based on the EU commonly agreed indicators, and supplemented by national indicators.

Part 1: Common Overview

This section should involve:

- An assessment of the <u>social situation</u> (4 pages), which should include macro and micro-economic policy and the implications for social policy, as well as major trends, new challenges and key risk groups. **A specific new section should address the main social aspects of the integration of migrants, ethnic minorities** (the indicators sub-group will provide guidelines for this).

- The overall <u>strategic approach</u> (5 pages) – drawing on the previous reports and referring to the 3 overarching objectives. Particular emphasis should be given to the link between the 3 strands of the OMC and the Lisbon National Reform Programmes, with particular emphasis on **feeding out** (*"how the Growth and Jobs strategy contributes to delivering the objective of greater social cohesion, improves adequacy and sustainability of pensions and positively*

---

[3] Guidance Note to the preparation of the National Strategic Reports 2008-11.

influences the accessibility, quality and sustainability of the provision of health and long-term care, and health itself") *Guidance Note p.4)*

- On the question **of governance** a new demand is to identify similarities and differences between approaches on governance between the different strands, but also to highlight how good governance will be upheld *"continuously over the full OMC cycle, including the intervening thematic years" (p.5).* Reference is also made to the 2007 Peer Review in Ireland on NAP Inclusion social inclusion forum – on the quality of participation.
- Information should be given also on monitoring and evaluation, targets set and indicators, with an emphasis on evidence-based policy

---

Part 2 – NAPS Inclusion

The NAP Inclusion should present Member State's key priorities in promoting greater social inclusion and impacting on poverty and social exclusion, drawing lessons from progress to date. *Member states should:*

- Build on policy developments from previous rounds of NAP Inclusion – particularly on **Child Poverty and Active Inclusion as agreed priorities and social integration of Migrants.**
- Determine **priorities** based on progress on previous priorities/new emerging challenges.
- Address the **implementation gap** and reinforce impact rather than reporting existing actions.
- Increase the **strategic focus**, integrated and multidimensional approaches.
- Clear **targets** should be set for both general poverty reduction and relation to the priorities.
- Improve **mainstreaming** into general policy design, implementation and budgetary decision-making particularly ESF and Structural Funds. Use poverty proofing/social impact assessment.
- **Strengthen Governance** by involving all actors in an on-going structured dialogue at all stages of the policy-making process and over the full cycle (including light years) – naming essential actors "*including local and regional authorities, NGO's voluntary and social and health service providers, NGO's representing vulnerable and excluded groups, people experiencing poverty, including service users, social economy actors…*". MS should indicate how they will evaluate the governance process and raise public awareness.
- **The European Year against poverty 2010 -** preparation activities should also be reflected.

Structure for the NAPs Inclusion

Section 2:1 Progress in relation to 2006-8 NSR and challenges identified in the Joint Report (08)

Section 2:2 – Key Challenges, priority objectives and targets (4 pages**).** Identify 3 or 4 priority policy objectives, embedded in the overall goals on poverty and social exclusion, setting quantified targets for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the near and medium term, disagreggated by age/ sex.

Section 2.3 – 2.5/2.6 – Priority policy objectives (2 pages each): Each priority objective should be justified, saying how gender has been taken into account and identifying the role of different actors. Also indicators and monitoring arrangements and resource allocation

Section 2.6/2.7: Better Governance (4 pages). This should provide detailed information on:

- Preparation process,
- Policy coordination,
- Mobilization and involvement of actors,
- Mainstreaming,
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

Annex 2.1: Good Practice and Other Social Inclusion Annexes

Provisional Timeline for EU/MS Actions on National Strategic Reports.

Date	Action
5 February 2008	Guidance Note approved by Social Protection Committee
13/14 March 2008	Spring European Council conclusions which need to be taken on board by member states.
April – July 2008	Bilateral Meetings with Commission on the development of NSR
2nd July	Commission Communication on Strengthening the OMC published.
15 September 2008	National Strategic Reports should be presented and no later than the 30th September
27 October	Discussion in SPC on the Communication: Strengthening the OMC.
12 November	First draft of the Joint Report 2009 and Supporting Document
18 December	SPC meeting to discuss the 2nd draft of the Joint Report.
Jan and Feb 2009	Joint Report finalized and key messages to Spring Council

• What EAPN has done, lessons learnt

EAPN was established in 1990 as an independent coalition of NGOs involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the EU. EAPN's membership is built on National Anti Poverty Networks and European NGOs primarily concerned with the fight against poverty and social exclusion. At present there are 24 National Networks and 27 European Organisations who are members of EAPN. The membership of EAPN is involved in a variety of activities aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion including, education and training activities, service provision and activities aimed at the participation and empowerment of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

EAPN Impact at EU level:

- **EAPN** members were active in the Poverty Programmes in the 80's and 90's which lead to the proposal of Article 126 and 127 in the Amsterdam Treaty setting out the agreement for the European Employment Strategy with all the key elements of the OMC.
- **EAPN** lobbied intensively during the Finnish Presidency in 1999 for a similar OMC for social inclusion and the establishment of the target of 2010 to have a decisive impact on poverty and social exclusion.
- **EAPN** became one of the main stakeholder groups engaging with the NAPs at national level and was recognized as such by the Social Protection Committee and the Commission, and in the organization of the Round Tables on Poverty each year.
- **EAPN** pressed strongly for the integration of the focus on people experiencing poverty influencing the initial priorities and objectives and resulting in the yearly Presidency Meetings involving People experiencing Poverty, as well as an on-going commitment to participation in all governance processes.
- **EAPN** is one of the main organisations pressing for the strengthening of the OMC and demanding the integration of the social dimension in the revised Lisbon Strategy.
- Currently, **EAPN** has been successful in pressing for improved quality governance in the OMC, and the demand that the OMC be revitalised incorporating new elements particularly Active Inclusion with a renewed focus on adequate minimum income and the need to retain broad, multidimensional approaches which deliver on poverty.

EAPN Action and Impact at National Level:

In this section we highlight some examples of national EAPN approaches and successes, in their work related to the OMC on Social Inclusion and Social Protection. For most networks, this only represents a small part of their national activities on poverty and social exclusion.

EAPN France	EAPN worked to influence the NAP through the ALERTE coalition. They pressed for a working group between government and civil society, though initially the Government resisted. Now the Government has agreed to synchronize the biannual conferences and regional meetings on Poverty with the NAP inclusion process. A major achievement has been the agreement of the new law for a right to housing, (DALO) although it is undermined by insufficient resources.
EAPN Denmark	EAPN took part in the preparation and implementation of the Danish NAP inclusion awareness projects in 2006/ 7. Following work at EU level, Danish EAPN took the initiative and implemented a project "Poverty and Social Exclusion among children in Denmark: Knowledge and Actions", this has led to a seminar held in February 2008 and on-going activities on raising the profile of child poverty concerns.
EAPN Portugal	In Portugal, an REAPN-led Working Party brought together social economy, NGOs, trade unions, education and rehabilitation cooperatives and local development associations in a broad platform and has now a leading role in the Non-Governmental forum for social inclusion with which the Government consults on the NAP Inclusion. In 2006 EAPN delivered an awareness-raising programme "This includes ME" which involved 5 national NGOs and the ministry. In 2007 EAPN developed an important evaluation conference and report on developments in the Lisbon Strategy and the OMC (from Lisbon to Lisbon).
EAPN Austria	EAPN developed a 'shadow' NAP Inclusion particularly in the area of poverty prevention, involving inputs from regional associations and was used in the Ministry's "Federal Platform" and in the media. EAPN is now a lead partner in the consultation process and participates in the meetings with the Ministry. They will be taking part in a new national indicators project using participative methodologies for the NAP Inclusion.
EAPN Luxembourg	Won inclusion of a provision that a minimum supply of electricity is a basic right, in the case of indebtedness and overspending. EAPN working with other NGO's also had a success in a campaign around payment for services: poor people now do not have to pay for services up-front as social ser vices will pay directly.
EAPN Germany	Succeeded in getting a focus on the most disadvantaged, new targets for people with special social needs and reports on homelessness and illiteracy. Other areas of impact have been development of a national integration programme for migrants; better access to financial resources – particularly for older people and those unable to work, the widening of access to health insurance and the development of personalized plans for integration into the labour market. Consultation has been institutionalised between NGOs, regions and Government. EAPN brought together local authorities, regions and national Ministry as well as NGOs in 3 workshops, the last one focussing on the National Poverty and Wealth report.
EAPN Sweden	In Sweden, EAPN has been active in the Brukardelegationen (the user delegation which acts as a reference group for social NGOs with the social ministry). The umbrella NGO (NMU – the network against exclusion), to which EAPN belongs inputs into the plan and gets the opportunity of adding

	an appendix to the official NAP Inclusion/Strategic Report. Last year they organized a big conference on the NAP. Regional networks are also implanting Regional action plans on social inclusion in 4 cities, through an EQUAL project.
EAPN Ireland	EAPN briefed and consulted with members and other NGOs, and people experiencing poverty on priorities and worked with the Ministry writing the NAP. They also made a submission to the relevant parliamentary committee. For the last report, this involved 2 consultation meetings regionally and 6 focus groups with people experiencing poverty
EAPN Spain	EAPN has been active at national, regional and local level in bringing together actors in the development and implementation of social inclusion plans. They are a partner in the Government dialogue body with the sector and have carried out a broad awareness raising programme in the regions working with Luis Vives Foundation. EAPN regional networks are key actors in developing regional and local social inclusion plans, ensuring input of people experiencing poverty through 5 meetings. EAPN have been contracted to develop a methodological guide for the participation of people experiencing poverty in policy development and delivery
EAPN Belgium	In **Belgium**, EAPN has been meeting with regional and federal administrations involved in the NAP process since 2000. In 2005, EAPN got regular meetings agreed involving all actors, as well as meetings three times a year with the President of the Federal Administration EAPN prepares input through meetings with people experiencing poverty to the national reform programme, minimum income consultations and the evaluation, implementation and monitoring of the NAP
EAPN Finland	EAPN and the Federation of Social Welfare were part of the preparatory working group on the NAP and connected a wider range of NGOs to the preparatory process through dialogue with the members.
EAPN Italy	In **Italy**, CILAP/EAPN is used the NAPs awareness funds for a large-scale series of conferences on different aspects of the NAPs and across most of the regions.
EAPN Netherlands	EAPN has continued to be actively engaged in the NAP, commenting on drafts etc. The Government includes their contributions in the annex. They have succeeded in getting some new measures ie related to reducing debt. EAPN has been asked to be on the advisory committee, flagging up concerns about under-use of allowances, and minimum income. The network has organized around Nice Objective 4), involving all actors, and has organized 10 local conferences around finding a solution to poverty. Homelessness is a key concern. Government has now agreed to fund the 14th meeting.
EAPN UK	Led the creation of a Social Policy Task Force to bring together the work of different NGOs on the NAP, which is now official dialogue partner on the NAP with the Department of Work and Pensions. They got funding for 2 awareness projects. The first held 147 grass-roots workshops with people experiencing poverty and developed a participatory Tool Kit called Get Heard! The second awareness project called Bridging the Policy Gap. carried out pilot 360 degree Peer Reviews in three local authority areas in three nations of the UK on three NAP objectives, including actors from all levels of UK government, local service providers and service users. In July

	2007 they held first <u>UK People Experiencing Poverty conference</u>, modelled on the European one. They have had some successes in influencing anti-poverty policy on housing benefit regulations, debt, working poverty ,volunteer expenses and cost of benefit telephone advice lines.
EAPN Poland	In the first NAP: 2004-6, anti-poverty NGOs were very successful in advancing proposals. The Polish Ministry of Social Policy expressed its willingness to establish an observatory to monitor the NAP implementation to involve civil society. In the second NAP (2006-8) the involvement was not so active but they have had some positive results including the new <u>Sectoral Operational Programme on Human Resources Development</u> which will have an important impact on social exclusion.
EAPN Malta	Anti-poverty NGOs take an active part in the national consultation process. EAPN Malta was invited to act as a key stakeholder in facilitating the participation of people facing poverty and social exclusion. Maltese NGOs were active in creating <u>Target Group Committees (2-year-project)</u> involving asylum seekers, domestic violence, illiteracy and children with disabilities. NGOs, representatives of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and persons experiencing poverty and social exclusion.
EAPN Lithuania	EAPN participates in the Anti Poverty Steering Group organized by the Ministry and got <u>4 key priorities accepted</u> for the 2006-8 NAP. In 2007 EAPN collaborated with the Civil Society Institute and other partners in the <u>"LabAs" awareness-raising project</u> funded by the Commission. (Lithuania without exclusion and poverty) raising awareness of the fight against poverty.
EAPN Czech Republic	EAPN has been active in the consultation process and is a lead NGO partner with the Ministry. They are concerned to impact also on the implementation process, through an <u>EU funded project "STOP Social Exclusion</u>, monitoring the <u>impact of the NAP</u> in 3 policy areas: Long term unemployed, socially excluded Roma and Homelessness in 3 different regions. EAPN has successfully <u>lobbied for changes in the new law on social services</u> and have published a leaflet on social exclusion. They have also been active in the <u>regional and municipal community planning processes</u> on social inclusion.
EAPN Hungary	EAPN welcomed the Committee against Social Exclusion, with representatives of most departments. However, the Hungarian government did not broaden the debate with NGO stakeholders.
EAPN Slovenia	The antipoverty network will be formalized this year. Several different organisations are involved in the network RISI (union of non-governmental organizations in working the field of poverty and social exclusion)
Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia	In **Slovakia** the NAP was prepared without cooperation with civil society. In **Latvia** NGOs were included in the JIM but not in the NAP process In **Estonia**, NGO's were not involved and there is not a formal EAPN network yet.
Romania	The Association for Actions against Poverty and Social Exclusion invited NGOs to study and publicly debate the Memorandum. The <u>European Roma RCRights Centre</u> (**ERRC**) provided input on the final drafts of the JIMs in seven MS where Roma issues are most relevant (Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia), aiming to ensure prioritization of Roma issues in their first Plans.

• Key Demands

Each network will develop their own demands related to their national context. However, EAPN encouraging members to make reference to some common EAPN key demands which have been developed through debates and discussion within EAPN and its working groups.

1) The overall EAPN perspective on social policy priorities

EAPN response to the social stocktaking Feb 2008[4]
EAPN believes *effective anti-poverty policies should be multi-dimensional, balanced employment and social policies based on economic and social rights, delivered through universal, preventionist approaches, combined with more targeted strategies to reach out to specific groups.* They should build on the following objectives:
- Guaranteeing an adequate income and resources for all for a dignified life, regardless of employment status.
- Reducing inequalities, through robust re-distributory mechanisms, recognizing that inequalities in poverty and wealth undermine social cohesion
- Supporting family solidarity and children's rights and the capacity for families of whatever kind to provide a decent life for their children.
- Developing effective strategies to promote an inclusive labour market, which provides quality jobs and opportunity for all.
- Ensuring decent housing for all.
- Guaranteeing equal access to, and invest in high quality and affordable services (particularly health, transport, education, social care, financial, cultural, recreational and legal).
- Implementing specific approaches and programmes targeting people in extreme poverty, including homeless people.
- Implementing anti-discrimination legislation, and promoting pro-active measures to tackle discrimination, particularly in access to jobs, rights and services.
- Ensuring active governance and participation, particularly of people experiencing poverty.

2) Specific demands for the 2008-11 NAP Inclusion and Strategic Report

Recommendations on the 2008-11 NAP Inclusion –
Drawn from the EAPN Social Inclusion Working Group meetings (March 1st 2008)
Key Issues:
- The need for visible political will to develop a separate, dynamic National Action Plan on Inclusion and to deliver the OMC, SPSI ensuring **effective and dynamic governance, implementation and impact.**

General Policy Content:
- The NAPs should demonstrate more clearly a universal social rights approach, implementing the tenets of the new Lisbon Treaty, the horizontal social clause and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- The original objectives of the OMC social protection and social inclusion should be quoted and remain at the heart of the proposals. (see earlier section) underlining the commitment to multidimensional, integrated approaches to eliminating poverty and social exclusion.

---

[4] EAPN response to social stocktaking www.eapn.org

- The plans should focus on measures to tackle <u>income inequalities</u> and proposals for a <u>fairer distribution</u> of the benefits of growth, analyzing wealth as well as poverty.
- Specific priorities should be justified in the context of the <u>broad overarching objectives</u>.
- The NAP Inclusion should review progress to making a significant impact on poverty and social exclusion by <u>2010</u>, preparation for actions in 2010 and proposals for post 2010.

Key policy priorities:

- **Active Inclusion:** measures should guarantee adequate minimum income for a dignified life, (regardless of employment status) and affordable access to quality services, as <u>pre-requisites</u> to developing positive social and economic activation approaches leading to quality jobs.
- **Follow up to Child Poverty:** explicit new measures to promote adequate family income, life-long learning for parents and children, support to positive child development and creative play approaches based on children's rights, as well as improved key services including promotion of universal childcare and dependent care services.
- **Migrants, ethnic minorities and asylum seekers**: action to implement anti-discrimination legislation and pro-active multidimensional measures to challenge discrimination and promote diversity.
- **Housing and Homelessness**: implementation of the right to affordable, decent housing, specific measures to promote access for key discriminated and/or vulnerable groups and development of integrated approaches to tackle <u>extreme poverty</u>.
- **Gender and Life-cycle:** mainstream and poverty proof gender and life-cycle approaches o ensure that the specific experience of socially excluded groups and people experiencing poverty is taken into account.

Key Proposals on Process

- **Develop plans, not reports –** put into practice participatory planning and policy development processes involving all stakeholders in an on-going structured dialogue on the development, delivery and evaluation of anti-poverty strategies, rather than static reports.
- **Invest in participative democracy –** invest in more effective partnerships by financially supporting NGO's and activities which promote the direct participation of people experiencing poverty at all stages of the policy cycle.
- **Specify measures/realistic timelines and budget –** spell out what is going to be done, by when and with what financial resources, investigate participative budget methodologies.
- **Link local to national –** actively promote local, participative, social inclusion action planning process, which feed into regional/ national action plan on social inclusion.
- **Establish national and local targets and quantitative indicators of progress –** related to overall objectives on poverty and social exclusion (For example - phased elimination of risk of poverty and extreme poverty – targets for 2010, 2015 and 2020) and short and medium term policy priorities.
- **Develop new indicators** which measure the reality of poverty and social exclusion – involving participative methodologies, focusing on impact.
- **Prioritize monitoring and evaluation** as learning processes which can ensure better delivery.
- **Mainstream social inclusion in economic and other processes –** pilot poverty proofing and social impact assessment based on participative methodologies. Link the planning and consultation processes on the National Reform Programmes and the National Action Plans
- **Promote social innovation and social experimentation:** ensure that Structural Funds and other sources are actively used to promote new approaches, involving NGOs.

- **Tips for getting involved 2008-11**

National Level

This section makes some suggestions on how to influence the Plans and to use them to promote public debate on poverty.

The Plans can be seen as an opportunity to:
- influence policy
- raise public awareness of poverty and the potential of policy to address it
- build relationships with potential allies
- build dialogue between policy makers and people experiencing poverty
- exchange experience at European level on policies and engagement of stakeholders.
- raise the profile and credibility of EAPN and your members.

Some possible steps

1. **Gather relevant information and analysis**

The **first step** is to quickly establish contact with your contact point in your National Government department to find out the timeline and how you can best intervene.

For **information** at EU level, the Guidance Note and 2006 Objectives provide the best starting point. This should be related to the analysis and demands of EAPN and other EU NGOs

At national level, if you have the resources you could analyse:
- The previous NAP Inclusion (2006-8)
- The latest implementation report (2007) and the Joint Report 2007
- Commentaries by the independent 'national experts'
- EAPN and other NGO demands, including European Organisations in EAPN.
- Other national research papers as relevant.

2. **Consulting with the Anti-Poverty Organizations and people.**
- Organize a meeting with EAPN members and other NGOs to talk about the NAP Inclusion process and what your input might be. Discuss the EAPN list of demands (see above section). Follow-up meeting(s) could go into more depth on targets, and your strategy.
- Integrate the views of people experiencing poverty. You can link this to the preparations of the Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty or think about organizing separate focus group meetings on particular themes which link to your consultation meetings with the sector.
- EAPN has basic powerpoint presentations available on the OMC and the NAP Inclusion. If you develop your own, please copy them to EAPN so that they can be place on the website for use by other networks. (sian.jones@eapn.skynet.be)

3. **Develop a submission to the new Plan (before the draft)**

Some key elements should include.
- Provide a section which sets out the **background to EAPN** and your national EAPN network and the work you have been doing related to the priorities.
- Spell out what should be the **key 3 or 4 policy priorities** for the Plan (see Guidance Note and EAPN demands above). It's important if possible to also define what measures, targets, indicators, resources will be needed to achieve them.
- **Make proposals linked to 2010**. Set out what you think should have been achieved, how the 2010 year should be implemented and proposals for post 2010.

- Refer to the **EU priorities** where appropriate, although these currently do not prioritise effective minimum income schemes and social protection systems.
- Refer to relevant **EAPN critiques** of the NAPs Inclusion and the implementation reports. See section on overarching demands on social inclusion.
- It is useful to **copy your submission** to the key officials in your Government and the European Commission, including the national Desk Officer as well as the independent national expert.
- Your submission should also be copied to EAPN in Brussels (sian.jones@eapn.skynet.be)

4. Develop a strategy to influence the NAP Inclusion and promote debate
If you have resources and are a well-established network you should plan a media strategy:
- Seek a formal input to the Plan or involvement in any planned stakeholder meetings. In some countries, the EAPN National Network has a close relationship with key officials.
- Identify and contact possible allies, such as other NGOs, social partners, especially trade unions; politicians (especially opposition), etc.
- Devise a media strategy, where possible. It is often possible to interest the media in the commitments made to eliminate poverty at EU level by national politicians
- Engage National and Regional Parliaments (who are named in the Guidelines as important actors). In some countries, opposition politicians will be keen to question the Government.
- Raise awareness of the process at national level. The Commission launches calls for proposals for proposals for this type of project (the next call will be in May/June, but is likely to be broader than simply the NAP Inclusion)

5. Respond to the Plans
When the Plan is published (15 September 2006 or at the latest 30 September) it is useful to respond, so as to:
- Influence the Joint Social Inclusion and Social Protection Report – the Commission and Council's report
- Contribute to joint EU-wide assessments by EAPN
- Promote debate in your country among members, media, allies, politicians etc.

> ### Possible Format for Response to the Report/Plan
> o *Comment on the overall situational analysis – how far do you agree?*
> o *Analyse the priorities chosen – how far do you agree with them*
> o *Are the policy measures, targets, indicators and resources adequate to ensure delivery?*
> o *What is missing? What proposals would you make?*
> o *What evidence – both academic and from experience of people in poverty in your organisations.*
> o *Comments on the governance process and participation – was it adequate? How could it have been improved.?*
> o *Comments on the links to 2010.*

6. Resources
Networks will need to identify what resources are available. In many cases, this will mean drawing on the goodwill of members, while others will be able to access funding for the network itself. A small amount (1400€) of funding is available from the European EAPN Secretariat for engaging with the NAPs (to fund meetings, translation, drafting of reports, covering 90% of costs and upon proof of receipts). For further information contact the Secretariat.

Checklist for Preparing a Policy Proposal/Submission to the NAP Inclusion.

1. **What process will you follow?**
- *Who? - Which organizations are you going to develop your proposal?*
- *How? – What kind of consultation are you going to do – meetings? focus groups? written input or through e-line discussions etc…?*
- *How? - Are you going to involve/integrate People experiencing Poverty?*

2. **What policy priorities would you propose?**
- *What are the Governments priorities likely to be?*
- *What are your networks priorities? Are these different?*
- *Are you clear what is likely to have success*

3. **What proposals would you make on the NAP Inclusion Process?**
- *What is the process likely to be?*
- *Is it likely to be improved/get worse this year?*
- *Have you got specific concrete proposals to improve it?*

4. **What format would you use to present the proposal?**
- *Is there a specific format/template for presenting a submission?*
- *Is it more effective to present an academic looking presentation focused on content or make a visually impressive proposal – with well presented key messages and examples?*

5. **What evidence do you need?**
- *Do you need to back up your proposal with "scientific evidence*
- *Is it important to draw on real-life examples and testimonies (eg people experiencing poverty or anecdotes from organizations?*

6. **What's the timeline for engagement and for your action?**
- *Are you clear when the main actions will happen from input to draft report/and final report and when you need to make an input?*

7. **What follow-up will you do?**
- *How will you monitor whether your submission and/or response has had any impact?*

Activity developed in EAPN Capacity Building Workshop on the OMC. 1.03.08

EAPN Action at EU Level

At EU level, EAPN works with its national networks to make a EU response and Lobby on the National Strategic Reports and National Action Plans, drawing on national networks work and views.

You can see the results of this work in the Useful Documents section (EAPN). Howver, the most important work is that done by national networks themselves in trying to input into the plans/reports and commenting on drafts directly to their governments. Please send EAPN a copy or a summary of this (sian.jones@eapn.skynet.be)

In 2008, the EAPN Social Inclusion Working Group will be preparing a report on the 2008-11 Strategic Reports. In May, the <u>Planning Group will forward each network an outline questionnaire</u>. This will focus both on networks assessment of their MS's Strategic Reports, the process followed as well as outlining their own engagement. This should be completed **as soon as possible** (on the basis of the drafts if you have access to them) and if not, by the latest **at the end of September 2006**, so that EAPN can present key findings to the **Round Table in October**. This questionnaire will include the following areas:

Content
1) Your overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Report – how far will it help to drive forward and implement effective policies to support the fight against poverty and social exclusion.
2) Your assessment of the choice of priorities
3) The adequacy of policy measures highlighted, indicators, monitoring arrangements and resources.
4) The follow-up on child poverty and actions developed on Active Inclusion
5) The proposals on 2010
6) The choice of good practices

Process
1) How far improvements have been made in the governance process, involving NGO's and people experiencing poverty (quality of the engagement at all stages of the policy cycle)
2) Whether attempts have been made to evaluate/monitor governance performance and what the impact has been.
3) How far and how effective your networks engagement was in the process – main achievements/weaknesses.

Where to find out more

- ## Useful contacts

Officials responsible for the Plan/Process

National Government

- The official/office writing the Plan See Address list
- SPC (Social Protection Committee) Member. See Address list

Non-Governmental experts

These are independent experts charged with drawing up reports on national situations, on the Plans and on their implementation. See their web-page for their reports and contact details

European Commission

(see the Organisation Chart in pdf format on the Commission site)

- 'Desk Officer': the officials responsible for monitoring each country for DG Employment and Social Affairs. (see the last three rows of the three columns on the left of the Organisation Chart above). (See EAPN list)
- The Social Inclusion Unit responsible for promoting the process and producing the Joint inclusion Report (see E/2 on the organisation chart). Katarina Lindahl is currently responsible for the overview on the National Strategies and the Joint Report. To phone the relevant person: 00 322 29 (then the number)

▪ Useful Documents

EAPN

EAPN analysis of the NAPs Inclusion:
- EAPN response to Guidance Note 2008
- 2006-8 National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion
- 2005 Implementation Reports ('old' 15 Member States)
- 2004, NAPs, 10 new Member States
- 2003 NAPs ('Old' 15)
- 2001 NAPs by country and across the 15

Child Poverty
- EAPN Network News: Child Poverty.
- **EAPN and Child Poverty: the start of a debate (presentation of initial conclusions from Review Group Meeting 12 May 2007)**

Active Inclusion/Minimum Income
- EAPN response to Consultation on Minimum Income (Active Inclusion).
- EAPN Social Standards Project Model and other background papers: www.eapn.ie/standards

Poverty/Social Inclusion
- EAPN Response to the social reality stocktaking 2008
- EAPN Book - The EU We Want: Views from those fighting poverty and social exclusion on the future development of the EU [08/02/2006]
- EAPN Position paper - Building Confidence in the EU Inclusion Strategy [15/10/2004].
- Report - Poverty indicators starting from the experience of people living in poverty: Final report of a European project [1/4/2004]
- EAPN Position paper - A Europe for all: For a European strategy to combat social exclusion [6/5/1999]
- EAPN Policy Brief on EAPN extranet

For a more complete list of documents, see EAPN web site

European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty

2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002: see the Reports

Other NGOs

Social Platform: www.socialplatform.org
- Eurochild: www.eurochild.org
- AGE: http:www.age-platform.org
- FEANTSA: www.feantsa.org

European Union Documents

All documents on social inclusion are on the EU social inclusion homepage	In **English/French and German** www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_en.htm www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_fr.htm www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_de.htm
Common Objectives *AllCommunity Languages*	This page includes the new common objectives agreed in 2006 for the streamlined strategy and the Nice (2000) NAPs Inclusion guidelines
Common Indicators *All community languages*	Sets out the new common indicators agreed in 2006 which covers 14 overarching indicators and 3 strands related to social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care.
NAPs/Inclusion *National language sometimes English*	Old 15: 2001-2003 and 2003-2005 with implementation reports and update in some countries for 2006. New 10: NAPs 2004-2006. National Strategic Reports 2006-8 and Update Reports 2007.
Guidance Note; National Strategic Report2008-11	The revised Framework adopted in Feb 2008 for drafting the National Reports.
Most reports are in all Community languages.	Joint Reports on Social Inclusion and Social Protection, 2007, 2006 and 2005 (all 25 countries) and Joint Inclusion Reports: 2004 (new 10), 2003 and 2001 (old 15). These reports provide useful synthesis of strategies by theme and by country, including identifying challenges by country. There is also a list of good practice examples. .
Enlargement	Joint Inclusion Memoranda for, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria as well as 2003 JIMs from the 'new 10'.
SPC Committee	A useful set of documents from the Committee, including its Indicators Sub-Committee
Progress (*Most documents are in English, French, German***)**	
Peer Review **Peer Review Website**	Reports, case-studies and reactions by stakeholders on range of topics (check for ideas on detailed policy areas).Also own website where you can sign up for regular e-flash.
Studies	Range of useful studies, including the Special Eurobarometer report 279 on Poverty and Social Exclusion 2007, Poverty and Social Exclusion of Lone Parents and Measurement of Homelessness., child poverty etc.
Non-Governmental Expert Reports	Important implementation reports on the NAPs Inclusion country by country. Influential in guiding Commission thinking and analysis. Includes a list of experts and their e-mails. See particularly 2006 report on Minimum Income and Active Inclusion. Also Tackling Child Poverty and social inclusion of children. Feeding in and out and National Policies on Immigration and Ethnic Minorities.
European Round Tables	Reports of the 17 October Round Tables, with papers etc.
EU Strategy Rights of Child	Commission Communication: Towards an EU strategy on the Rights of the Child
Child Well-being	UNICEF report on Child Well Being in Rich Countries
Active Inclusion	This page gives all the background inform and links to documents related to the Commission consultation in 2006 and the latest consultation as well as conference reports on EU Action to promote the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market.

*For a useful **Glossary of Terms** used in the **Social Inclusion Process** click here.*