

Introduction to the EMIN-Project

&

***EU roadmap towards progressive realization
of adequate and accessible Minimum Income
Schemes***

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I. Introduction to the EMIN-Project

Recent EAPN Work on Minimum Income

- EAPN works on Minimum Income in various projects, debates, conferences and lobbying-activities since 1990
- EAPN coordinates the EMIN-Project (2013-14)



EMIN Network

Aim of the Network and the National Conference

- **To raise awareness** on 1) the commitments made by the Council and Commission on adequate Minimum Income Schemes, 2) the importance of adequate Minimum Income Schemes to keep people active in society 3) the Importance for all of the society of adequate Minimum Income Schemes as the base for a high level social Protection Systems
- **To build consensus** and advocate to take the necessary steps towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes at 1) National and 2) EU levels

Based on a Common Understanding and Vision

- **Minimum Income schemes:** “income support schemes which provide a safety net for those who cannot work or access a decent job and are not eligible for social security payments or whose entitlements have expired”
- **Adequate Minimum Income:** income that is indispensable to live a life in dignity and to fully participate in society
- The vision is for a **Europe of High levels of High Quality Employment with High levels of Social Protection.**
- **Adequate Minimum Income Schemes is the foundation** on which such a vision can be realised

Partners in the Project – Building stakeholder engagement

2 Year Project (2013 -2014)

initiated by the European Parliament and financed by the European Commission

Lead Partner: EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network)

Key European level Partners

- **AGE** Platform Europe
- **FEANTSA** (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless)
- **Belgian Public Administration**, Public Planning Service Social Integration, Anti Poverty Policy and Social Economy Social Integration
- **ANSA** (Agence Nouvelle des Solidarités Actives)
- **ETUI** (European Trade Union Institute)
- **OSE** (Observatoire Social Européen)
- **SIRG** (Social Inclusion Regional Group)

**National Minimum Income Networks (building engagement of stakeholders)
in 30 European Countries!**

EMIN Next Steps

- **30 National Conferences** to present information, raise debates and develop consensus
- **European EMIN Conference** 11 December Brussels
- EAPN is committed to ensuring that the ambition to **achieve adequate Minimum Income Schemes in all EU Member States** remains on the Agenda.
- EAPN is committed to supporting the development of the **National and European Minimum Income Networks** beyond 2014 including seeking financial support for this work.

II. EU roadmap towards progressive realization of adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes



Content

1. Setting the scene

2. EU Road Map for the progressive realisation of Adequate Minimum Income Schemes

2.1 Awareness Raising and public debate

2.2 EU Directive

2.3 Integrate follow up on adequate Minimum Income Schemes in key EU processes

3. Conclusions

1. Setting the scene: ensure every person's fundamental right to live a life in dignity

- People living in poverty since 2009: **+10 million**. Now **over 124 million**. $\frac{1}{4}$ population cannot enjoy their right to live a life in dignity.
- Current **policies fail to deliver** on the Europe 2020 target of reducing poverty by at least 20 million by 2020.
- **Little evidence of progress** in member states to improve benefits systems and ensure adequacy of benefits. **Crisis and austerity measures**: Increased conditionality and failure to upgrade benefits.
- **A balanced socio-economic policy with a rights-based approach needed!**

1. Setting the scene: ensure every person's fundamental right to live a life in dignity

- What we want: binding **European Social Standards** for upward social convergence and **social progress**.
- **Adequate minimum income schemes in all member states is a corner stone** = basis for high quality social protection schemes and positive hierarchy with other social benefits and minimum wages.

2.1 Awareness raising and public debate: We have the arguments!

- Well-designed, adequate and widely available income support schemes give people **greater chances to take up a job** than non-recipients = **good social investment!**
- It is crucial to guarantee adequate income for **people in vulnerable situations** for whom a return to work is not possible: **human right**
- Ensure that people who need them can remain **active in society**, and allow them to **live in dignity**
- **More equal societies** = better for the whole of society

2.1 Awareness raising and public debate

- **‘Economic stabilizers’**: countries with high quality social protection systems are better able to resist negative impacts of the crisis
- They are **cost effective economic stimulus packages**, as the money involved immediately re enters the economy
- They can play a positive role in **reversing the destructive trend of rising numbers of ‘working poor’** in Europe
- Inadequate Minimum Income Schemes help in addressing very basic needs, however they are likely to lock people in a **cycle of dependency** without adequate means to access opportunities or to fully participate in society

2.2 EU Directive on adequate MIS – Why?

- Give meaning to EU commitment on combating social exclusion of the **Fundamental Rights Charter**.
- No longer viable to develop national social policy without considering the European perspective. **Common EU level efforts are needed** to help achieve high social standards.
- We can observe a **highly divided Europe** with **loss of solidarity** and **growing distrust** of European institutions. A Directive would show **commitment to a Union of social values** and would help restore confidence.

2.2 EU Directive on adequate MIS – Content

- **What is adequate Minimum Income?**
 - at risk of poverty indicator, **60% of median equivalised income** and **material deprivation** indicators,
 - common EU-wide methodology for **reference budgets** to test the robustness of the level of MI and of the 60% threshold, based on **active participation of people experiencing poverty** in the establishment of the basket of goods and services

2.2 EU Directive on adequate MIS – Factors to be considered

- **Who is covered? How to ensure better coverage and take up?**
- Member States to **evaluate** their MIS: avoid the creation of hidden poverty, to ensure take up, by reducing conditionality requirements, increasing transparency, informing eligible benefit recipients actively about their rights, by establishing simplified procedures and by putting in place policies to fight stigma and discrimination
- **Uprating? Appeal?**
- **Common information requirements, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder involvement.**
- **Active inclusion approach:** adequate minimum income, combined with inclusive labour markets and enabling (social) services

2.3 Integrate follow up on adequate MIS in key EU processes - Europe 2020 strategy

- Adequate MIS will contribute to the **delivery of the Europe 2020 poverty reduction target**: progress reports, country specific recommendations on adequate minimum income
- **Use 20% of European Social Fund for social inclusion** in partnership with NGOs
- **Exchange best practices** to find ways to tackle poverty and social exclusion
- Develop a system of well-defined and **binding EU level social standards** in hard law, as part of a **Social Pact for Europe: adequate Minimum Income as pioneer.**

3. Conclusions: A story that millions of Europeans would want to hear

- **Many existing commitments** on adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes at EU level
- **Feasible to introduce a Directive** on the Adequacy of Minimum Income Schemes under EU treaties
- **Good arguments** why this would be good for the people, for the society in general and for the EU
- EU citizens would want **to know what Member States and other EU political leaders are doing to introduce or to block such a development** and to explain their approach
- The EMIN project is an **exciting opportunity** to contribute to this 'story'

Slogan from the Czech Republic Delegation: We just want a normal life



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