

# POLICY BRIEFING


## DEAR EAPN MEMBERS,

This is our first Policy Briefing of 2012, following the Spring European Council held earlier this month. It has been a depressing start to 2012, with governments tightening fiscal austerity packages, impacting most on the poor, and the EU agreeing a fiscal compact to enforce economic governance and zero deficits by law, to be signed off in 2012. Meanwhile, the European Commission is pressing to shift the attention to growth rather than just austerity, with a renewed focus on employment, but little signs of an inclusive growth package that can reduce poverty. The Troika countries continue to suffer the most from enforced punitive programmes to quickly reduce deficits, and from exclusion from the Europe 2020 poverty reduction requirements or demands to deliver National Reform Programmes. The only really positive news has come in the area of Structural Funds, where the Commission's proposals on the Regulations have met with a positive response from EAPN, and being firmly followed up by the European Parliament, with commitments to ring-fence 20% of ESF to deliver on the poverty target. EAPN has started the New Year actively reorganizing its internal structure, in response to the proposed changes in the Strategic Plan, holding its first EU Inclusion Strategies Group, aiming to support its role as a strategic partner in EU and national anti-poverty policy making. The Group has held its first meeting in February, and has launched a common project to try to engage with civil dialogue at national level on anti-poverty policy, get involved with and review the National Reform Programmes and National Social Reports, against an increasingly negative climate of reduced participation, and anger against the austerity policies being propagated and the negative role of the EU. EAPN members will be assessing their engagement in Europe 2020, including the Flagship Programmes, at the end of 2012, to decide on a follow up strategy. The group also agreed 3 Task Forces to work on child poverty and well-being, Structural Funds Toolkit and an assessment of the Troika countries, to take forward key priorities.

We take this occasion to welcome all EAPN new members to the new structures and hope you will continue to find this briefing useful. In the next meeting of the EU ISG group (4-5 May), this instrument will be reviewed with the members. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Best regards

Sian Jones, Policy Coordinator, with the Policy Team: Fintan Farrell, Amana Ferro, Vincent Caron, Claire Champeix, Tanya Basarab (Development Officer), and Micheline Géronal and admin support from Rebecca Lee.

NOTE: Policy Briefings/Updates give EAPN members the latest information on policy developments and EAPN Actions on each area of EAPN Policy Work. Please pay specific attention to the items introduced by the following symbol , highlighting your action.

All EAPN documents, reports, position papers can be accessed on the EAPN website [www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu) > Publications section and in EAPN Members' Room.

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## 1. EUROPE 2020 AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

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All policy officers (Amana Ferro, Claire Champeix and Vincent Caron, with Sian Jones) contribute to this work, through the EU Inclusion Strategies group.

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

Following the decision by the European Council and Euro Group on the 8 and 9 December, to agree a new fiscal compact and Golden Rule, the Eurogroup and European Council have moved forward on enforcing balanced budgets or surpluses for the Eurozone and others enforcing tighter budget rules and sanctions with a new economic governance. The Commission has attempted to balance this approach with a renewed focus on growth and jobs, whilst continuing to enforce fiscal austerity, with no focus on reducing the social impact. The Commission has been preparing through bi-lateral meetings with the Member States their NRP's to be presented in Mid- April, including national job plans with a focus on youth, based on the revised guidelines.

#### Feb-March National Reform Programmes Updates

The Commission has been carrying out bi-lateral meetings with Member States in preparation for their National Reform Programmes and the Stability Programmes.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> January the Guidance for the National Reform Programmes was sent to Member States. This is not publically available – please see Members' Room. The NRP's should follow the Integrated Guidelines, the Annual Growth Survey priorities and the statements and Conclusions from the European Council. See paragraph below on Spring Council. Guidance is given that the NRPs should be developed in consultation with social partners and representatives of civil society, and in the follow-up (as relevant and in line with national practices...). The focus is on implementation also on the flagship initiative, with particular reference to Youth Opportunities Initiative and National Roma Integration Strategies. The deadline for submission was the 13 April.

Countries subject to Troika funding should provide information on the state of play and possible updates of their targets and Euro Plus Pact in a letter by the same date.

#### 15 March: Fiscal Compact runs into trouble

The new Fiscal Treaty is already in trouble, with threats to the ratification process from – Ireland (where a referendum will be carried out), in France – where the socialist candidate Francois Hollande has announced he wouldn't sign; in Germany and the Netherlands. Spain's opposition party has also supported Hollande's bid to rethink the fiscal pact. See [EURACTIV](#). However only 12 Euro-countries are needed to ratify the Compact, and countries that do not ratify will not be able to access the EU Stability Fund Mechanism.

### **13 March: ECOFIN Council backs Alert Mechanism and sanctions against Hungary**

The Council adopted Conclusions on the Commission's alert mechanism to detect macroeconomic imbalances – ie to support the surveillance of wage levels, deficit etc. It suspended 495.2 million EU for Hungary under the Cohesion fund and set 2012 as the target year to correct Hungary's deficit. It also adopted a decision adjusting the fiscal consolidation measures required for Greece, following an agreement by the Greek Government and the Troika. See [here](#).

### **02/03/2012: Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG)**

In the margins of the European Council meeting on 1-2 March 2012, 25 European leaders signed the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline and introducing stricter surveillance within the euro area, in particular by establishing a "balanced budget rule". The content of the treaty had been endorsed at the last European Council meeting in January.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012: Spring European Council endorses 5 priorities of the Annual Growth Survey, but gives priority to stability and growth**

The European Council continues to reinforce the need to balance fiscal consolidation with growth and jobs: "sustainable growth and jobs cannot be built on deficits and excessive debt level". It asserted the relevance of the 5 targets, including the poverty target but highlighted that the effort made so far "remains insufficient". It endorsed the 5 priorities established in the AGS.

- 1) Pursue differentiated, growth –friendly tax consolidation
- 2) Restore normal lending to the economy
- 3) Promote growth and competitiveness
- 4) Tackle unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis
- 5) Modernize public employment

However, the main focus is on employment. Member States are expected to elaborate National Job Plans in their NRPs, with a particular focus on youth unemployment, and the Council highlights the new Commission's Employment package. No mention is made of how to limit the social impact of the crisis.

See Council Conclusions [here](#).

### **Fiscal compact signed: Strengthened fiscal discipline and convergence in the euro area**

In the margins of the European Council meeting on 1-2 March 2012, 25 European leaders signed the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline and introducing stricter surveillance within the euro area, in particular by establishing a "balanced budget rule". The content of the treaty had been endorsed at the last European Council meeting in January.

→ [Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union \(TSCG\)](#)

→ [Press release - Strengthened fiscal discipline and convergence in the euro area](#)

→ [Speech by President Herman Van Rompuy](#)

The Euro group agreed a new package of support for Greece, with punitive terms, and an in principle agreement to raise the **EFSD/ESM to be agreed by April**.

See Statement of the Euro Area Heads of State [here](#).

### **21 February 2012: Council agrees 2<sup>nd</sup> Economic Governance package**

The European Council agreed 2 draft regulations aimed at strengthening economic governance: 1) a regulation for monitoring and assessing draft budgetary plans of Euro area members, particularly those subject to an excessive deficit procedure and 2) a regulation for enhanced surveillance of Euro members requiring financial assistance. This package followed up on the original package of 'six pack' of economic governance proposals agreed in November 2011. See [here](#).

### **15 January: EP Plenary adopts Marije Cornelissen's report on the employment and social aspects of the Annual Growth Survey**

The report, which EAPN inputted on, urges coherence in the follow up on Europe 2020 and delivery on the targets, and on the priorities in the AGS, with concern shown about priority 4 being only 1 social objective in 5. It emphasizes the need for concrete action on quality work, social protection and active inclusion and strongly backs the need for active stakeholder engagement at national level in Europe 2020.

### **30 January 2012: Barroso presents vision of Europe 2020 to Informal European Council**

Barroso highlighted the need to break out of vicious circles and to restore growth whilst confirming fiscal discipline, emphasizing the need for increased economic governance. The focus is on following up on country-specific recommendations from July 2011, and the Euro Plus Pact focussed on reducing wage levels, flexibilizing the labour market, reducing deficits, raising retirement ages. The new priority is Youth Unemployment in the Youth on the Move Pact (see Employment Section). See powerpoint presentation [here](#).  
See Europe 2020 Target delivery so far [here](#).

### **1<sup>st</sup> January – Launch of the Danish Presidency**

The Danish Presidency programme was launched, with 4 priorities. It is highlighted as an 'Austerity' Presidency, with a reduced programme of low profile events, and surprisingly little priority to social objectives.

- A responsible Europe
- A dynamic Europe
- A green Europe
- A safe Europe

See programme [here](#) and Danish Presidency Site [here](#).

### **22 December 2012: EU**

This Eurobarometer Study highlighted declining incomes and job situation across Europe, as well as decline in trust in EU and national institutions.

### **Coming up**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2012**, MS should submit their National Reform Programme Updates to the Commission.

**End of May 2012**: The Commission's review of the NRPs will propose country-specific Recommendations, to be endorsed by the **June European Council 28-29 June 2012**. **The EPSCO will take place on the 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2012** – Proposed date for the Irish Referendum on the Fiscal Compact.

EAPN has continued to lobby actively on Europe 2020, as well as the broader EU strategy on economic governance and fiscal austerity, deeply concerned about new developments related to the fiscal compact and punitive actions against the Troika countries.

**29<sup>th</sup> February: EAPN and EPSU (European Public Sector Union) wrote a joint press release** calling on the Ministers to demand an alternative economic policy, as an alternative to austerity. Involving:

- A new stimulus package with investment in public services and public infrastructure leading to green employment and sustainable development.
- Access to quality jobs and addressing precarious work.
- Strengthening social protection and minimum income to reduce poverty and improve social cohesion.
- Addressing inequalities through fairer taxation policies and a sharp focus on tax fraud and tax.

**22<sup>nd</sup> February: EAPN sends letter to Barroso in solidarity with Troika Countries and Press Release**

In the wake of the new 'bail out' package for Greece by the Troika, and building on a demand by the new EUIS group, EAPN wrote a letter to President Barroso and Heads of State to demonstrate solidarity with people not with markets. The letter called for 5 Actions. [See here](#).

**17 February: EAPN launches its Position Paper on the Crisis and alternatives: Re-engaging hope and expectations. See [here](#).**

The Paper is the finalized version of the discussion paper developed at EAPN's international Crisis Conference on the 23 September 2012.

**10-11 February 2012 – New EU Inclusion Strategies Group meets**

The first meeting of the EUIS group was held in Brussels, involving representatives from the 30 national networks and 23 European Organisations. The meeting focussed on exploring the national context and building agreement on a common project for advocacy and representation on national and EU anti poverty policy, in the context of Europe 2020, but within a reality where the commitment to civil dialogue is severely under threat. The group agreed to attempt to engage in 2012 with the NRP process and the Social Reports, and to review the outputs together, but warned that with the decline in democratic processes, many networks were increasingly unwilling to invest limited resources in meaningless engagement. The group agreed priorities for new Task Forces to work on a child poverty explainer, and Structural Funds tool kit for the new programming period, and an assessment/actions of impact on poverty of the Troika programmes. See Member's Room for documents and agenda/follow up.

**January 2012 EAPN Response to the Annual Growth Survey**

EAPN's response to the AGS – welcomed the new "social" priority 4, but argued it doesn't go far enough, and is undermined by the overarching austerity drive and punitive economic governance approach.

Key Messages:

- 1) Europe 2020 continues to be invisible in the AGS

- 2) New Social priority 4 is welcomed by undermined by EU's overarching austerity focus and priorities
- 3) Growth-friendly fiscal consolidation falls short of re-affirming inclusive growth
- 4) Tackling unemployment needs concrete measures to promote quality work and Active Inclusion, not hardening conditionality
- 5) Social consequences of the crisis cannot be reduced to unemployment not tackled without safeguarding social protection, AI and social investment.
- 6) Failure to mention participation undermines credibility of EU
- 7) Structural Funds fall short of potential to contribute to poverty target.

[See here](#).

EAPN Response to the Draft Employment Report: See Employment Section.

### 5 December – EAPN's Letter to Barroso prior to Annual Growth Survey

**See Press Release: Prioritize solidary and Inclusive Europe and Letter [here](#).**

See **Social Inclusion** section for work on the European Flagship Platform against Poverty and the Social OMC, as well as the poverty sections of the Employment Guidelines and the Employment Report (poverty issues).

See **Employment** Section for work on the New Agenda for Skills and Jobs Flagship and the Joint Employment Report (employment issues) and new Employment Package/Youth Unemployment.

See **Structural Funds** section for work on Structural Funds related to Europe 2020.

See the **Capacity Building** section for all the documents and tools developed for the Induction Training, which had a cross-cutting approach and covered all the policy work, including Europe 2020, Social Inclusion, Employment and Structural Funds.

See all the background notes, policy fiches and presentations [here](#).

### Coming up

☺☺☺: The new EU Inclusion's Strategies Group met on 10-11 February. The next meeting will be on the 4-5 May in Brussels. There will be a day workshop on the NRPs and Social Reports where we will analyse together how far they deliver on social inclusion and make Recommendations. The day will finish with an exchange with decision-makers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> day will give priority to agreeing how we work ( communication, organizing ourselves at national level, and capacity building) as well as deciding on new sub-groups and others ways of organizing during the meeting. We will also discuss follow up on the Task Forces and the Policy conference in September.

☺☺☺: **Members should have been trying to engage with their NRP and giving their input. Get hold of the final NRP and the National Social Report and analyse it according to the template prepared by the secretariat and group, in preparation for the May meeting. Think about possible Recommendations.**

## 2. OMC ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION / EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY

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EAPN group in charge: New EU Inclusion Strategies Group (EUISG)

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

The Commission held its **first stakeholder meeting of the EU Platform against Poverty 2012** in February, which reviewed the delivery on the first year and the Annual Convention. Most stakeholders were dissatisfied with the lack of obvious progress and the limitations of the Convention, and the little value apparently given to stakeholder involvement, at EU and national level. The Commission dropped the idea of developing a report assessing the role of the Social OMC, and the SPC has continued to seize the initiative following their own opinion, with the preparation of the **National Social Reports. These are being produced in a parallel process to the NRP and will feed into an SPC annual report (due at the end of the year)** into the Annual Growth Survey and the Spring Council Conclusions for 2013. Progress has continued on the Recommendation on Child Poverty, and a consultation on Active Inclusion has been launched. The next meeting of the Stakeholder Forum will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, when a programme for the Annual Convention should be presented, which will be held in December this year.

#### Child Poverty Recommendation delayed again

The SPC Ad Hoc group has continued to meet, in support of the Commission proposals to take forward the Recommendation. It will however, now not present its final opinion until the Autumn. It's unclear the reason for the delays. The SPC is under a lot of pressure with its engagement in the NRPs, and the new national social reports. It appears also that the Secretariat General is not particularly in favour of the Recommendation, because it diverts from their main messages. The Impact Assessment is being carried out and the Recommendation should be adopted in November/December or even into the Irish Presidency in January.

#### January 2012 - SPC Stakeholder consultation on Child Poverty finalized

The Ad-hoc group held a stakeholder consultation meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. EAPN responded to the consultation questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on 1) the EU added value of an EU initiative 2) the core principals and 3) implementation and monitoring mechanisms. EAPN responded to the questionnaire with its member. See EAPN contribution [here](#). (Contact Sian Jones for more details: [sian.jones@eapn.eu](mailto:sian.jones@eapn.eu))

#### March 2012 Active Inclusion Report – Stakeholder consultation

The Commission report on implementation is being progressed through national experts. A consultation process has now been launched, with the circulation of a questionnaire, to be returned to the Commission by the 13<sup>th</sup> of April. This 6 week period does not however fulfil



the minimum standards on consultation established by the European Commission. EAPN has prepared an input with its members – see Active Inclusion section.

### 1 Feb 2012- SPC report on Annual Growth Survey

The SPC endorsed its assessment of the AGS and highlighted priorities for action and political guidelines in 2012. Key points included the need to improve the quality of fiscal consolidation, responding to social need, mitigating inequalities through exploiting the potential of social protection systems and ensuring access to SSGI, the importance of adequacy and sustainability of social security and pensions systems and implementing Active Inclusion, and seizing the opportunities to deliver on poverty through ESF. The opinion also highlighted the vital role of Social Protection systems in creating high-value jobs in the health and social services sector and the dangers of shifting taxation from labour in terms of undermining financing of SP. [See here](#).

### 26 January 2012- 3<sup>rd</sup> Report on the Social Impact of the Economic Crisis and on-going fiscal consolidation 2011

The SPC adopted this fuller, 3<sup>rd</sup> assessment of the social impact of the crisis. The Key points highlighted: Increasing insecurity of the overall population, as seen the Eurobarometer Flash report in December 2011 on the social impact – with 80% of the EU population thinking that poverty had increased, and 32% finding increased difficulties in accessing services – particularly health and child care. Poverty and Social Exclusion (under the new indicators), has increased significantly –with nearly 2 million more people at risk (115.5 with 23.4% of the EU population). This includes 345.000 more in severe material deprivation, and 3 million more with low work intensity. 8.5% are suffering from in-work poverty. Key issues include the crucial role of social protection and assistance systems, the rise of indebtedness and access to housing, and growing inequalities. The main messages were the need to maintain the adequacy of income support to offset the effects of the crisis, act as automatic stabilisers and spur aggregate demand. Measures to tackle unemployment are undermined by lack of job creation and active inclusion, mitigating inequalities is key, particularly through ensuring access to services and social protection. See [here](#).

### Jan 2012 - SPC Work Programme 2012

The SPC confirmed its **Work Programme** for 2012, confirming the new sense of ambition and energy apparent in 2011, arising from the decision to strengthen the Social OMC and continue with parallel National Social Reports. The WP is divided into 5 sections:

- 1) **Structural Activities** – which include work on the OMC in context of Europe 2020, with the examination of the NRPs, NSRs and Recommendations; Active Inclusion implementation, input to pensions in a Pension Adequacy Report, preparing an opinion for the EPSCO. The SPC Annual Report on the Social Dimension of Europe 2020, will be published at end of 2012/beginning of 2013 and will continue its assessment of the social impact of the crisis, monitor the poverty target, the input of the OMC, including Peer Reviews.
- 2) **New Activities** – The SPC will start a working group on the financing of social protection systems, and also work on principles for active ageing, common work on the ILO Social Floor initiative with EMCO, and on the National Roma Strategy. They will also develop work on Beyond GDP; Homelessness and Housing Exclusion and Social Innovation and Experimentation.

- 3) **Continued work on** – Social Services of General Interest, Child Poverty and Pensions, but clearly getting a lower profile.
- 4) **Indicators Sub Group** – detailed work on the poverty indicators, preparing for the mid-term review in 2014.
- 5) **Working Methods** – Becoming more effective. Each Bureau members will take responsibility for a theme and task. They will also strengthen the co-working with EMCO and EPC.

See [here](#).

#### **Jan 2012 - Minimum Income Network Call re-launched**

The Commission decided to re-launch the tender, despite receiving two tenders (1 from EAPN and another). EAPN revised the proposal and re-presented. The offers have been opened by the Commission, but we are awaiting the decision.

#### **Social OMC PEER Reviews – 2012 Programme still not confirmed**

**The Peer Reviews for 2012 are still not officially confirmed and on the website. They will be presented on the Peer Review website shortly** – See [here](#). So far few countries have presented proposals, reflecting perhaps the current dismal context, and it continues to be dominated by the same countries (particularly BE/FR and Norway). The few proposals that have been made fail to pick up EAPN core priorities, so EAPN will find it difficult to get a place at the table. These include 1) BE – combating child poverty through means of social cultural participation; 2) BE – A global approach to better responses to chronic diseases, including affordability and accessibility; 3) FR – Social Economy; 4) Norway – Area-based policies in urban areas to ensure good living conditions for children and youth; PL – Innovative approaches to active ageing.

*Once the programme is confirmed and your country is down as contributing, you can contact your government officials to see whether you can participate as a non-governmental representative.*

#### **Network of Independent Experts: Programme for 2012**

No official programme is publically available, but the provisional programme of reports includes: **1) Analysis of National Reform Programmes and National Social Reports**. The experts will produce a quick flash assessment at beginning of May, and a full report for end of June. A key focus will be how far the concerns of the NSR are reflected in the NRP. The synthesis report will probably be made available, but not the national reports. **2) Active Inclusion implementation**. This should be finalized by the end of July, to feed into the Commission's Active Inclusion implementation Report in the Autumn. **3) Country profiles** for each country on key developments in poverty and social exclusion, and social impact – to help the SPC reports to be part of the Annual SPC report.

For more information on Independent Experts and reports, see [here](#).

### **EAPN activities**

#### **Engaging with the Flagship Platform Against Poverty, Social OMC**

EAPN has continued to try to participate actively in the Flagship Platform and the Social OMC and to press for national stakeholder engagement, but it has been an uphill task. The lack of transparency, limited contact and few events or stakeholder contact with the Commission has severely limited the potential for co-working.

- **6 February and 3 May 2012:** EAPN participated in the Commission's Stakeholder Meeting on the Flagship Platform in February, having discussed with the Commission member's feedback. EAPN will participate in May meeting (see above). EAPN attended the workshops on the Annual Convention, Active Inclusion and Social Innovation.
- **December 2011:** - EAPN responded with its members to the Consultation by the SPC on **Child Poverty and Well-being** – [See here](#).
- **12 April 2011:** EAPN responded with its members to the Commission's Consultation on **Active Inclusion Implementation**. See the Active Inclusion section.

#### Summary of other events/activities

- **26<sup>th</sup> January:** Greens/EFA Event on Social Protection Systems in the European Parliament, with Martin Hirsch, ILO and OSE – EAPN provided an input to this event.
- **9<sup>th</sup> February:** EAPN spoke at ENIL even supporting the resolution on the impact of austerity measures on people with disabilities.
- **27<sup>th</sup> February:** EAPN participated with EAPN EE in major conference on Learning for Well-being in Brussels.
- **1<sup>st</sup> March:** EAPN participated in interactive seminar/workshop on global perspectives on experience of poverty, organized by Oxford University, following up on its project on the impact of shame.
- **8<sup>th</sup> March:** EAPN participated in EPP event in the EP on Social Investment Pacts with key inputs from Franck Vandenbroucke.
- **19<sup>th</sup> March:** EAPN participated with EAPN DK in Presidency Event – Europe de l'infance in Copenhagen, exploring the pre-requisites for promoting children's rights and well-being, in the context of the UN and other International Right's frameworks.
- **12<sup>th</sup> April:** EAPN was invited to a meeting with Gabriele Zimmer, the new President of the GUE group, to discuss current developments and the GUE initiatives/resolution on the Greek situation. For more information on these events contact: Sian Jones – [sian.jones@eapn.eu](mailto:sian.jones@eapn.eu)
- EAPN has participated actively in the Social Platform initiatives and campaigns – particularly on the inputs to the SPC on the impact of the crisis and response to the AGS and in preparing this years work on Europe 2020. See [www.socialplatform.eu](http://www.socialplatform.eu).


#### 10-11 February 2012: EU Inclusion Strategies Group


The first EUISG meeting was held in Brussels with the participation of 30 national networks and and 5 European Organisations. The meeting tried to establish its common project for work together engaging in civil dialogue and influencing anti-poverty policy at national level and through the EU Social OMC and NRP process. However, the meeting highlighted the serious decline of meaningful dialogue at all levels, in a worsening social context. It agreed to attempt to engage in the NRPs and National Social Reports and other EU processes, this year, but to review the progress at the end of the year. The meeting also finalized its proposals for 3 Task Forces – see below, and its priorities for thematic work: Active Inclusion, Employment and Structural Funds, as well as its new Steering Group members: Sonja Lemkuil (NL), Paul Ginnell (IE), Sebastian Nastuta (RO). See minutes and all documents in [the member's room](#).

#### Coming up

 **4-5 May: EU Inclusion Strategies Group (EUISG) Meeting in Brussels**

The next EUISG meeting will start with an intensive workshop assessing together the NRPs and NSR's and developing common key messages and country-specific recommendations. We will then spend time to look at how we can work together better, deepen our discussion on sub-groups/and thematic work, and discuss the proposals for the EAPN conference on the 23-24 September. For all the agenda and documents – see on the member's room [here!](#)

 **Social OMC/National Social reports** – Members should get hold of their National Social Reports as well as their NRPs, by looking on their government websites and/or asking their SPC and/or social ministry representative. Then start to make their assessment according the background note prepared for the EUISG meeting. Talk to your networks about this process. It will be important to make Recommendations and think about how you can lobby on this at national level.

 **3 New EAPN Policy Task Forces will be starting shortly.** These Task Forces will work on a specific time-limited objective and output until the end of 2012. The EXCO agreed the selection from the nominations received from national and EO members, at its meeting on the 20-21 April. The Task Forces will focus on 1) Child Poverty and Well-being explainer (joint with Eurochild). 2) Structural Funds Tool Kit 3) Impact on poverty of Troika arrangements.

### Participation

Preparation has continued for the People Experience Poverty Meeting being organized with the Danish Presidency. A key challenge has been the change-over with new personnel working in the Commission on the event.

The event will take place on the 10 and 11<sup>th</sup> May, in the Egmont Palais. The agreed title is Homelessness and Housing Rights in Times of Crisis.

Several coordination and organizing meetings have taken place

**14 January 2012:** National Coordinators of People Experience Poverty meeting

**20 January and 22 February:** Organization Committee with the Commission.

For more information contact: Micheline Gerondal at [Micheline.Gerondal@eapn.eu](mailto:Micheline.Gerondal@eapn.eu)

## 3. ACTIVE INCLUSION

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EAPN Working Groups concerned: EU Inclusion Strategies Group.

## EU Policy developments

### Latest developments

#### 1 March

The European Commission is currently producing a report on the assessment of the implementation of the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation by Member States. Together

with other stakeholders, EAPN has been invited by the Commission to collect feedback from its members, in order to contribute to the assessment report. Members' answers from this survey will therefore be made into a summary report and sent to the European Commission. This input is very important, not least because the follow-up on the recommendation will also serve as guidance towards future directions in the field of active inclusion. The deadline for submitting replies to the European Commission was April 13<sup>th</sup>.

### 6 February

The European Commission held the first Stakeholder Forum of the Platform against Poverty of the new year. The full-day workshop involved around 100 stakeholders, mainly European NGOs and networks, but also representatives from social partners, think tanks, the World Bank as well as the EESC, CoR and the European Parliament. One of the three afternoon workshops was dedicated to Active Inclusion. EAPN attended and contributed to the entire event. Please click to see the [agenda](#) and [mandate](#) of the meeting.

### 13 January

The European Commission released a **Study on the Active Inclusion of Migrants**, looking specifically at access to social assistance and social services, and covering all EU Member States. Read more and download the full study [here](#).


## EAPN activities


### Latest EAPN activities

**9 April** – EAPN has prepared a draft response to the Active Inclusion consultation launched by the European Commission (to assess the state of play of implementation by Member States – see above) and has circulated it to members for input. A finalised contribution was sent to DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion on April 12th, and the consultation response will be available online, on the EAPN website, shortly.

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

### Coming up

 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, including through the NRPs, and make inputs to your SPC and EMCO representatives, as well as feeding back to the Secretariat.

**EAPN** is planning to organise a hearing in the European Parliament, dedicated to Active Inclusion and how to put in place integrated approaches. Watch this space for details, or contact the [Secretariat](#) for more information.

**EUROCITIES – NLAO** project: Over the period May-October 2012, each of the nine network partners (Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Krakow, Lille Métropole Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm) will organise a national workshop, informing national,

regional and local stakeholders of the main EU developments on Active Inclusion, and presenting the main findings and good practices identified in their research activities. Two study visits will be held, by the city of Bologna (looking at the important role of social economy, local associations and their relationship with the institutions in the implementation of AI policies) and the city of Rotterdam (looking at a territorial AI initiative, targeted at the Netherlands' most deprived urban area). Click [here](#) to download a leaflet with more information on the 2011 activities of the project.

*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 group in charge: EU Inclusion Strategies Group

### EU Policy developments

#### Latest developments

**18 April – The Employment Package is out!** DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion is following up on commitments made in the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (one of the 7 Flagship Initiatives under Europe 2020) with a Communication entitled *Towards a Job Rich Recovery*, accompanied by 9 Staff Working Documents. These are: Quality Framework for Traineeships; Exploiting the Employment Potential of the Personal and Household Services; Reforming EURES to meet the Goals of Europe 2020; Implementing the Youth Opportunities Initiative; Labour Market Trends and Challenges; Exploiting the Employment Potential of ICTs; Action Plan for the EU Healthcare Workforce; Exploiting the Employment Potential of Green Jobs. All documents can be consulted [here](#). For a quick overview, read the [press release](#) and / or the [Q&A](#). EAPN will be preparing a brief response in the upcoming weeks.

#### 26 March

**Informal Employment Committee/Social Protection Committee meeting**, in Copenhagen, Denmark. More details [here](#).

#### 20 March

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) released its annual report *Benchmarking Working Europe 2012*. You can download the report [here](#), and see more details about the launching event [here](#).

#### 27 February

**The Europe 2020 Summit - Unleashing Growth and Creating Jobs**, with the participation of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. More details [here](#).

### 17 February

Meeting of the **Council for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)** in Brussels. The agenda included the Europe 2020 Strategy, Conclusions on 2012 priorities for employment and social policies, presentation of the third report on the social impact of the economic crisis and report on macro economic imbalances (alert mechanism report), and the preparation of the Tripartite Social Summit. Please see [here](#) for more details.

### 9 February

Expert Conference organised by the Employment Analysis unit of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in order to launch the “**Employment and Social Development in Europe 2011**” report. Please see the agenda of the event [here](#), and the press release here [here](#) (for the full publication, scroll down till the end of the press release).

### 1 February

The **Employment Committee** announced its **2012 Work Programme** to the EPSCO. You can consult it, together with its policy priorities and detailed annexes, [here](#).

### 1 February

The EAPN Secretariat joined EAPN Ireland in a study visit to the European Institutions, and hence met with European Commission officials from **DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion**. For the purpose of this section, the most interesting exchange was with Manuel Hubert, in charge of the **European Agenda for Skills and Jobs**, who spoke to us about the follow-up to the initiatives presented in the Flagship. These are the highlights of this exchange:

- An “**employment package**” will come out at the beginning of April – as above.
- The planned **Communication on Lifelong learning** has been scrapped.
- He couldn’t tell us anything about the planned awareness campaign on EU social security coordination.
- He confirmed that the **review of the concept on quality work** is progressing, with work on the indicators (as indicated in the [last edition of this Policy Brief](#)).
- He confirmed that the social partners have begun negotiations on the **revision of both the Working Time, as well as the Posted Workers Directives**.
- The announced cooperation between employment services is taking place under the **PARES initiative** (see [previous Policy Brief](#) for details, or contact the [Secretariat](#)).
- The **EU Skills Panorama** is in preparation – an online tool, providing quantitative and qualitative information on supply and demand of skills, as well as matching. It will be online in October 2012. It will cover both the national and the EU level and provide labour market intelligence. The project will include the setting up of skills observatories, to better exchange information.
- The **European Sector Skills Council** is another initiative, which will bring together sector skills organisations, education and training providers, who will work together to define qualifications standards.
- The **European Qualifications Framework** will operate as a kind of a “translating” device for national qualifications.
- The Commission is looking at how to use the potential of migrants’ labour force, especially the high-skilled. The **European Blue Card initiative**, which facilitates access to the European labour market especially in fields meeting tensions, is still being transposed

by Member States. The Commission to enter into infringement procedures in some cases.

- However, on the proposed new **Agenda for Integration of Third Country Nationals**, it is now DG Justice leading. There is no rush from Commission to push on these issues, because it is a sensitive topic in the context of the rise of unemployment in the EU.

### 19-20 January

The **peer review on public employment services** and effective services for employers, as part of the PES to PES Dialogue programmes of the European Commission for Public Employment Services in Europe, was held in Paris. See more information [here](#).

### 10 January

**The Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review:** December 2011 is out! Read an overview of results [here](#) (at the bottom of the hyperlinked page you will find the link to the full report).

### 20 December 2011

The European Commission has launched the **Youth Opportunities Initiative**, in an effort to curb ever-rising youth unemployment. Please see the press release [here](#) (at the bottom of the hyperlinked page you will find the link to the full communication). You can also read EAPN's analysis on the communication, by clicking [here](#) (password 1515 for the Members' Room, page 21).

### December 2011

The **Mutual Learning Programme under the European Employment Strategy** has released its synthesis report for 2011, entitled "Working towards the employment targets and priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy". It can be consulted [here](#).

### Coming up

#### Mutual Learning Programme of the European Employment Strate

**26-27 April – Activation measures in times of crisis: the role of public works**, Riga (Latvia), Peer Review

**24-25 May – Extending Working Life: The tripartite cooperation and the role of the Centre for Senior Policy**, Oslo (Norway), Peer Review

**11 June** - Thematic Review Seminar, in Brussels, focused on employment policies to promote active ageing. The title will be confirmed when the agenda is finalised later this spring.

The activities for Autumn 2012 will be announced when the work programme is finalised.

#### Danish Presidency of the European Union

**23-24 April – Informal meeting of Ministers for Employment, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)** in Horsens, Denmark. More details [here](#).

**26-27 April – Youth: Employment and Inclusion in Times of Crisis.** Conference taking place in Horsens, Denmark. EAPN will have two delegates to this event. More details [here](#).

**9-11 May – New Skills event** in Copenhagen, Denmark. More details [here](#).

**29 May – Bi-annual EURES Working Party**, in Copenhagen, Denmark. More details [here](#).

**18 June – Conference on Education in Entrepreneurship**, in Horsens, Denmark. More details [here](#).



**21 June** – Meeting of **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council** (EPSCO) in Luxembourg. More details [here](#).

*For a full list of the Danish Presidency events, as well as additional information, please consult the Presidency website [here](#).*

#### **Other events**

**3 May** – EAPN, together with the Scotland House in Brussels, is organising a screening of the **EAPN short film *Pathways to Work. Unlocking a Door to Active Inclusion*** (watch [here](#)). The event will benefit from the presence of some EAPN members from National Networks, and will challenge local authorities and regional offices in Brussels to a debate on how to ensure positive activation at the local level, as part of wider, integrated Active Inclusion strategies.

#### **10-11 May**

The **peer review on public employment services and older workers**, as part of the PES to PES Dialogue programmes of the European Commission for Public Employment Services in Europe, will be held in Nürenberg. See more information [here](#).

### **EAPN activities**

#### **Latest EAPN activities**

**29-30 March** – EAPN attended, for the third consecutive year, the annual conference of the **Joint Social Conference**, a venture bringing together trade unions, social movements and NGOs in a collective effort to find sustainable and inclusive alternatives to the crisis and its aftermath. The EAPN delegation comprised 4 Secretariat staff and 3 representatives of National Networks. EAPN coordinated a workshop dedicated to Decent Wages and Adequate Minimum Income, and intervened in both the opening and the closing plenary. Director Fintan Farrell presented EAPN's paper [Re-engaging Hope and Expectations – Getting out the Crisis Together – Alternative approaches for an inclusive recovery](#). Please access the alliance's [website](#) to view videos from the event (including Fintan's speech – first from top), the Final Declaration of the event, the agenda and other supporting documents.

**16 February** – EAPN sent its response to the Draft Employment Report to the Employment Committee and Social Protection Committee (EMCO and SPC), prior to their discussions on their opinion on the Annual Growth Survey 2012. EAPN's responses build on EAPN and its members' assessment of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Reform Programmes of the Europe 2020 Strategy: [Deliver Inclusive Growth – Put the heart back in Europe! \(EAPN Analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes\)](#). (October 2011).

Our key messages on the draft Joint Employment Report:

- 1) Support overarching multidimensional, integrated national strategies to fight poverty and social exclusion, developed in the National Social Reports to underpin the NRP and EES.
- 2) Active Inclusion needs a higher profile and be better mainstreamed into the EES.
- 3) Make employment a real route out of poverty for those who can work.
- 4) Prioritize a comprehensive approach to the different needs of all vulnerable groups.
- 5) Raise the profile of Structural Funds in the fight against poverty and unemployment.

You can read the full response [here](#). For addition reading, you can find the draft Joint Employment report, as released by the European Commission, [here](#), and, for a detailed analysis of the Annual Growth Survey Package, see the documents [here](#). To find out more

about the Annual Growth Survey and EAPN's response, please consult the Europe 2020 section of this Policy Brief.

**9-10 February** – First meeting of the new EU Inclusion Strategies Group, in Brussels. Although no employment items featured on the agenda per se, employment (especially for youth) was deemed a priority by members attending. A subgroup on this topic might start operating in the EU ISG – a detailed discussion on this will take place at the next meeting. Employment will continue to be a significant topic to monitor in the larger framework of the work EAPN is carrying out on Europe 2020 (review of National Reform Programmes and National Social Reports, follow-up on the Flagship Initiatives etc). Please see more information on the meeting [here](#).

**December 2011** – The EWG finalised its short video on activation policies, entitled *Pathways to Work. Unlocking a Door to Active Inclusion*. The 20-minute film illustrates positive and negative activation practices in Belgium, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom. The movie has been screened at the first meeting of the EU ISG and at the Social Platform, and other public screenings are being organised for the Spring. You can watch it [here](#).

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

#### **Conferences attended**

**12 April** – The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EuroFound) and the European Parliament organised a conference dedicated to “Quality of work and employment: a policy tool towards an inclusive and sustainable growth”. Please see more details about the event [here](#).

**27 March** – The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) organised a seminar dedicated to Working Conditions surveys. You can access all presentations of the event [here](#).

**20 March** – Two events dedicated to youth unemployment took place in the same day in the European Parliament. One, organised by SOLIDAR and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, was entitled “Young People and the Search for Decent Work” (see details [here](#)). The other one, organised by the European People's Party, and benefitting from the presence of Commissioner László Andor, was entitled “Youth Employment: potential for Europe - boost it or lose it?” (see details [here](#)).

**15 March** – The AGE Platform Europe, member of EAPN, organised, in the framework of the European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, a Thematic Seminar on Age-Friendly Labour Markets and Social Protection Systems (in partnership with the Committee of the Regions). See [here](#) for more details.

**18-19 January** – EAPN was present at the opening conference of the European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, held in Copenhagen, under the auspices of the Danish Presidency. The event had a strong labour market component and focused mainly on how to raise retirement age and retain people in employment for longer. Please see [here](#) for agenda, presentations and videos from the event.

## Coming up

☺☺☺ Based on your responses to the Questionnaire on Quality Work, a core team and the Secretariat are currently drafting a **Quality Jobs and Employment** explainer. A first version will be circulated before the summer, and your input will be requested at that time.

☺☺☺ A second draft of the **In-Work Poverty position paper** will also be circulated around the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, and you will have two weeks to send us your feedback.

☺☺☺ 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](#).

☺☺☺ Get in touch with your representative in the EU ISG and support the upcoming analysis of the National reform Programmes and National Social reports! (to be carried out at the next meeting, May 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, in Brussels).

## 5. STRUCTURAL FUNDS

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EAPN group in charge: Structural Funds Working Group

## EU Policy developments

### Latest developments

**14 March** – Following the [Cohesion Policy proposals](#) of 6<sup>th</sup> October, and to help Member States prepare for the next programming period, the Commission presented on 14 March 2012 the "Common Strategic Framework" (CSF). It is intended to help in setting strategic direction for the next financial planning period from 2014 to 2020 in Member States and their regions. It will enable a far better combining of various funds to maximise the impact of EU investments. National and regional authorities will use this framework as the basis for drafting their 'Partnership Contracts' with the Commission, committing themselves to meeting Europe's growth and jobs targets for 2020.

Comments on the CSF may be sent to the European Commission by e-mail ([REGIO-CSF@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REGIO-CSF@ec.europa.eu))

Staff Working document on the Common Strategic Framework: [Part I](#) - [Part II](#)

**13 March** – The Council adopted a decision suspending EUR 495,2 million in scheduled commitments for Hungary under the EU's cohesion fund, taking effect as of 1 January 2013. This corresponds to 29% of scheduled commitments for 2013. This unprecedented decision follows the Commission's repeated warnings to Hungary urging it to step up its efforts to end the country's excessive government deficit. However, the Council agreed to return to the matter at its meeting on 22 June with a view to lifting the suspension of Hungary applies the necessary corrective measures. For more information, please click [here](#).

**1 March** - The European Commission published country factsheets outlining the progress of individual Member States in meeting their agreed targets under the Europe 2020 Strategy. The factsheets give the state of play in various themes under the three headline targets of the Strategy: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. The factsheets will be used as a support in the negotiations on the next period of EU cohesion funding (2014-2020). They place each country in a European perspective by measuring performance and comparing to the EU average, as well as the best and the worst performers in the Union.

Each fact sheet shows the country's national target, the EU target and the highest and lowest targets adopted by other countries. In addition, it measures how far that country is from the target it has set itself and compares this to the EU and the most and least ambitious country.

These factsheets are based primarily on data from [Eurostat](#), but also from the [Joint Research Centre](#), the [European Environmental Agency](#), the World Bank and other sources. The targets have been collected from official documents. In some cases, absolute targets have been translated into relative targets to allow for a cross country comparison. If you want to see your Country factsheet, please click [here](#).

**8 February** - The European Commission has published a practical guide to 'EU funding Opportunities for Research and Innovation (including Social Innovation). This new edition covers all EU Structural Funds and 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programmes, Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development, European Fisheries Fund, Lifelong Learning Fund and LIFE+ in the field of the environment). The following EU funding instruments:

This updated Practical Guide allows potential beneficiaries to quickly identify exactly how they can access European funding at any stage of a project. The guide is available [here](#).

**30 January** - Following an agreement at the January European Council, the €82 billion of EU structural funds still to be allocated to projects is to be quickly examined to ensure that it is effectively mobilised to support economic growth and job creation. In particular the remaining funding will be examined to see if it can have a greater impact on tackling youth unemployment and providing support for small businesses.

Member States accepted a proposal from President Barroso to examine the plans for the unallocated European Social Fund resources to help finance training and work experience opportunities for young people. The Commission will now work with the national authorities and social partners from the eight EU countries with the highest youth unemployment rates (Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ireland) to ensure that existing plans are accelerated and reinforced where possible.

Member States also endorsed proposals to review, accelerate and redirect European Regional Development funding in support of job creation by small businesses. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises have created 80% of all new jobs in the EU over the last five years. These decisions follow on from a series of actions that the European Commission has taken to ensure that structural funds help EU countries to improve growth prospects and counter the effects of the economic crisis, including:

- Increased of co-financing
- Advances for the countries hardest hit by the crisis
- Reprogramming and simplification of procedures
- Access to finance for SMEs

For further information, please click [here](#).

### Coming up

- **End of the first quarter of 2012:** publication of the EC proposal of European Code of Conduct on the partnership principle.
- **24 April:** Meeting of General Affairs Council
- **26 June:** Meeting of General Affairs Council

## EAPN activities

### Latest EAPN activities

**2 April** – EAPN together with 7 of its EOs (Eurodiaconia, Eurochild, FEBA, FEANTSA, Caritas Europa, Red Cross/EU Office, ENAR) sent a letter to Social Attachés of Permanent Representations to urge them to support the continuation of the EU Food Aid Programme for the most deprived after 2013 while asking not to do so as a replacement of the a social, long-term and sustainable strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion. EAPN calls Member States not to include the Food Aid Programme into the 20% of the ESF earmarked for social inclusion but rather to have a specific regulation. For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

**15 March** – EAPN sent a letter urging MEPs of the EMPL Committee to support the proposed 20% of the ESF for social inclusion and poverty reduction. For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

**12 March** – EAPN released its detailed [Response to the Commission's package on Cohesion Policy 2014-2020](#) and sent it to EU officials in the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. EAPN also sent a [letter to Directors General in charge of Cohesion Policy](#) in all EU Member States as well as its proposals for amendments on each the Structural Funds' Regulations to MEPs (all accessible in EAPN Members' room).

**8 March** – EAPN participated in a Stakeholder Meeting on the legislative package for the Future of Cohesion Policy. This was a opportunity to present the draft EAPN Proposals for amendments to the shadow Rapporteurs on the General Regulation as well as the ESF and ERDF Regulations. For more information, please ask the Secretariat.


**29 February** – EAPN attended the hearing on the ESF draft Regulation organised by EMPL Committee. For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

**26 January** – EAPN was invited to speak at an Exchange of views with representatives of European social partners and non-governmental organisations on the future of the ESF during the EMPL Committee meeting. It was the first opportunity for EAPN to outline to the MEPs our key messages on the ESF Draft Regulation. The summary Report is available [here](#).

### Coming up

**Beginning of May** – Launch of the EAPN Campaign to defend the proposed 20% of the ESF ring-fenced for social inclusion.

**Mid-June** – Publication of the leaflet on Structural Funds and Social.

 The Members of the EU ISG are invited to:

- Use and publicise the EAPN Response to the Commission's legislative proposals on Structural Funds and follow up with their Ministries and Managing Authorities
- Use and disseminate the EAPN proposals for amendments to their MEPs as well as the EAPN template letter for MEPs and SPC Members.
- Get engaged in the EAPN Campaign to support the 20% of the ESF ring-fenced for social inclusion
- Give their final comments to the final version of the Leaflet on Good practices of social inclusion through Structural Funds updated after the September meeting.

## 6. SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST

### EU Policy developments

**20 December 2011** - Commission adopted the Almunia Package. This is a revised package of EU state aid rules for the assessment of public compensation for services of general economic interest (SGEI).

**All social services become exempted from the obligation of notification to the Commission**, regardless of the amount of the compensation received. **The services concerned must meet 'social needs as regards health and long-term care, childcare, access to and reintegration in the labour market, social housing and the care and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.'** Previously only hospitals and social housing were exempted.

The new package consists of four instruments that will apply to all authorities (national, regional, local) that grant compensation for the provision of SGEI:

- A new **Communication**, clarifying basic concepts of State aid, which are relevant for SGEI, such as the notions of aid, SGEI, economic activity, convergence between public procurement procedures and absence of aid, etc.
- A revised **Decision**, exempts Member States from the obligation to notify public service compensation for certain SGEI-categories to the Commission. The exemption is extended from hospitals and social housing to a much wider range of social services and a lower compensation threshold applies for triggering notifications for other SGEI activities. The notification threshold was lowered from €30 million to €15 million.
- A revised **Framework** for assessing large compensation amounts granted to operators outside the social services field. Those cases have to be notified to the Commission and may be declared compatible if they meet certain criteria. The new rules introduce, in particular, a more precise methodology to determine the amount of compensation, a requirement for Member States to introduce efficiency incentives in compensation mechanisms, the requirement to comply with EU public procurement rules and equal treatment of providers of the same service for determining compensation. Moreover, the Commission may require Member States to adopt measures to reduce the anticompetitive effects of certain compensations that present a particularly strong potential for distorting competition in the Internal Market.
- A new proposal for a **de minimis Regulation**, providing that compensation below a certain threshold does not fall under state aid scrutiny, is expected to be adopted in the spring of 2012, after a final round of consultation.

The new legislative package (the three already adopted texts) can be found [here](#).

### EAPN activities

**2 April** – The EPSU Water Campaign was presented to the Commission as one of the first European Citizens’ Initiative. EAPN is being involved in this initiative as supporting NGO. The Commission then has 2 months to consider whether it comes within the Treaty base. EPSU is assuming it will get the go ahead quickly and is planning an official launch of the campaign to collect signatures on the 24<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **Aim of the campaign**

This campaign is a tool to commit the EU and Member States to implement the human right to water and sanitation. It is a tool to change the mind-set in the European Commission from a market-based approach with the focus on competition to a rights-based approach with the focus on public service. It aims to achieve universal (global) access to water and sanitation and to safeguard the limited public water resources for future generations.

The 3 main goals:

1. Guaranteed water and sanitation for all in Europe.
2. No liberalisation of water services.
3. Universal (Global) access to water and sanitation.

#### **Launch of the Right2Water website**

[The new Website for the campaign](#) was launched last week. This gives all the details of the campaign. Once it is agreed by the Commission after the launch (24<sup>th</sup> April approximately), people will be able to sign up to support the campaign.

They have just uploaded the leaflets/material in different languages on this page: <http://water.ttp.eu/material>, which is to be used for dissemination of the campaign.

#### **EAPN engagement**

- We have become official partners to the campaign with our logo and quote from Ludo Horemans. See the bulletin Splash [here](#).
- Mathias Maucher from EPSU spoke to the EXCO in February, and encouraged members to be involved at a national level. We have sent them the list of EXCO members so that they can contact you about national mobilisations.
- At EU level we will be part of an EU supporters advisory

**29 March – Joint Social Conference** - EAPN participated in the workshop on defending public services and public goods. In this workshop, the impact of macro-economic decisions taken at EU level on the provision of quality and affordable public services has been dealt with as well as the greek case. For more information, please click [here](#)

#### **29 March – Kick-off meeting of the London Forum Working Group on Vulnerable Consumers**

The setting up of this working group was decided during the 2011 London Citizen’s Energy Forum with the aim to establish a more regular and structured consultation process on those

issues by gathering all relevant stakeholders (energy providers, energy regulators, Ministers in charge of energy, Social NGOs, Consumers' organisations).

The 2 main tasks of this working group will be to:

- An overview of the implementation in each EU Member State of their obligations regarding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Energy Package

- A better understanding of the drivers of vulnerability and how MSs tackle these drivers?

The next meeting will be held in Brussels on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.

The next London Citizens' Energy Forum will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of November.

For more information, please ask the Secretariat.

***EAPN Participation in the DRIVERS project on health inequalities.***

## **7. EUROPEAN YEAR ON ACTIVE AGEING AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS 2012**

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2012 has been declared, by the European Commission, the European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. This is the official website of the Year: <http://europa.eu/ey2012/>.

### **Latest developments**

The European Year comprises three strands:

- **Employment** (mainly focused on providing incentives so that older people remain active for longer on the labour market)
- **Participation in Society** (on how to continue to contribute and participate in society after retirement)
- **Independent living** (about healthy ageing and empowerment of older people to remain in charge of their own lives for as long as possible).

There is no specific budget or calls for proposals for this European Year. You can read [here](#) more about how to get involved and what other funding is available.

Check out this [interactive map](#) and click on a country to find out what activities are being developed in that country, in relation to the European Year. See [here](#) for the authority in your country responsible for the implementation of the Year.

Find [here](#) useful promotional materials (logo, multimedia, goodies for the press).

Access [here](#) the special briefing, packed with useful information on the European Year, prepared by AGE Platform Europe.

### **March**

Within the *generations@school* project, schools are invited to organize a *generations@school* day, sometime around 29 April, the **European Day of Solidarity**



**between Generations**, to bring older people into the classrooms, to explore with the pupils how a better society for old and young can be built. The pupils will listen to the stories of the older people and the older people to the dreams and fears of the younger. Together they will reflect on what they could learn from each other and on what they could do together for a better future. The *generations@school* project encourages all sorts of intergenerational activities and events in schools – discussions between the older people and the pupils, games, artistic activities like drawing, theatre, music and handicrafts works etc. On the projects' website, especially set up for *generations@school*, schools can share their experiences and images (photos, drawings) on a map of Europe. By doing so, their project(s) will participate in a European competition. In each country, one outstanding *generations@school* project will be awarded a prize. And every participating school or class will receive a participation diploma to thank all teachers and students for their engagement and their solidarity!

For more details on this project, please visit <http://www.historypin.com/gats/en/> (including a pedagogical resource kit, helping teachers in their preparations, available in all 23 EU languages). You can also contact [generationsatschool@paueducation.com](mailto:generationsatschool@paueducation.com).

### EAPN activities

EAPN is a member of the [NGO Coalition for the delivery of the European Year](#), coalition led by the AGE Platform Europe (EAPN member). In this capacity, EAPN has been present at a series of planning meetings throughout 2011, and has attended relevant events. You can read more about the Coalition, its objectives, past and future activities, and outcomes [here](#).

#### Publications of the Coalition

- *Intergenerational Solidarity – The Way Forward. Proposals from the NGO Coalition for a 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity* (read [here](#)).
- *2012 – Everyone has a role to play* (read [here](#)).
- *Manifesto for an Age-Friendly European Union by 2020* (read [here](#)).
- *Roadmap towards and beyond the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012* (read [here](#)).

#### Key dates and events

**18/19 January:** EY2012 opening conference in Copenhagen (details [here](#)).

**January/February:** National opening conferences

**14 February:** Forum on EY2012 organised by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels (details [here](#)).

**March:** Media conference "Reporting on ageing and solidarity between generations" in Brussels

**7 April:** World Health Day on Health and Ageing

**29 April:** European Day of Solidarity between Generations (promote intergenerational encounters in schools around in the weeks before and after 29 April)

**4 June:** Conference on "Good governance for Active and Healthy Ageing" in Brussels

**19/20 September:** UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Vienna

**1 October:** International Day of Older People

**4 November:** European Demography Forum

**November:** Award Ceremony in Brussels

**December:** Closing conference in Cyprus

#### **Other events**

24/02/2012:

**[First progress report on Germany's age-friendly work environments](#)**

23/02/2012

**[The Committee of Regions celebrates a Forum on the European Year 2012](#)**

21/02/2012

**[The Joseph Rowntree Foundation launches a website celebrating old age](#)**

21/02/2012

**[Slovenia launches the European Year and presents its seven National Ambassadors](#)**

17/02/2012

**[Estonia presents its activities for the European Year 2012](#)**

15/02/2012

**[Opening of European Year for Active Ageing in Sweden](#)**

15/02/2012

**[Norway joins the celebration of the European Year for Active Ageing](#)**

13/02/2012

**[The 'Get Involved'! conference launches the European Year events in Poland](#)**

10/02/2012

**[President Michael D Higgins opens the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations in Ireland](#)**

09/02/2012

**[Launch of the European Year in the Slovak Republic](#)**

08/02/2012

**[The Federal Minister of Family Affairs opens the EY2012 in Germany](#)**

07/02/2012

**[Latvia presents its Good Will Ambassadors for the European Year 2012](#)**

07/02/2012

**[Denmark launches European Year 2012](#)**

02/02/2012

**[Poland dedicates website to the EY2012](#)**

16/02/2012 - 16/02/2012

**[Launch of the European Year 2012 in Slovenia](#)**

24/10/2012 - 25/10/2012

**[Conference "Towards active ageing at home \(age@HOME\)](#)**

07/10/2012 - 07/10/2012

**[The Day and the Week of the Elderly in Finland](#)**

13/08/2012 - 17/08/2012

**[Celebrating diversity: The 8th World Congress on Active Ageing](#)**

09/07/2012 - 11/07/2012

**Generations Ageing Together**

26/06/2012 - 29/06/2012

**2012 World Conference on Active Healthy Ageing and Technology**

24/06/2012 - 27/06/2012

**21st Nordic Congress of Gerontology - Dilemmas in Ageing Societies**

06/06/2012 - 09/06/2012

**The EDEN 2012 Conference**

28/05/2012 - 01/06/2012

**IFA 11th Global Conference on Ageing - Ageing Connects**

23/05/2012 - 23/05/2012

**ESIP European Conference 2012**

13/05/2012 - 16/05/2012

**Networked regions and cities in times of fragmentation: Developing smart, sustainable and inclusive places'**

08/05/2012 - 10/05/2012

**Creating a New Old - A global conference**

03/05/2012 - 05/05/2012

**German Senior Citizens Day**

19/04/2012 - 19/04/2012

**European Joint Action on Healthy Life Years meeting**

07/04/2012 - 07/04/2012

**World Health Day: Ageing and health**

03/04/2012 - 03/04/2012

**Conference of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing: "From Plan to Action"**

19/03/2012 - 21/03/2012

**Perspectives on Ageing: High-level Conference on Health and Long-term Care**

07/03/2012 - 07/03/2012

**International conference: "Promoting active ageing and intergenerational solidarity – an integrated approach – challenges for Poland"**

07/03/2012 - 07/03/2012

**Launch event of the European Year 2012 in Belgium**

06/03/2012 - 06/03/2012

**UK launch event of the European Year**

05/03/2012 - 05/03/2012

**Seminar on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations**

05/03/2012 - 05/03/2012

**"Get involved!" opening event of the European Year in Hungary**

02/03/2012 - 02/03/2012

**Opening of European Year for Active Ageing in Romania**

02/03/2012 - 02/03/2012

**Central European Good Practice Fair: Promoting active ageing at local level**

02/03/2012 - 02/03/2012

**Launch event of the European Year 2012 in Bulgaria**

02/03/2012 - 02/03/2012

**Launch of the European Year 2012 programme in Greece**

01/03/2012 - 01/03/2012

[European Year opening event in the Czech Republic](#)

29/02/2012 - 29/02/2012

[Austrian Opening Event for the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations](#)

28/02/2012 - 28/02/2012

[European Year launch event in Portugal](#)

28/02/2012 - 28/02/2012

[European Year launch event in France](#)

28/02/2012 - 28/02/2012

[Regional and local initiatives promoting healthy and active ageing](#)

27/02/2012 - 27/02/2012

[Luxembourg inaugurates the European Year with the Get Involved! event](#)

14/02/2012 - 14/02/2012

[EY2012 Opening Conference in Estonia](#)

14/02/2012 - 14/02/2012

[Forum of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels](#)

09/02/2012 - 09/02/2012

[Launch of European Year in Ireland](#)

09/02/2012 - 09/02/2012

[European Demography: any opportunities?](#)

08/02/2012 - 08/02/2012

[European Year 2012 launching event in Poland](#)

08/02/2012 - 08/02/2012

[Youth@Work at the European Job Day, University of Turku, Finland](#)

08/02/2012 - 10/02/2012

[Launch of the European Year 2012 in Sweden](#)

07/02/2012 - 07/02/2012

[Get Involved! - Slovak Republic European Year opening event](#)

06/02/2012 - 06/02/2012

[EY2012 Opening Event in Germany](#)

05/02/2012 - 05/02/2012

[Kiel Volunteering Fair](#)

03/02/2012 - 03/02/2012

[Opening event of the European Year 2012 in Latvia](#)

24/01/2012

[Invitation for Journalists: Become a part of the EY2012 Media Network](#)

17/01/2012

[New European website on Healthy Ageing](#)

17/01/2012

[Eurofound launches new Information Pack on Active Ageing](#)

13/01/2012

[Europeans ready for 'active ageing', new survey says](#)

11/01/2012

[Active Ageing online in Denmark](#)

13/08/2012 - 17/08/2012

[Celebrating diversity: The 8th World Congress on Active Ageing](#)

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