

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK
RESEAU EUROPEEN DES ASSOCIATIONS DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE
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EU leaders give signs of hope

EAPN General Assembly welcomes European Council's new Strategic Agenda

Brussels, 01 July 2014 - The European Anti-Poverty Network held its 2014 General Assembly in Tallinn, Estonia, on 27-28 June 2014.. The General Assembly welcomed the seemingly positive shift of the European Council's new Strategic Agenda endorsed on 27 June regarding social issues, which reflects several EAPN's concerns and key messages over the last years. In its final Declaration, EAPN's General Assembly addressed the new Members of the European Parliament, recalling the achievements of the previous European Parliament and highlighting the priorities at stake, with the Mid-Term Review of the) - Europe 2020 Strategy, coming up in 2015 which has so far failed to deliver on its promises and highlighting EAPN's current preparation of its own position. EAPN also endorsed the membership of two new networks in Croatia and Latvia raising the number of member networks to a total of 32.

EAPN and its members welcome the European Council's conclusions and new Strategic Agenda as a signs of a potentially crucial shift, reflecting several EAPN's concerns and key messages over the last years. First, the Strategic Agenda acknowledges the need to tackle social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and inequalities; Secondly, although EAPN deplores the focus on competitiveness, reference is made to create more and better jobs and to invest in education; Thirdly, reference is made to the importance of safety nets and social protection; Fourthly, EAPN welcomes the mention of the need to "guarantee fairness by tackling tax evasion and fraud", and to "help ensure that safety nets are in place – to support change and reverse inequalities".

"Our members meeting in Tallinn at EAPN's General Assembly welcomed the new Strategic Plan put forward by the Council, in particular the realization that a new balance must be struck between the economic and the social policies. We hope that this gives a sign that the Council will now take steps towards an EU framework directive on minimum income, but also stress that safety nets must be part of quality social protection systems ensuring universal access to public services and benefits for all. We also remind the Council that a genuinely 'inclusive tax policy' need to promote progressive tax systems which redistribute income and wealth if a significant impact on poverty and inequality is to be made," said Sérgio Aires, President of EAPN.

In this context, EAPN's General Assembly adopted its Final Declaration, addressed to newly elected MEPs. Recalling the achievements of the previous Parliament and thanking the [over 80 MEPs](#) who have taken [EAPN pledge](#) in support of [EAPN's Manifesto](#), EAPN members remind the new Parliament of the Mid-Term Review of the Europe 2020 Strategy - which so far has failed to progress on the poverty target as 6.6 more million people have fallen into poverty since 2010 – coming up in 2015, with a public consultation this year. Highlighting that this failure and consequent impact on poverty, exclusion and inequalities is due to European policies driven by austerity and neo-liberal macro-economic governance, EAPN's General Assembly urged the new Members of the EP to support a Marshall Plan to support public investment: to create quality jobs, ensuring access to those excluded from the labour market and to invest in universal social protection and public services to tackle the spiralling poverty levels

"We congratulate the newly elected MEPs who have taken EAPN pledge and all those who will defend the elements of our final Declaration. The European Council's shift seems like a step forward and we hope to say, soon, that EU leaders have understood what a strong EU means and needs: put people's lives and well-being first", added Sérgio Aires.

At its 2014 General Assembly, EAPN also formally welcomed 2 new members, EAPN Croatia and EAPN Latvia.

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Notes for the editor:

- EAPN sent a [letter to the European Council](#) as EAPN on the social dimension (26/06/2014)
- EAPN also sent an assessment of Semester along with a [Press Release](#) on the Country-specific Recommendations as coordinator of the [Semester Alliance](#) (25/06/2014).
- See here [List of candidates who have taken EAPN's pledge](#)

EAPN's 2 new members:

EAPN Croatia (Hrvatska mreža protiv siromaštva - Croatian Anti Poverty Network) was founded on 28/03/2014 by 5 non-governmental organisations: Pragma, Centre for Social Policy Initiatives, Croatian Red cross – Zagreb Branch, Katolička udruga “Kap dobrote”, Hrvatska mreža za beskućnike - Croatian Network of Homeless People.

The objectives of the CAPN are:

- Gathering and connecting legal entities and individuals interested in working to improve the care of vulnerable and socially excluded groups of citizens,
- Promoting the rights of vulnerable and socially excluded groups of citizens,
- Active, continuous and systematic joint action in order to establish a permanent forum for the advocacy of the rights of vulnerable and socially excluded groups of citizens and interests of legal entities who provide care to them.

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EAPN Latvia (Latvijas PretNabadzības Tīkls) was founded on 09/10/2013 by 7 non-governmental organizations: Latvian Red Cross, Association “Skalbes”, International Women's Organization, SOS Latvia – Association of Children's Villages, Riga Alliance of Active Seniors, Latvian Association of Addiction Psychologists and Association “PINS” and currently has 16 member organisations.

The aim of the network:

Working as a part of the European Anti-Poverty Network to work on a socially safe Latvia, free from poverty and social exclusion, and where economic, social and cultural rights are available for all.

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The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is the largest European network of national, regional and local networks, involving anti-poverty NGOs and grassroots groups as well as European Organisations, active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It was established in 1990.



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