



EAPN: Fighting for a Social Europe Free of Poverty

**Tackling long-term unemployment**  
*Support holistic pathways to inclusion*

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EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK  
RÉSEAU EUROPÉEN DES ASSOCIATIONS  
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE

## Overview of the presentation

- **What is EAPN?**
- **Setting the context**
- **Damaging policies**
- **Groups hardest hit**
- **The way forward**
- **EAPN further reading**





# What is EAPN?

- Independent European Network of NGOs
- Fighting for a **social Europe, free of poverty**
- Started in 1990 – key actor in the **Social Open Method of Coordination**
- Involved in the **European Employment Strategy** since 1997
- Actively engaged in **Europe 2020 and the NRP** process – EU and national level.
- Working **with and for people in poverty**
- Financial support from the European Union (**PROGRESS**)
- **30** National Networks + **25** European NGOs

## Setting the context

**“Work is the best route out of poverty” –  
mantra of the past decade.**

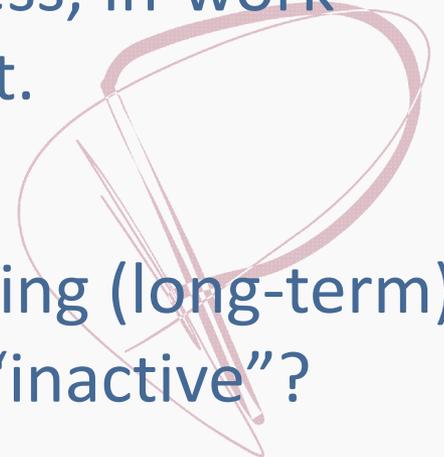
However, a quarter of people currently  
experiencing poverty are employed.

### **What is “employment”?**

=> Long-term precariousness, in-work  
poverty, underemployment.

### **Economic inactivity**

=> When does one stop being (long-term)  
unemployed and become “inactive”?



## Setting the context

- **Significant differences between countries:** MS offering lifelong learning, flexible working, and security in between jobs perform better (Nordic countries, Germany, Austria, Luxemburg).
- **Impact of crisis and austerity, especially Troika:** reduced support and funding for institutions and programmes supporting the LTU, as well as in unemployment benefits and services.
- **EAPN analysis:** LTU is increasing, due to both lack of jobs and lack of resources to tackle it; compulsion to get people off benefits and into any kind of employment at all costs.

# Setting the context

## Europe 2020

- **Joint Employment Report (2012)** – highlights good practices and gaps still to overcome, and stresses the positive role of automatic stabilisers and the ESF.
- **Towards a Job Rich Recovery** – only hiring subsidies.

## National Reform Programmes

- **EAPN analysis of NRPs in 2011 and 2012** shows little preoccupation of Governments to seriously tackle the issue, especially in austerity times.
- **No meaningful involvement of grassroots NGOs** in the design and implementation of policies and NRPs.

## Country-Specific Recommendations

- **Only Latvia** received a CSR specifically on LTU.



# Damaging policies

## 1. Low level of UB, conditionality, reductions in coverage

- Breaking the **link with contributions** and **absence of minimum standards** condemn people to poverty.
- Requirements for training, regular visits to job centers, and job-hunting, without **additional support (transport, childcare etc)**.
- Reduction in coverage - **shifting people to social assistance**, or nothing (IT, ES, GR, HU...).

*The capacity of the unemployment benefit system to provide adequate coverage for the long term unemployed [...] is not a concern of the State.*

**(EAPN FR)**

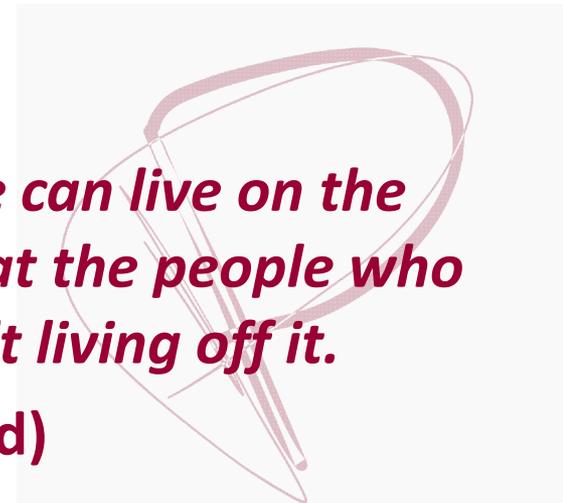
# Damaging policies

## 2. Offering unsustainable, low quality jobs

- Sends people through a **revolving door of in-work and out-of-work constant poverty.**
- Reduces people's motivation, causing **erosion of skills and self-esteem.**
- Pushes people into **undeclared work**, as the ultimate survival strategy.

*Who can actually say that people can live on the minimum wage? I'm pretty sure that the people who came up with the figures aren't living off it.*

**(EAPN UK – Scotland)**



# Damaging policies

## 3. One size fits all and unprepared PES

- Applying **universal activation strategies** is like prescribing the exact same medicine irrespective of the disease.
- PES are often **understaffed** and **lack appropriate training**.
- **Outsourcing** PES services to **for-profit companies** (UK) has as result a **race to get people off benefits**, not supporting them into decent lives.

***Today, Public Employment Services build an ‘individual plan’ no longer after 5 months, but after 12 months of unemployment. (EAPN CZ)***

# Damaging policies

## 4. Creaming to obtain quick results

- Focusing resources on those easier to rehabilitate **only increases the gap.**
- Absence of **follow-up after job placement** and **qualitative evaluations.**
- Use of private employment agencies reinforces the **emphasis on quick , quantifiable results.**

*I had a drug problem and I am now in a training programme [...]. We are the people who become numbers after training.*

**(Participant at the 10<sup>th</sup> European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty)**

# Groups hardest hit

## Young people

*It is important for young people to have a job as soon as possible after school. If they have no work for months [...] they loose hope and it tears their dreams to pieces [...] their talents are lost.*  
(10<sup>th</sup> European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty)

## Single parents

*The introduction of compulsory engagement with the labour market despite little delivery in terms of child care, sufficient training and education, and employment opportunities creates strong difficulties for lone parents.* (EAPN IE)

## Migrants and minorities

*...People of migrant origin don't have equal opportunities on the labour market. [...] There are no concrete measures to overcome this obstacle, rooted especially in discrimination by employers.*  
(EAPN BE)



# Groups hardest hit

## People with a disability / illness

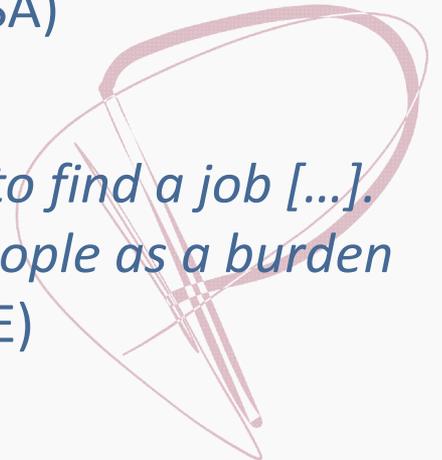
*I am a job seeker, I am 28. [...] I graduated in corporate economy but still could not find a job. I think it is because I have a disability. Employers will not employ me. (EAPN BG)*

## Homeless

*Research proves that short-term unemployment does generally not lead to poverty when there is a robust social protection system; however, long-term unemployment increases the risk of homelessness. (FEANTSA)*

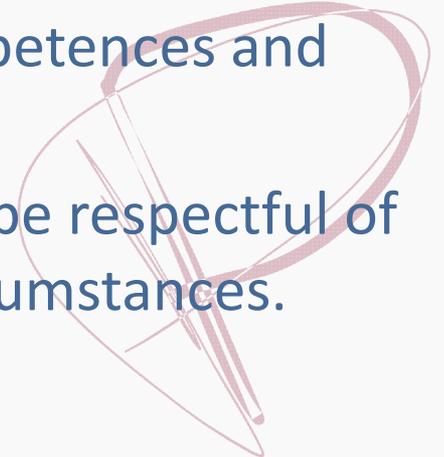
## Older workers

*For those above 50, it is almost impossible to find a job [...]. The Government talks publicly about old people as a burden for society and the state economy. (EAPN EE)*



# The Way Forward

- **Build pathways to work and inclusion**
  - **Hopeful Vision**: View labour market integration as a component of broader social inclusion and social participation in the wider sense.
  - **Case by Case Management**: Each person is different, as is each stage of the lifecycle – ALMP need to be flexible to provide for tailored approaches.
  - **Empowerment**: Start from the individual and build on people's strengths, reinforcing competences and overcoming weaknesses.
  - **Respect**: Strategies proposed must be respectful of people's difficulties, needs, and circumstances.



# The Way Forward

- **Bet on Inclusive Labour Markets**
  - **Active Inclusion**: For those who can work, provide pathway approaches to decent employment, coupled with access to services and adequate minimum income schemes.
  - **Make work pay**: Institute statutory minimum wages that effectively take people out of poverty, to make work pay in a positive way.
  - **Quality jobs**: Raise quality of proposed employment overall, to make it more attractive.
  - **Invest in job creation**: Especially in deprived areas (including rural) or in emerging sectors, and make jobs accessible to those furthest from work.



# The Way Forward

- **Reinforce Public Employment Services**
  - **Sufficient staffing**: Austerity cuts have reduced the number of job centers and their staff.
  - **Adequate training**: PES staff needs to be trained in qualitative aspects such as discrimination, decent jobs, dealing with sensitive cases etc.
  - **Integrated services**: Effectively liaise with other state services, especially those related to education, health, housing, and other needed social services.
  - **Not a numbers' game**: Institute key performance indicators and evaluation systems, which take into account *qualitative* aspects and follow-up.

# The Way Forward

- **Support employers**
  - **Diverse working arrangements:** Provide work experience, as well as initial part-time or flexible working, to support return to the labour market.
  - **Fight discrimination:** Offer discrimination-free access to jobs and work environments.
  - **Support lifelong learning:** To prevent people from slipping into long term unemployment in the future.
  - **Tailored workplaces:** Providing adapted environments for older workers, or with a disability.
  - **State role:** Targeted subsidies to employers to take on the LTU and support their integration.

# The Way Forward

- **The role of NGOs and Social Economy**
  - **Unemployment Centers:** They play a key role in supporting those furthest from the labour market.
  - **Direct Knowledge:** Grass-root organisations are the most acquainted with people's needs.
  - **Adequate funding:** Austerity has reduced public support for civil society organisations which provide essential support and services to the LTU.
  - **Social economy:** Invest in Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), to provide transitional spaces and adapted work environments.
  - **Foster participation and empowerment:** Meaningfully involve the beneficiaries in policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

# The Way Forward

- **Harvest the potential of EU Funds – ESF**
  - Back integrated Active Inclusion approaches : currently not implemented in 11 MS (BE, DE, EE, FR, DE, LU, NL, PL, SI, ES, SE) – EAPN assessment.
  - Support outreach strategies : currently in place only in 4 MS: AT, DE, IE, SE – EAPN assessment.
  - Enhance coordination between EU Funds : ESF, ERDF, Life Long Learning etc – a crucial move to ensure tailored access to integrated training and education programmes.
  - Facilitate access to Structural Funds for small NGOs : provide tailor-made Global Grants schemes, as well as Technical Assistance and capacity-building.

## Further EAPN reading

- ❖ EAPN's in-depth analysis of the social impact of the crisis in [2009](#) and [2010](#).
- ❖ EAPN's paper on [Getting out of the Crisis Together](#) (alternative approaches).
- ❖ EAPN's comprehensive assessment of the National Reform Programmes of [2011](#) and [2012](#) (inclusive growth).
- ❖ EAPN's shadow [Country Specific and Thematic Recommendations](#) for 2012.
- ❖ EAPN's book: [Active Inclusion – Making It Happen](#) (policy into practice).
- ❖ EAPN video on activation practices in the EU: [Pathways to Work](#).





# Thank you for your attention!

*For more information:*

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See also:

[www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu)

[www.adequateincome.eu](http://www.adequateincome.eu)

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