

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING NATIONAL REPORTS ON STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Introduction

Following the agreement of the SPC, the Council and the European Council on the streamlining of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the Member States are now charged with translating the common objectives into National Plans for each of the three areas of Social Inclusion, Pensions and Health and Long Term Care. These plans, which should cover the period 2006-2008, should be submitted to the Commission in the form of a National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion by 15 September 2006.

The following guidelines represent an informal agreement between Member States and the Commission on a common approach by Member States to preparing their National Reports. Such a common approach has been agreed in order to maximise the value and effectiveness of the Open Method, in particular as a vehicle for exchange and mutual learning and as a means of reinforcing the interplay between the Open Method and the Lisbon Strategy on Growth and Employment.

The National Reports should therefore address the specific challenges of the three pillars of social inclusion, pensions and healthcare and long-term care, while drawing out high-level and summary messages across the sector as a whole. The National Reports will consist of four parts. Part 1 will be a Common Overview containing an assessment of the social situation and a presentation of the overall strategic approach. Parts 2 to 4 will consist of thematic plans which cover the three pillars. Each will serve as a national plan for the specific policy field. However, as the reports to the Commission are intended to be synthetic and focussed in nature these are likely to draw on more detailed national plans or strategies. Where appropriate, Member States may wish to attach these as annexes.

In bringing together the three pillars into a streamlined process it has been agreed that it will be important to respect the specificities of each strand and to take account of the rather different characteristics and stages of development of each while also building on progress made to date. In practice this means that for 2006-2008 the current National Action Plans for inclusion will be maintained but within the framework of the National Reports. It is also envisaged that they will be more concise with an enhanced focus on being strategic, setting priorities and policy implementation. For pensions the current role of setting out the strategy for the modernisation of pension systems to meet current and future challenges will continue. However, since Member States presented comprehensive and forward looking strategies for pensions in 2005, the submission for the 2006-2008 period will be very light. The first strategies for health and long-term care will focus on identifying key issues where mutual exchange and learning can take place. Reflecting these differences the guidelines outlined below vary significantly for each strand.

While the National Reports will reflect the diversity of situations and policy priorities at national level, some degree of coherence is necessary as regards their structure and

contents in order to reflect the common objectives that have been agreed and facilitate their use in a process of mutual learning. It is thus proposed that Member States draw up their plans according to the common framework outlined in the subsequent parts of these guidelines. Member States are invited to report on all 4 parts of the framework and thus on all the Common Objectives. However, within different parts, some Member States may choose to combine the reporting on two or more objectives while making it clear how the measures proposed will address all the different objectives. Also, while covering all objectives they may choose to emphasise certain of them.

To ensure synchronization and consistency across Member States the following practical arrangements are proposed:

- **Submission date:** The National Reports should be submitted not later than 15th September 2006.
- **Size:** Their size should be no more than around 40 pages divided as follows:

Part 1 Common Overview	5-7 pages
Part 2 National Action Plan on inclusion	10-15 pages
Part 3 National Strategy Report for Pensions	3-5 pages
Part 4 National Strategies for Healthcare and Long-term care	10-15 pages

However, Member States may wish to include annexes elaborating in more detail the report on the social situation in part 1 and on particular aspects of one or more of their three plans. In the case of social inclusion the EU-10 Member States may also wish to include an annex reporting on the implementation of their 2004-2006 NAPs/inclusion, as the EU-15 did in 2005.

- **Language:** In order to assist the process of preparation of the joint report and to facilitate dissemination across Member States, Member States are asked to submit their National Reports in two languages, one of which at least should be a working language of the Commission.

Part 1 – Common Overview

1.1 Assessment of the Social Situation (2 pages)

It is suggested that this section gives a synthetic overview of the economic, social and demographic context that needs to be taken into account when setting priorities and developing policies in relation to social protection and social inclusion. Major trends, new and emerging challenges, the key immediate and long-term risk factors and the main groups at risk can be identified. Progress in relation to country-specific challenges identified in the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion could be reported here. Information on the baseline social policy situation and trends thereof can be provided, from which the extent of any new or strengthened policies can be determined.

Member States are invited to support this section with relevant statistics and indicators with particular focus being given to monitoring changes over time and differences between different demographic/socio-economic groups of the population. The Union's commonly agreed indicators should be used. Where appropriate, these can be supplemented with indicators based on national data, highlighting national specificities in particular areas of social exclusion and poverty that are not covered by the common indicators, helping interpret the latter and/or measuring policy effort. Member States are encouraged to break down all statistics and indicators wherever possible by sex and age. It must be noted that the list of common indicators may eventually be streamlined in the light of ongoing work in the Indicators Sub-Group on the streamlined objectives.

Member States are encouraged to complement the synthetic overview with more detailed analysis and detailed tables in an annex.

1.2 Overall Strategic Approach (about 4 pages)

In this section the overall strategic approach to modernising social protection and social inclusion policies followed during the period 2006-2008 can be presented. The section should be prepared by reference to the three common overarching objectives (see Appendix 1). It will also be important to show the mutually reinforcing nature of the strategies adopted under these objectives and the Member States' National Reform Programmes and how these approaches will contribute to achieving the objective of greater social cohesion.

The informal EPSCO meeting in Villach agreed that the visibility of the streamlined process in the social field should be enhanced. Such visibility could be enhanced by emphasizing the mutual strengthening of economic, employment and social policies. It is thus suggested that in relation to objective (b) Member States indicate examples of such mutual strengthening. In order to increase the potential for comparisons and mutual learning, it would be helpful if this mutual strengthening could be illustrated by at least one example taken from the fields of child poverty, social inclusion of migrants and minorities, longer working life (including entry to and exit from

the labour market) or flexicity¹. Member States might also identify here how social inclusion policies and the modernisation of pensions, health and long term care interact and contribute to achieving the overarching objectives. As appropriate, Member States can include cross-references to the Lisbon NRPs rather than duplicating their reporting.

Without prejudice to the possibility of merging reporting on different objectives within a single chapter, Member States are invited to address each of the three overarching common objectives in turn.

Objective (a): Here Member States may outline their strategy for ensuring that social inclusion policies and social protection systems contribute to a high level of social protection, social cohesion and equality between men and women and equal opportunities for all while being efficient and sustainable.

Objective (b): Here Member States may outline what strategy will be used to ensure that pension reform, health and long term care and social inclusion policies and the strategy for growth and jobs mutually reinforce each other. The two way relationship may be covered:

- first, the way social inclusion policies, pension reform, health and long term care will enhance the strategy for growth and jobs; and
- second, how the growth and jobs strategy is actively delivering on the objective of greater social inclusion and positively influences the accessibility, quality and sustainability of the provision of pensions and health and long term care.

As noted above, the Commission encourages Member States to illustrate these two points with examples drawn from the fields of child poverty, the inclusion of migrants and minorities, longer working lives and flexicity.

Objective (c): This sub-section should provide an overview of the overall approach to good governance adopted by Member States, particularly in relation to objectives a) and b). It then should identify similarities and differences between the approaches adopted by the different strands. These could relate to issues such as: increasing transparency of decision making; ensuring good coordination between different parts of the system and different levels of governance; strengthening the involvement of and consultation of stakeholders such as social partners, NGOs, patients' associations and people

¹ For instance, it would be useful if Member States could report on how social protection systems support the right balance between flexibility and security, and review recent or any planned reforms to the systems from this viewpoint. Similarly, how measures to tackle child poverty involve actions to support the increased participation of lone parents in the labour market or how social inclusion measures supporting the integration of immigrants lead to increased participation in employment might be highlighted. As working longer makes a decisive impact on adequacy and sustainability of pensions, Member States could elaborate on how pension reforms improve incentives to work longer and how labour market reforms open up opportunities for older workers.

experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the design, implementation and monitoring of policy; and improving information to citizens both about the OMC overall but also in relation to rights and entitlements in relation to the three pillars.

In this sub-section Member States are also encouraged to outline what arrangements are or may be put in place to monitor and evaluate the overall implementation of policies reported in the National Reports and in particular to assess their impact on moving towards the overarching objectives over the two-year period, as well as any targets that have been set in the strategy, be they based on the commonly agreed indicators or national (input- or output-related) indicators. In this context, Member States are encouraged to make use of any relevant and robust independent research in this area.² While Member States will develop monitoring and evaluation arrangements appropriate to their own situations it is important to remember that results of policy evaluation is of fundamental importance to support the exchange of learning and good practice between Member States.

1.3 Overarching Messages (about 1 page)

In this section Member States can draw-out from the plans for the three pillars the main high level and summary messages across the social protection and social inclusion sector as a whole. It could particularly draw attention to synergies between the three pillars and their contribution to the overarching objectives.

² Monitoring and Evaluation: guidelines will be developed by the Commission to facilitate a common approach to arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the National Reports.

Part 2 – National Action Plans for Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

The National Action Plans for social inclusion (NAPs/inclusion) are the social inclusion pillar of the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion. They should present the key priorities in Member States' efforts to promote greater social inclusion and to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion. Many Member States may draw them from more detailed national plans on poverty and social exclusion which may be attached as an annex if so wished. Member States are invited therefore to be forward looking and to set out new or additional policies or programmes rather than just report on existing actions. However, existing policies and programmes will provide an important context. Thus ensuring complementarity and synergies between existing and proposed actions will be an important element.

In preparing their NAPs/inclusion Member States are also encouraged to take account of lessons from implementing previous rounds of NAPs/inclusion. These particularly relate to improving implementation, ensuring an integrated and multi-dimensional approach, enhancing co-ordination with other strategies, increasing the strategic focus, improving mainstreaming and strengthening governance arrangements.

Implementation gap: The assessment of the NAPs/inclusion process to date has clearly identified an implementation gap between what Member States have committed to in common objectives and the policy effort to implement them. The revised social inclusion objectives are consistent with and build on the original objectives defined at Nice and Laeken. They are intended to assist Member States to be more selective and focused in identifying the most urgent national objectives that need to be achieved if the overall EU level objectives are to be achieved. This in turn is likely to help Member States to develop more focussed and strategic plans which will lead to more effective implementation and better monitoring and evaluation of the actions.

Increase strategic focus: The NAPs/inclusion will have a clearer strategic focus by identifying a small number of key priorities which reflect as appropriate the seven key policy priorities identified in the 2005 and 2006 Joint Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.³ Member States are invited to set clear specific quantified targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, as requested initially by the Barcelona European Council, and for the outcomes of the implementation of their key priorities. They are encouraged to take account of anti-discrimination measures and mainstream gender at each stage of the plans, in the identification of challenges, the design, implementation and assessment of policies, the selection of indicators and targets and the involvement of stakeholders. It will also be important to keep in mind

³ These are: to increase labour market participation, modernise social protection systems, tackle disadvantages in education and training, eliminate child poverty and enhance assistance to families, ensure decent housing and tackle homelessness, improve access to quality services (health and care services, life long learning, financial services, legal advice services, transport...) and to overcome discrimination and increase the integration of people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and immigrants (first and second generation).

the need to ensure a balance between measures to prevent poverty and social exclusion arising and to alleviate those situations that already exist.

Integrated and multidimensional approach: A key learning point from the NAPs process to date is the importance of developing an integrated and multi-dimensional approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. Thus Member States are encouraged, while developing a more focussed approach, to also maintain a multi-dimensional approach. In particular they might ensure this in three ways: first, by selecting key objectives on the basis of a multi-dimensional analysis of the situation; second, by developing a multi-dimensional set of actions to achieve each of the strategic objectives⁴; and, third, by ensuring that arrangements are or will be put in place to mainstream social inclusion into other relevant policy domains (see below).

Co-ordination with other strategies: It will be particularly important to ensure that there is a good coordination between the preparation of the NAPs/inclusion and the National Reform Programmes on growth and employment so that each reinforces and complements the other. It will also be important to ensure that there is a good coordination between the preparation of the NAPs/inclusion and the reports on pensions and healthcare so as to increase synergies and to avoid overlap. In this regard it is suggested that the NAPs/inclusion could only address questions of healthcare and long-term care or pensions in so far as they affect those people or groups who are most vulnerable and at risk of poverty and social exclusion and who need additional support to be able to access mainline provision. In other respects these areas can be addressed in the pensions or healthcare strands rather than in the NAPs/inclusion. Cross-references to relevant reforms in line with the Education and Training open method of coordination (Education and Training 2010) and to the Youth Pact could also be made when appropriate. In particular the NAP might identify measures that will be undertaken to implement the Youth Pact action line concerning vulnerable young people, particularly those in poverty, and initiatives to prevent educational failure. This is particularly important given the pace of demographic change.

Improve mainstreaming: The NAPs/inclusion need to be better integrated with the general policy approach in Member States and to indicate how poverty and social exclusion objectives are concerned in other relevant policy areas. Instruments such as poverty proofing and impact assessment could be used. The NAPs/inclusion need to be linked as appropriate to budgetary decision making, including by giving consideration to how the Structural Funds can support the implementation of measures under each priority objective.

Strengthen governance: The governance of policies and practices to combat exclusion is of vital importance and needs to be strengthened. Thus it will be important for the NAPs/inclusion to take into account the regional and local dimensions while respecting the different distribution of competencies in different Member States and to involve regional and local authorities in their preparation, implementation and monitoring of their plans as appropriate. The NAPs/inclusion might also highlight and support the development of local and regional action plans in countries where

⁴ e.g. if an objective was to reduce child poverty a MS might indicate how employment, income support, health, social services, housing, education, transport, cultural, sport and recreation, legal, anti-discrimination and other policies will contribute to achieving the objective.

these have been developed. Member States are invited to outline what forms of dialogue they are using to ensure the involvement of as broad a range of actors as possible, in particular social partners, NGOs and social service providers and people experiencing poverty, in all stages of the development, implementation and monitoring of the process. They are also invited to show how arrangements and capacity to monitor and evaluate the policies have been put into practice and, where appropriate, strengthened. Member States are encouraged to use the preparation of the NAPs/inclusion as a means of increasing awareness of and debate about poverty and social exclusion issues both amongst the general public and amongst policy makers and practitioners, including national parliaments;

STRUCTURE FOR THE NAPs/INCLUSION

Section 2.1 – Key Challenges, Priority Objectives and Targets (3-4 pages)

Member States are invited to identify the 3 or 4 priority policy objectives that they will pursue during the course of the 2006-2008 NAPs/inclusion and which they think will best contribute to achieving Common Objectives (d) and (e) agreed by Member States. Without repeating the analysis in the first section of the report, they are requested to explain and justify why these particular objectives have been selected.

In selecting and justifying these key objectives it is recommended that Member States take into account:

- the overall assessment of the social situation in the Common Overview of the National Reports and the latest available data on poverty and social exclusion, including giving especial consideration to the position of particularly vulnerable groups;
- the experience of implementing their previous NAPs/inclusion;
- an assessment of the extent to which progress has been made in relation to the key challenges on social inclusion identified in their country fiche in the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.
 - an assessment of which of the seven key policy priorities already identified by the process are most relevant to their national situation and to the prevention and alleviation of poverty and social exclusion.

Member States are invited to set clear specific quantified targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion by 2010, with, as appropriate, interim targets for the period covered by the plan. These could draw as appropriate on the work of the Social Protection Committee on commonly agreed indicators and on the discussion on indicators and targets in the Report commissioned by the Luxembourg Presidency on Taking Forward the EU Social Inclusion Process. They could also draw on national or sub-national data when this better reflects those aspects of poverty and social exclusion that are a priority for a Member State. Member States are encouraged to disaggregate targets by age and sex whenever data is available and this is relevant. (see Appendix 1 on target setting). Member States may also want to supplement overall national targets with targets at sub-regional level where appropriate.

Sections 2.2 – 2.4/2.5 Priority Policy Objectives 1 to 4 (2 pages each)

(The numbering of these chapters will vary depending on whether a Member State selects 3 or 4 priority objectives)

It is suggested that for each priority objective identified Member States identify the following key elements:

Policy measures: in this sub-section Member States are invited, first, to outline the key existing measures that will contribute to achieving the priority objective selected and any significant modification they propose to make to them so as to enhance their impact and effectiveness; secondly, to identify any major new/additional policy measures that will be introduced to achieve the objective; thirdly, to specify how a gender perspective has been taken into account, in particular by assessing where appropriate the implications for both men and women of the policy measures proposed.

Indicators and monitoring arrangements: In this section Member States are invited to specify what indicators will be used to monitor progress towards the achievement of the objective and the specific arrangements to be put in place for the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of actions and for assessing their impact in achieving the objective. They are encouraged to use the commonly agreed indicators developed by the Indicators Sub Group of the SPC wherever possible and, when appropriate, to supplement them with national indicators.

Resource allocation: In this section Member States are encouraged, first, to indicate what level of additional resources, including European Structural Funds, are envisaged to achieve the objective; secondly, what agencies (national, regional or local) will be responsible for implementing measures and how their efforts will be co-ordinated.

In identifying policy measures Member States are encouraged to take into account the importance of a multidimensional approach and thus the contribution that can be made by a range of different policy domains (economic, employment, education, social, environmental and cultural)⁵ to achieving the policy objective set (see the NAPs/inclusion planning tool in Appendix 2). It will also be important to take into account measures to fight discrimination on grounds of sex, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. In identifying specific actions it will be important to achieve a balance between measures to prevent poverty and exclusion arising and to redress the situation where it does exist.

Section 2.5/2.6 – Better Governance (2-3 pages)

This section should be structured around the third of the social inclusion common objectives agreed by Member States. Drawing on the section in good governance in Section 1.2(c), it should set out in detail the arrangements that the Member States intend to implement over the two-year period to strengthen their overall institutional arrangements to support policies and measures to eradicate poverty and social exclusion.

⁵ The range of policy domains in the original social inclusion objectives agreed at the Nice and Laeken European Councils provide a useful framework in this regard.

To facilitate exchange and learning it is suggested that this chapter should have five sub sections as follows:

Preparation process: In this sub-section Member States are invited to give a brief description and assessment of the process which was followed to develop the Member State's 2006-2008 NAP/inclusion. In particular this could explain what arrangements were made to involve all actors (including social partners and NGOs) and to promote administrative co-ordination in their preparation and give details of all those involved.

Policy coordination: In this sub section Member States are, first, invited to outline what arrangements are already in place to co-ordinate and integrate social inclusion policies across all relevant policy domains and to ensure that all levels of government (national, regional and local) are involved. Where inclusion policies are mainly the responsibility of regional authorities, these arrangements might comprise the provision of national monitoring. Secondly, they are encouraged to specify what new or additional arrangements will be put in place during the period of the plan.

Mobilisation and involvement of actors: In this sub-section Member States are encouraged, first, to summarise what arrangements are already in place to ensure the mobilisation and involvement of relevant actors, including people experiencing poverty in the process on an ongoing basis; secondly, to specify what new or additional arrangements will be put in place during the period of the plan.

Mainstreaming: In this sub-section Member States are invited, first, to identify what arrangements are already in place to mainstream social inclusion in all relevant public policies (economic, employment, education, social, cultural and environmental) and in the Structural Funds; secondly, to specify what new or additional arrangements will be put in place during the period of the plan.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements: In this sub-section Member States are invited to specify what arrangements are or will be put in place to monitor and evaluate the overall implementation of the plan and to assess its impact on eradicating poverty and social exclusion. They could outline how the range of actors will be involved in the process on an ongoing basis and the extent to which independent research is being used to feed into this monitoring and evaluative process.⁶ Such arrangements may assist Member States when they come to prepare a report in 2008 on the implementation of their 2006-2008 plan.

Annex 2.1 – Good Practice

In this section Member States are invited to give a detailed presentation of a few (not more than four) examples of good practice drawn from policy measures or institutional arrangements. It is suggested that examples selected are key policies or pilot projects that have been evaluated and have demonstrated important lessons for policy making or cover a key institutional arrangement relevant to some aspect of the third of the social inclusion common objectives. It is helpful when presenting examples to illustrate not only what has been done and the outcome but also how it has been done. It is also particularly useful to include details of any monitoring or evaluation results which are available as this will support the dissemination of good

⁶ See footnote 2 above

practice among other Member States. In relation to the support provided by the SEP programme (in the future PROGRESS), it would be useful to specify whether those examples are inspired by the peer review exercises and/or could be worth feeding into such reviews at European level.

Annex 2.2 – Implementation Report on 2004-2006 NAPs Inclusion (or voluntary light updates from EU-15 covering developments during 2005-2006) (20-30 pages)

The EU10 Member States may wish, on a voluntary basis, to attach an Annex describing and analysing the implementation of their 2004-2006 NAPs/inclusion. In any case such an analysis is likely to be a necessary part of the preparation of their 2006-2008 NAPs/inclusion. Such an annex might cover both an overall assessment of progress made in achieving the objectives, priorities and targets that were set for the period in question and an examination of how the policy measures and institutional arrangements proposed in the plan have been implemented in practice. The guidelines used by EU15 in preparing their Implementation and Update Reports on their 2003-2005 NAPs/inclusion may be helpful in this regard.

Other Social Inclusion Annexes

Some Member States may wish to attach more elaborated NAPs/inclusion they have developed and which have provided the basis for selecting the priorities included in this plan. Others may wish to elaborate in more detail on some aspect of their work on poverty and social exclusion that they think will be of interest to other countries.

Part 3 - National Strategy Report for Pensions

Given that National Strategy reports on pensions were delivered in the summer of 2005, and that a synthesis report has been produced by the Commission services on adequate and sustainable pensions (adoption expected February 2006), reporting on pensions in 2006 should be very light in nature.

3.1. Updating the 2005 National Strategy reports

In this section Member States are invited to give updates if there have been any relevant changes since the 2005 National Strategy report. In this case, there should be a short description of the main changes and how they aim to achieve the relevant pension objectives, according to the structure below. References to the National Reform Plan on growth and employment showing how these changes have been taken up in this context will be useful. In their reporting, Member States are invited to use the commonly agreed EU indicators where appropriate in the relevant sections.

3.1.1. Responding to objective (g)

How the new measures allow, for example, retirement incomes for all, or allow to maintain, to a reasonable degree, living standards in retirement.

3.1.2. Responding to objective (h)

How the new measures aim to ensure sustainability, for example by ensuring longer working lives, or improving the balance between contribution and benefits, or ensuring the security of funded and private schemes.

3.1.3. Responding to objective (i)

How the new measures respond to societal and structural change. How new measures improve system transparency and information to citizens.

3.2. Focussing on specific issues

More generally, if countries feel it is of relevance to report developments, it would be useful to focus their contribution on the key issues identified for further work in the synthesis report on adequate and sustainable pensions, namely:

- design of minimum income provisions for older people (including the link between pensions and other benefits provided to people in retirement);
- the strengthening of the link between contributions and benefits (enabling a life cycle approach to pensions, that has to be reconciled with non contributory credits and gender issues);
- the link between the flexibility in the age of retirement and longer working lives ;

- key issues in the development of private pensions (efficient legal framework, (in)equality in coverage, security, information, transition costs, contribution private pensions can make to financial sustainability) ;
- developing regular review and adjustment mechanisms.

Part 4 – National Strategies for Health and Long Term Care

INTRODUCTION

In its Opinion on the Commission's Communication on the Streamlining of the OMC on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the SPC agreed that the plan for health and long-term care will focus on identifying issues on which mutual exchange and learning can take place. This working arrangement takes account of views expressed in the Member States' preliminary policy statements 2005 and in the Commission's subsequent synthesis paper. Member States agreed that the streamlined OMC can usefully be applied to this area to stimulate policy development, highlight common challenges and facilitate mutual learning. The agreed Common Objectives for the streamlined OMC are presented in Appendix 1 of this document.

STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHCARE & LONG-TERM CARE

It is suggested that the National Strategies for Healthcare and Long-term care should be 10-15 pages long. Given that this is the first time that formal reporting on healthcare and long-term care is carried out, Member States may wish to provide more descriptive material on systems and practices, including statistical information. This could be done in an Annex 4.1.

In the reporting, Member States are invited to use the commonly agreed EU indicators where appropriate in the relevant sections. Note that a minimum set of common indicators is to be agreed in the ISG meeting 19th of May. They are encouraged to mention if and how national objectives or targets have been set, and what national indicators are used to monitor progress. They could also report on any specific arrangements to be put in place for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of actions.

The National Strategies for Healthcare and Long-term care can build on the previous National Preliminary Statements on Healthcare and LTC⁷ and possibly also on the replies to a questionnaire that EU15 Member States submitted in 2002. This should facilitate the drafting of the 2006-2008 strategies. When preparing for and when drafting the national strategies, the national SPC members are strongly recommended to be in close contact with their national colleagues that take part in the High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care.

Section 4.1 – Summary, covering both healthcare and LTC. (2 pages)

In this section Member States are invited to give a short overview of key developments and policy trends in the healthcare and long-term care fields, and of how social protection measures interact to translate the common objectives into national policy. They are also encouraged to give an overview of the national

⁷ see Review of Preliminary National Policy Statements on Health Care and Long-term Care 2005 at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soical_protection/health_en.htm

challenges, objectives and planned policies and to review the interaction between the healthcare system(s) and the long-term care services.

To ensure consistency it would be useful to report on progress made with respect to the challenges identified in the country fiche in the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006.

The Member States could point to interesting national experiences from policy measures or institutional arrangements, described in more details in an Annex 4.2 – Good Practice Examples. (See below)

The national strategies could identify the 3-4 most important strategic policy issues where European actions could bring the most added value to the policy developments. This would be important for planning the horizontal work within the OMC. The eight key policy issues for further work described in the concluding section of the synthesis document could be used as reference (see footnote 7).

Section 4.2 - The Healthcare section. (4-6 pages)

4.2.1 - Brief description of the healthcare system(s)

A short, broad description of the healthcare system(s), including the responsibilities at Member State, regional and/or local level, will facilitate the understanding of the information in the sections that follows. More extensive descriptive material on systems and practices, including statistical information, can be provided in Annex 4.1.

4.2.2 - Priority policies related to Common objective (j)

In this section Member States are encouraged to look at policies in place to ensure universal access as well as equity in access to care, e.g. for various groups. The key dimensions seem to be age, gender, socio-economic groups and geographical regions. One factor of particular interest is the use and effects of patients' co-payments for healthcare services. This section may report on issues such as coverage of population by public and private arrangements and, if applicable, on policies to promote insurance coverage.

4.2.3 - Priority policies related to Common objective (k)

In this section Member States are encouraged to report on how social protection systems contribute to promoting quality. One key issue identified in the preliminary statements is how social protection systems encourage healthcare services to adapt to changing needs and preferences, e.g. to the growing importance of primary care and preventive activities. A second important issue relates to patients involvement, choice and information.

4.2.4 - Priority policies related to Common objective (l)

In order to ensure access for all and sustainability, a key angle is improving governance of a very complex system. Thus in this section Member States are invited to report on how they intend to improve governance. This would include coordination between different providers and care systems, the relation between those which finance health care and users and providers, the review of incentive structures for users and providers. It could also reflect about experiences with cost control strategies

and mechanisms. Promoting health and active life styles are important as part of a sustainability strategy in a broader sense, as well as the question whether human resources for the care sector are and will be available.

Section 4.3 - Long-Term Care (4-6 pages)

4.3.1 - Brief description of the systems for long-term care

A short, broad description of the relevant systems, on national, regional and/or local level, can be given here to facilitate the reader's understanding of the information in the sections that follows. This could be used to report on the approach taken to develop the long-term care, including distribution of responsibilities, financing and provision and priorities given to different types of care. It would be useful to briefly describe how the various systems are interacting with each other and with the healthcare system(s), and how this interaction is developing. More extensive descriptive material on systems and practices, including statistical information, can be provided in Annex 4.1.

4.3.2 - Priority policies related to Common objective (j)

In this section Member States are encouraged to look at policies in place to ensure equity in access to long-term care, e.g. the coverage by age groups, gender, socio-economic groups and geographical regions. One factor of particular interest is the use and effects of different payment provisions, including the arrangements for providers, users and carers. It would also be of interest to highlight ongoing and planned modernisation of social services for disabled persons of all ages, having in mind that the modernisation should promote access to affordable quality care services.

4.3.3 - Priority policies related to Common objective (k)

In this section Member States are invited to report on national strategies for quality promotion. It can also show how the LTC is being adapted to changing needs and preferences of the concerned persons for different types of care and to the growing importance of preventive activities and rehabilitation. This section could be used to show how support is given to people to enable them to stay at home as long as they wish.

4.3.4 - Priority policies related to Common objective (l)

In this section Member States can review the provisions in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of LTC systems. This could include a review of the basic financing provisions and related reforms. This section could also set out how good governance contributes to ensuring that adequate and high quality long-term care remains affordable and sustainable, for instance through care coordination and incentives for different actors to use resources efficiently.

Recommended Annexes

Annex 4.1- Descriptive material on healthcare and long term care systems and practices

Experience shows that some Member States may wish to provide additional, more detailed, information than foreseen in the structure outlined above. This is most welcome to be submitted in Annexes 4.1.x.

Annex 4.2 – Good Practice Examples

This annex could give a detailed presentation of a few examples of good practice drawn from policy measures or institutional arrangements. In selecting examples Member States are encouraged to select those for which monitoring or evaluation results are available as this will support the dissemination of good practice among other Member States. Examples selected should be of key policies rather than of individual or pilot projects, or should cover a key institutional arrangement relevant to some aspect of the common objectives. Examples should illustrate not only what has been done and the outcome but also how it has been done.

Supporting Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Common Objectives

The overarching objectives of the OMC for social protection and social inclusion are to promote:

- (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 with the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy;
- (c) good governance, transparency and the involvement of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policy.

The following objectives apply to the different strands of work:

A decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by ensuring:

- (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, both 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.

Adequate and sustainable pensions by ensuring:

- (g) adequate retirement incomes for all and access to pensions which allow people to maintain, to a reasonable degree, their living standard after retirement, in the spirit of solidarity and fairness between and within generations;
- (h) the financial sustainability of public and private pension schemes, bearing in mind pressures on public finances and the ageing of populations, and in the context of the three-pronged strategy for tackling the budgetary implications of ageing, notably by: supporting longer working lives and active ageing; by balancing contributions and benefits in an appropriate and socially fair manner; and by promoting the affordability and the security of funded and private schemes;

- (i) that pension systems are transparent, well adapted to the needs and aspirations of women and men and the requirements of modern societies, demographic ageing and structural change; that people receive the information they need to plan their retirement and that reforms are conducted on the basis of the broadest possible consensus.

Accessible, high-quality and sustainable healthcare and long-term care by ensuring:

- (j) access for all to adequate health and long-term care and that the need for care does not lead to poverty and financial dependency; and that inequities in access to care and in health outcomes are addressed;
- (k) quality in health and long-term care and by adapting care, including developing preventive care, to the changing needs and preferences of society and individuals, notably by developing quality standards reflecting best international practice and by strengthening the responsibility of health professionals and of patients and care recipients;
- (l) that adequate and high quality health and long-term care remains affordable and financially sustainable by promoting a rational use of resources, notably through appropriate incentives for users and providers, good governance and coordination between care systems and public and private institutions. Long-term sustainability and quality require the promotion of healthy and active life styles and good human resources for the care sector.

Appendix 2 - Setting Targets

Barcelona Conclusions

The conclusions of the Barcelona European Council invited Member States "to set targets, in their National Action Plans, for significantly reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2010". This is an important recommendation as setting targets can contribute significantly to the impact of the NAPs/inclusion. Setting targets that are appropriate to their own situation is a matter for each Member States. However, many of the factors that need to be taken into account in the process of setting targets are common to all. This appendix outlines some of the considerations that Member States may find useful to take into account in selecting targets for the social inclusion strand:

Importance of Targets

Setting targets is important for a number of reasons. In particular targets can be:

- a significant political statement of purpose and ambition in terms of eradicating poverty and social exclusion which can lead to increased policy effort;
- a goal against which to measure progress and thus a means of creating a dynamic process characterised by openness and accountability;
- a tool for promoting awareness of the process and thus for encouraging and mobilising all actors in support of it;
- a focal point around which to concentrate the efforts of policy makers and practitioners.

Types of Targets

In the various rounds of NAPs/inclusion prepared by the Member States three distinct types of targets were used. The first were concerned with the **direct outcome** of policy in terms of the reduction in poverty and social exclusion in a key policy domain (i.e. unemployment, low income, poor housing/homelessness, educational disadvantage, poor health). They included targets such as achieving specified reductions in overall income poverty levels or for specific groups such as children or reducing the number of long-term unemployed. The second type of targets were **intermediate outcome targets** which if achieved may play an important role in reducing poverty and social exclusion. These include things such as increasing the number of people in employment by a specified amount or reducing the number of welfare recipients, or decreasing the number of unhealthy years of life by a specified percentage and so on. The third type of targets were **input targets** which were more concerned with policy effort such as increasing the number of homeless assisted, ensuring that all immigrants can participate in an integration programme, ensuring that all socially excluded people are assisted by social services within one year, et cetera. Although setting **direct outcome** targets should be the first priority intermediate outcome targets can be an important complement. When input targets measuring policy effort are used, monitoring of progress towards them needs to be accompanied by an assessment of their impact on social exclusion and poverty.

Characteristics

Experience suggests that for targets to be useful they need to have a number of characteristics. They need to be:

- **ambitious** but **achievable**: targets need to imply significant progress but should also be realistic;
- **relevant**: achieving the target should contribute significantly to meeting a key objective;
- **intelligible**: targets need to be understandable and to make sense to the average person;
- **quantified and measurable**: a target should be specific and the data should be available to measure whether it is being achieved.
- **time specific**: the period of time over which it is intended that the target should be achieved should be specified.

Multi-dimensionality

Given the complex and multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion it can be useful to have targets that cover a number of key dimensions. The main policy domains identified in the common objectives such as employment, income adequacy, housing, healthcare and education are a useful guide in this regard. However, the decision on whether or not to set a target in any particular domain will obviously depend on the seriousness of the problem for the Member State concerned.

Number

For targets to make a political impact and to contribute to awareness raising and mobilisation of actors it is worth considering selecting just a small number of **headline or global targets** for poverty reduction by 2010, the target date set at Lisbon and referred to in Barcelona. However, a series of more **detailed targets** might then be included as these can be important for monitoring progress towards the more global targets. These might cover very specific aspects of policy or specific target groups. Also, while long-term targets are important, it can be useful to set a number of **short-term** or intermediary targets that can be used to assess progress towards the long term goal from one plan to the next.

Comparability and the Commonly Agreed Indicators

An important dimension of the Union's social inclusion process is to allow comparisons and the exchange of learning between Member States. It would thus be very helpful if Member States made use of the commonly agreed indicators as appropriate when setting their national targets. In addition some Member States might make use of the common indicators to help them to benchmark their performance against other Member States. Thus a Member State could decide to use the average performance of the three best performing Member States on a particular indicator to set a benchmark of what it wants to achieve.

Gender

The importance of promoting equality between men and women in all aspects of the fight against poverty and social exclusion should be taken into account when setting targets. This might involve disaggregating global targets by sex where appropriate and setting specific targets for either men or women or selecting gender gaps where there is a very significant difference in poverty outcomes in general or on some specific aspect of poverty and social exclusion.

Regional and Local

The regional and local levels are also important when it comes to setting targets. In some Member States policy responsibility for key aspects of the fight against poverty and social exclusion is primarily at a regional level. Thus regional targets can be a useful complement to national targets and can be one approach to addressing significant regional variations in the scale and intensity of poverty and social exclusion and for focussing attention on areas of multiple disadvantage.

Statistical Infrastructure

Ultimately the setting of targets and indeed the use of indicators to monitor progress depends to a great extent on the availability of relevant and timely data. Thus, as well as setting targets in their NAPs/inclusion, Member States may wish to identify gaps in existing data and to stress the need to further develop their statistical infrastructure.

Appendix 3 – NAPs/inclusion Voluntary Planning Tool

A key learning point from the EU's social inclusion process to date is that the main poverty and social exclusion challenges facing Member States tend to be multi-dimensional and require a response that cuts across and integrates many different policy areas. Thus, in identifying the policy measures they propose to implement to achieve each objective they have set for their NAPs/inclusion, Member States are encouraged in the guidelines "to take into account the importance of a multidimensional approach and thus the contribution that can be made by a range of different policy domains (economic, employment, social, environmental and cultural) to achieving the policy objective set."

Some Member States have indicated that they would find it helpful to have a planning tool such as the one below when they are preparing their plans. Whether or not Member States use it is entirely voluntary. The intention is to assist those developing strategies to ensure that each key objective is approached in a multi-dimensional way. It should be used in a flexible manner appropriate to national situations and it is not expected that all domains in the grid will be relevant for all objectives. However, it could be helpful to consider the possible relevance of each domain for each objective.

The grid also includes a number of other rows and columns to cover other elements in the draft guidelines such as:

- input and output targets
- indicators to be used for monitoring
- new or additional resources allocated
- agencies responsible for implementation.

Priority Objective:

e.g. Eliminate Child Poverty **or** Ensure Inclusion of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities **or** Reduce Homelessness
or Increase Access to Employment of Vulnerable Groups **or** Reduce At-Risk-of-Poverty Levels

Input or Output targets	Indicators to measure progress		Policy Measures										
			Employment	Economic	Income: tax, social protection	Education & Training (incl. ICT)	Housing, Environment & Basic Services	Health & Social/Family Services	Culture, Sport & Leisure	Transport	Financial & Legal Services	Non Discrimination ⁸ and Gender Equality	
		<i>Key Existing measures</i>											
		<i>Main New measures</i>											
		<i>Additional resources</i>											
		<i>How do these measures address gender inequalities?</i>											

⁸ i.e. policies to fight discrimination on grounds of sex, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

		<i>Agencies responsible for delivery (national, regional, local)</i>										
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