



**EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL
EXCLUSION**
STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

**5th meeting of EU stakeholders on the European Platform
Against Poverty and Social Exclusion**

Draft MINUTES

Introduction

In the framework of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, and the Europe 2020 Strategy, the fifth meeting of the EU stakeholders group on the European Platform against Poverty took place on Friday 21 September 2012.

The meeting was opened by Dr Lieve Fransen, Director "Europe 2020: Social Policies", DG EMPL, who started off by underlining the importance of the input of the stakeholders and thanked the representatives of stakeholders for being present.

The fight against poverty and social inclusion is not an easy one and even during the period of economic growth there was little improvement. It is becoming clear that the Europe 2020 target on poverty risks will not be met if we look at the current developments. Especially in a period of austerity, it is imperative that efficiency gains need to be made in the field of social protection as well as in social investment.

Ms Fransen underlined that DG EMPL ensured that social inclusion and the social investment package (SIP) are now at the centre of EU policy. In this respect, she pointed to President Barroso's State of the Union address declared the need to aim for increased economic growth that is smart and sustainable and at the same time inclusive.

The social investment package (SIP) will be discussed within the Commission in the next weeks and the 2012 Poverty Convention will be used to have a wide consultation on the main topics addressed in the SIP. Most of these topics such as social protection and social investment (including health), extreme poverty, activation policies, and developing competences for the current and future labour market require a cross functional and multidisciplinary approach.

There is also a need for streamlining activities for Europe 2020 and those of the Social OMC.

The lack of consultation in the framework of the Annual Growth Survey as well as in the preparation of the National Reform Programs in some member states (MS) also needs to be addressed.

Following the introduction by Ms Lieve Fransen, the Cyprus Presidency of the Council took the floor. Ms Toula Kouloumou, Director of the Cyprus Social Welfare Services explained that one of the priority pillars of the Cyprus Presidency is social cohesion and within this pillar one of the main priorities is enhancing the participatory process in Europe 2020.

Following the introductions, **ETUC** took the floor and insisted that social protection is an investment and that more investment in social protection is needed if we want to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The representative of **EAPN** then took the floor and thanked the Cyprus presidency for their efforts to improve the participatory process in Europe 2020. He continued by insisting that the EU needs better taxation. On SIP, EAPN stated that we need to move from dealing with poverty to dealing with inequality as opposed to start focusing on extreme poverty. We also need to focus on the short and the long term vision.

Ms Lieve Fransen underlined that SIP has a short and a long term vision and that it deals with investment but also focuses on making efficiency gains. Finally she insisted that the Commission, the MS authorities and the stakeholders need to work together as we all have the same goals.

The following speaker was Mr Nicholas Costello, Deputy Head of Unit D1, DG EMPL who gave a first oral presentation of the SIP. He started by underlining that a better use of resources and increased efficiency and effectiveness in our policies is needed if we want to reduce poverty and social exclusion in times of austerity. He then listed the main features of the SIP:

- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social investment and protection
- Pursue activating and enabling policies
- Secure social inclusion and adequate livelihoods
- Advance social policy innovation and social policy experimentation
- Streamline monitoring, governance and information

The first to react was the **EESC** who pointed out that a transversal approach and strong coordination was needed and gave the example of a subject such as energy poverty. **Eurodiaconia** stated that the economic and social reform is needed to ensure structural measures and adequate income and also wanted to know how SIP linked up to the European Platform Against Poverty. The **EWL** wanted to know whether gender equality and elderly care was covered in the SIP and underlined the importance of improved governance. The representative from **ESAN** complained about the focus on austerity when many grass root organisations are already underfunded. **ENSIE** showed appreciation for the attention given to Social Inclusion in the SIP. The representative from **BusinessEurope** attracted attention to the issue of unemployment of young people and the potential of developing initiatives around apprenticeships.

Mr Costello asked the stakeholders to contact him and make additional suggestions in writing and underlined that gender equality and care for the elderly is dealt with in the SIP.

After the coffee break the **Preparation of the 2012 Poverty Convention** was discussed. The first to take the floor was Ms Kouloumou who confirmed that the President of Cyprus will speak at the opening session and the minister for Social Affairs will be present at the ministerial session. Furthermore the members of the SPC will be coordinating the participants and the national delegations. Stakeholders were asked to get in touch with the SPC members regarding the participation of national stakeholders.

Ms Anne Degrand-Guillaud, Unit D1, DG EMPL then gave an overview of the Convention and the preparations. The **Convention will consist of two plenary sessions, there will be four workshops dealing with topics directly linked to the SIP:** (1) Secure social inclusion and adequate livelihoods: Toward a full implementation of active inclusion, (2) Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social investment and protection: the case of health investment to reduce health inequalities, (3) Pursue activating and enabling policies: Taking into account the gender dimension and (4) Advance social policy innovation: the case of digital inclusion

There will also be a **speed dating meeting** organised in parallel to the workshop sessions designed to bring together current project innovators and potential future project developers. The Commission asked the SPC and the stakeholders to submit projects before 10 October.

The Convention will also have an **Interactive TED style event** interactive live stream followed by and interactive Q&A session and panels in the Member states. Stakeholders were asked to provide names of a TED style woman for the Convention.

(For further details see the presentation)

The stakeholders were then given the floor. **MHE** was glad to see that the Commission insisted on the presence of representatives of the People Experiencing Poverty. The Commission was asked to provide some clarifications regarding the number of participants per organisations and the reimbursement of costs. **SMES Europe** insisted that poor countries should be helped to have proper representation and priority should be given projects in those countries.

BusinessEurope believed that the past and the future should be covered simultaneously and wanted to know what the aim of the workshops will be and how they would link up to the SIP. It was also raised whether the social partners would the opportunity to speak. The Commission will give the floor to the EU stakeholders in several sessions.

The representative of **ESN** raised the issue of representation in the national delegations. Given the transversal nature of the topics covered attention will have to be given to what areas of competence the ministers present are responsible for. ESN also raised the issue of regional representation of unelected public servants. Finally regarding the workshops ESN inquired on whether the topic of deinstitutionalisation would be covered. Regarding the workshops, **Caritas Europa** pointed out that Active Inclusion was a broad topic and specifics were needed.

EAPN found the proposed Convention ambitious but wondered about the link between the SIP and the poverty target on the one hand and the workshops on the other. Furthermore homelessness is not explicitly mentioned but was satisfied to see that active inclusion will be a prominent topic. EAPN did point out that constituting the delegations will be tough but applauded the possibility to have a representative of the PEP in the delegation.

The representative of **AGE** noted that all the workshops have a link to the poverty target and should be the topic of the ministerial sessions. He also asked whether the aspect of governance would be handled. **EWL** applauded to focus on the gender dimension but wondered whether the Convention could really be referred to as a public consultation.

Eurocities wanted to know whether the invited elected officials would have an active role at the Convention and pointed out that it has several potential Active Inclusion projects, including on benefit take-up, which could be showcased. Regarding the Speed dating event, **ELISAN** will inform its network to propose projects and provide input.

Finally **Eurodiaconia** would like to have the Convention to help put social issues on the agenda of the EU and the Member States. It also wondered why the targets all Member States signed up to look like they will not be met and whether another forum to deal with this issue was needed.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud replied to most of the issues raised and then thanked the participants for their contributions and underlined that solidarity is at the centre of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Regarding the workshops she confirmed that the set-up and titles are not yet final. Stakeholders are invited to inform the Commission ASAP about their willingness to take an active part in the preparation of these workshops and the Convention as a whole.

Following the discussion on the preparation of the 2012 Poverty Convention there two presentations. The first one dealt with the **Active Inclusion report** and Mr Istvan Vanyolos, Unit D2, DG EMPL gave a summary of the **results of the social partner consultation**. The recommendations formulated by the organisations consulted aim at national level to better inclusion of the most disadvantaged, strengthening the three pillars, focusing on integrated approaches, while at European level focusing on Cohesion funds to support active inclusion strategies, and stepping-up awareness raising (for further details see the presentation).

The final presentation of the meeting was by Mr Fritz Von Nordheim, Deputy Head of Unit D3, DG EMPL who presented the **Pension Adequacy report** (for further details see the presentation).

The next meeting of the EU stakeholder group will take place in the beginning of 2013.

Attendance list

	Organisation	Representative
	AEPL - European Association of Free Thought	Pierre Verhas
	AGE - European network of organisations representing older people in Europe	Maciej Kucharczyk
	ATD Fourth World Quartmonde	Marie Cécile Renoux
	Businesseurope	Rebekah Smith
	CARITAS - Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development	Deirdre De Burca
	CECOP - European Confederation of Cooperatives and worker-owned enterprises	Diana Dovgan
	CEV - European Volunteer Centre	Daniela Bosioc
	Civic Agenda EU	Daniel Gueorguiev
	COFACE - Confederation of family Organizations in the European Union	Ana Perez
	COFACE - Confederation of family Organizations in the European Union	Florian Charron
	CoR - The Committee of the Regions	Lianne Verhees
	DBI	Mattia Tosato
	DYNAMO - Social streetwork for the benefit of children and youngsters	Mari Fresu
	EAPN - European Anti-Poverty network	Fintan Farell
	EAPN - European Anti-Poverty network	Amana Ferro
	EASPD	Irene Bertana
	EESC - The European Economic and Social Committee	Pierre Jean Coulon
	EJJO - European Juvenile Justice Observatory	Sonia Zdorovtsoff
	EJJO - European Juvenile Justice Observatory	Lucie Bassinah
	ENSIE - European Network for Social Integration Enterprises	Aurelie Duprés
	ENSIE - European Network for Social Integration Enterprises	Erika Lambert
	EPHA - European Public Health Alliance	Dorota Sienkiewicz
	Equinet - European Network of Equality Bodies	Raili Uibo
	ESAN - European Social Action Network	Cocozza Liliane

	ESN - European Social Network	John Halloran
	ESN - European Social Network	Stephen Barnett
	ETUC - European Trade Union Confederation	Henri Lourdelle
	EU Red Cross Office	Eberhard Lueder
	EUCIS LLL	David Lopez
	EUROCHILD	Michela Costa
	EUROCITIES - The network of major European cities	Anna Drozd
	EUROCITIES - The network of major European cities	Martin Virag
	EURODIACONIA - Europe wide community of organisations founded in the Christian faith	Heather Roy
	EURODIACONIA - Europe wide community of organisations founded in the Christian faith	Therese Schlage
	EFC - European Foundation Centre	Giulia Lombardi
	Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living & Working Conditions	Sylvie.Jacquet
	Eurohealthnet	Clive Needle
	Eurohealthnet	Stecy Yghemonos
	EWL - European Women's Lobby	Mary Collins
	EYF - European Youth Forum	Santa Ozolina
	FEANTSA - the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless	Mauro Striani
	FEBA - European Federation of Foodbanks	Angela Frigo
	ILO	Floris Tack
	LUDEN	Francesca Centalos
	MHE - Mental Health Europe	Paulina Banas
	OSE - European Social Observatory	Ramon Peña-Casas
	OSE - European Social Observatory	Barbara Uggeri
	PICUM - The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants	Kadri Soova
	REIF - Représentation des Institutions Françaises de sécurité sociale auprès de l'UE	Audrey Tourniaire
	REVES - Réseau des villes et régions de l'économie sociale	Erdmuthe Klaer

	SMES-Europa	Luigi Leonori
	Social Inclusion regional group	Elena Curtopassi (ELISAN)
	Social Inclusion regional group	Kelly Digneffe (VLEVA)
	Social Platform	Herlinde Vanhooydonck
	UEAPME - The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Helen Hoffmann
	Cyprus Presidency	Ms Toula Kouloumou
	European Commission	Dr Lieve Fransen
	European Commission	Nicholas Costello
	European Commission	Anne Degrand-Guillaud
	European Commission	Egbert Holthuis
	European Commission	Fritz Von Nordheim
	European Commission	Istvan Vanyolos
	European Commission	Frederik Lamberty
	European Commission	Annachiarra Pechini
	European Commission	Andrea Meszaros