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**EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
ADEQUATE MINIMUM INCOME
BUILDING CONSENSUS**

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Conference report by Pauline Geoghegan

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The European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) was a two year project (2013-2014) sponsored by the European Parliament, funded by the European Commission, under contract no Tender N° VT/2011/100 Pilot project – Social solidarity for social integration and promoted by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).
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Introduction

The European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) was a two year project (2013-2014) sponsored by the European Parliament, funded by the European Commission, under contract no Tender N° VT/2011/100 Pilot project – Social solidarity for social integration and promoted by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). The project aimed at building consensus to take the necessary steps towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes in European Countries. The project also aimed to strengthen cooperation at the EU level in relation to the achievement of Adequate Minimum Income Schemes, in line with the European Commission's Active Inclusion Recommendation of 2008, the Europe 2020 strategy and in the context of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the EU Social Investment Package. To know more about EMIN and to see all publications visit: <http://emin-eu.net>

The aims of the EMIN Project are:

- To build **National EMIN Networks** in five key pilot countries (Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Italy and Belgium) and **collaboration** with relevant actors to defend and support adequate Minimum Income Schemes in 25 other countries.
- To raise awareness on the issues of **non-take up** by vulnerable groups and **adequacy of income for older people** through the thematic work.
- 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 basis for a high level social Protection Systems
- To build consensus and advocate to take the necessary steps (**road maps**) towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes at 1) National and 2) EU levels.

The aim of this second EMIN EU level conference was to disseminate the findings from the national level and proposals for action at European level developed through the project.

The conference, hosted in the premises of the Belgian Ministry for Finance, brought together over 120 participants from 30 countries. Invited guests who contributed to the debate included users of minimum income schemes and representatives of National, European and international institutions and other experts from academic institutions.

Following a morning of exchange on the learning from the project, the conference addressed the EMIN achievements, lessons learned and way forward, with a presentation of the outcomes of the project and the proposed European Road Map. Workshops enabled a further in depth discussion on building momentum for minimum income schemes, with inputs from the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Social Policy Network, the European Economic and Social Committee, the two thematic networks, the Social Platform and the International Labour Organisation on Social Protection Floors.

Opening Plenary

Chair, Letizia Cesarini Sforza, Vice President EAPN

Opening the conference, Letizia Cesarini Sforza recalled that the purpose of the EMIN project is to build consensus for the idea that social policy is an instrument, and that good Minimum Income schemes are not just a cost: they must lead to a life in dignity. The EMIN project was based on this common understanding of what Minimum Income should be. Project partners have made an important contribution; through the project “Minimum Income is not a slogan, it is a desired reality”.

Videos from Portugal and Denmark.

Video Messages brought the voice of activists with direct experience of poverty in Portugal and Denmark to the heart of the debate. See the videos at this link: <http://emin-eu.net/emin-publications/>

Maria Arena

Member of the European Parliament - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

The European Minimum Income Project had arisen from the initiative of her predecessor in the European Parliament, Frederic Daerden MEP, and this had been followed up earlier in 2014 with a successful request to the European Parliament for an extended budget line to support a further phase of a project on Minimum Income. As former minister for social integration in Belgium, Maria Arena has already worked with EAPN, on Minimum Income but also on participation. Fighting cultural exclusion must also be taken into account where Minimum Income exists. Despite the 2020 target to diminish poverty by 20 million by 2020, the number has increased by 7 million, and austerity programmes are deepening poverty levels. Decision-makers must realise the cost of avoiding measures such as Minimum Income Schemes to get people out of poverty: for example one third of single mothers have no access to pre and post natal funding. The EMIN project is inspiring, particularly regarding the impact on women, who are among those most touched by poverty, especially single parents, as well as many children in poverty.

“Alternatives exist, and we must develop them with you”.

Stefan Olsson

Head of Unit, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Conveying thanks and appreciation for the project from colleagues in the Commission, the timing and content of the project is right, especially in the context of reducing budgets. Reforms must be done better, with efficiency and better targeting. The EMIN project can build up momentum.

The Social Investment Package is built on the investment principle: to get social spending to empower people, this investment is crucial. Referring to the Danish video shown earlier, the

Danish Minimum Income system is the basis for the Danish activation system. Minimum Income needs to be adequate and have good coverage.

This project works well with the Reference Budgets project. National Minimum Income networks can support the Reference Budget project as another pillar to maintain the momentum, to keep existing Minimum Income schemes and to introduce them where they do not exist. The semester process, with 11 recommendations, and the programming of the structural funds, with 20% to be committed to social measures, can also contribute to the process; social funds can be used to improve the system.

“We really appreciate this work, and keeping it on the agenda”.

EMIN: Achievements, lessons learned and ways forward

The EMIN project in Ireland and Poland

Representatives of two national EMIN networks summarised the impacts and challenges of their work at national level during the project.

Robin Hanan, EMIN Ireland

This is an important time for debate in Ireland, as we move from a fiscal and banking crisis to a social crisis. A quarter of people are in a situation of poverty, and a third of children live in households experiencing poverty. Debate focuses on activation conditionality, and imposing conditions on welfare.

The Irish alliance of EMIN includes EAPN Ireland and other networks dealing with disability, the lead NGO dealing with reference budgets, the unemployed and regional centres, trade union sponsored think tanks, AGE and FEANTSA pilot projects and Ireland’s largest trade unions. All organisations involved have been involved in the campaign to maintain welfare: cuts continue, with increased conditionality. They have talked to a wide range of actors, to build up a road map, aiming at an effective system for dignity and specific needs. The effect has led to synergy between people working on, the ground, as well as turning around attitudes, and making positive proposals, through a conference on consensus. The group aims to be a long-term alliance with focus on strategy.

Solutions must be European solutions: the EMIN project has given us energy to take this on.

Ryszard Szarfenberg, EMIN Poland

In Poland economic conditions are generally good. However the social ministry is quarrelling with the finance ministry. The finance ministry was convinced by the European Council not to reform the social system, but rather to reform and reduce the budget.

In 2009 30 NGOS that were part of EAPN Poland rejected the proposal for the EAPN Minimum Income campaign, considering that it was more harmful than good. Since then they have become less reluctant. They have worked with trade unions who are involved in upgrading the Minimum Income Scheme, as well as the social workers association and the association of social assistance officers, who are increasingly under pressure. They have created an 18 point list, in consensus with EAPN, NGOs and trade Unions, plus social assistance officers, but without the social ministry. There is now a good momentum, with a good coalition.

Emerging themes - synthesis from the 30 National and 2 Thematic Reports

Anne Van Lancker, EMIN Policy Coordinator

The full synthesis report is available online at:

<https://eminnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/emin-synthesis-report-road-map-2014-en.pdf>

The purpose of the EMIN project was

- An analysis of current state of play of Minimum Income Schemes in 30 countries: outlining current reality in relation to MIS in terms of adequacy, coverage and take-up
- To identify obstacles to implementation of adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes
- Progress work on identifying possible steps to improve adequacy and accessibility of Minimum Income Schemes

The state of play today: 5 national reports and 5 national minimum income networks have been constituted during the first phase, and consultations with stakeholders are ongoing. In the second phase 25 new national reports have been prepared, 30 national conferences have taken place, and 2 thematic reports, by AGE + FEANTSA, have been completed.

National reports on adequacy, coverage and take-up of MIS

The project is based on the following **definitions**:

- Minimum Income schemes are “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 is income that is indispensable to live a life in dignity and to fully participate in society.

All 30 countries, except Italy and Greece have some form of Minimum Income Scheme established at national level, in line with the definition of the EMIN project.

Minimum Income Schemes are very different across countries: many countries (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, IS, LU, NL, NO, PT, RO) have comprehensive and simple minimum income schemes, open to all people with insufficient means; others have simple and non-categorical systems but with restricted eligibility and coverage (EE, HU, IE, LT, NL, SE, SK, UK); some countries have a complex network of more categorical schemes (ES, IE, MT, UK); some countries have limited piecemeal schemes for specific groups in need (BG, RS).

Most minimum income schemes have eligibility conditions related to residence, age, lack of resources, willingness to work. Benefits vary according to household composition; operating is often not on regular basis; means-testing; mostly no time limits. There are big differences in generosity of benefits, ranging from 22 EUR in BG to 1433 EUR in DK for a single person, and from 100 EUR in PL and 3808 EUR in DK for a couple with 2 children.

In relation to median equivalised income:

- High level (over 50%): only DK and IS
- Medium-high (40-50%): AT, BE, IE, LU, LT, MK, NL
- Medium-low (30-40%): CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, MT, NO, PT, UK
- Low (20-30%): CZ, EE, HU, RO, SE

- Very low (under 20%): BG, LV, PL, SK

Countries with low and very low generosity are all in Central and Eastern Europe, except Sweden. Ensuring adequate minimum income will require a lot of effort. It affects a small proportion of population: in most countries it affects less than 5%; in some even under 3% of the population.

Adequacy of Minimum Income

There is little transparency as regards methodology to determine what constitutes a sufficient or minimum standard of living, no clear definition of decent income: minimum income is set by government decision, proportion to pensions, unemployment benefits, and minimum wage.

No country uses the AROP indicator (DK in future has adopted a measure at 50% median income during 3 years which they regard as persistent poverty). Some countries use concepts such as subsistence minimum or minimum income to avoid absolute poverty. Some countries use reference budgets to set minimum income level, but baskets often don't cover all expenses. In countries with well-conceived reference budgets, these are seldom used as benchmarks for minimum income. Most teams find Minimum Income in their country doesn't allow a life in dignity. Amounts of Minimum Income have often not kept up with increases in living standards. The AGE report on adequacy of Minimum Income for older people states that Ireland and France provide enough to cover the needs of couples, not single persons, and that in Poland it is inadequate.

Recommendations

5 teams want the 60% of median income threshold to be used to ensure adequacy of minimum income, 2 teams think minimum income should be a percentage of minimum wage. Even when the 60% AROP is too low to live a dignified life, the threshold is still relevant, since in all countries the minimum income level is (far) below 60%, except in Denmark and Iceland. Many teams insist that Minimum Income should be complemented by additional support and child benefits, housing subsidies, training allowance and energy costs.

Many teams want reference budgets to be used: to determine the level of minimum income, to test the adequacy of Minimum Income and of the 60% median income threshold, and to stimulate public debate on Minimum Income Schemes

But caveats!

Reference budgets should cover all necessary expenses to participate in society. They should be regularly updated and updated. They have to be developed through participatory approaches with focus groups. They should be used as basis for individual assessments. The AGE report states that specific reference budgets should be used for older people, broken down by gender and age cohorts. In countries where consumption expenditure is used as reference for Minimum Income, teams insist that not only the expenditure of lowest income groups should be taken as reference

Coverage and take up

Several teams find that their country uses thresholds to qualify for Minimum Income that are extremely low. Some teams point to the problem of young people living with parents, who can't receive Minimum Income. Also (undocumented) migrants and homeless people are

often cited as having difficulties to access Minimum Income Schemes. In some countries coverage is reduced through excessive means-testing. In countries where local authorities are responsible for access and amount of MI, teams complain about significant discrepancies.

Recommendations

Low thresholds have to be increased. Administrative discretion and arbitrariness must be reduced. Appropriate appeal procedures must be introduced. All young people from age of 18 should have access to MIS. Equal treatment for all, including migrants and ethnic minorities. Avoid local discrepancies through centralisation

Non-take-up is a serious problem: from 20% to as much as 75%: figures are much higher than fraud, but receive less police and media attention! Several reasons for non-take-up (using the typology of the FEANTSA report):

Unknown rights and lack of communication: when individuals are not aware of rights or don't know how to claim them. Administration has no pro-active role, beneficiaries have to find out by themselves.

Unclaimed rights and offer relevancy, by constraint: costs connected to accessing Minimum Income Schemes are perceived to exceed benefits (financial costs, benefits too low, complex procedures, distance to office, humiliation for having to rely on relatives first...)

Unclaimed rights by 'choice': linked with conditions to access Minimum Income Schemes that potential beneficiaries don't accept (activation, especially with public works, severe property census, controls seen as humiliating, extra conditions).

Unobtained rights and administrative obstacles: rights claimed but not obtained, because of bad administration, highly discretionary powers, absence of appeal procedures, requests for ID cards (Roma!), obligation to have an address (homeless!).

Discarded rights and opinion of social intermediaries: intermediaries may discourage potential users to claim rights. No examples in reports. On contrary, the potential of social workers and street workers to increase take-up.

FEANTSA highlight non-take-up as a big problem for rough sleepers and people staying at friends, less for those who stay at homeless accommodation where social workers help with papers.

Recommendations: automatic granting of rights, simplification of Minimum Income Systems, outreach work by qualified social workers, one-stop-shops and better cooperation between administrations and the separation of social work and control functions.

FEANTSA recommend review and simplification of administrative rules, improved interaction with other elements of welfare state, strengthened empirical evidence and research on non-take-up.

Linkages with Active Inclusion

In most countries there is little evidence of the integrated approach outlined in the Active Inclusion Recommendation. There is growing emphasis on willingness to take up work or training, activation strategies, but often this is not seen as effectively leading vulnerable people to labour market, but in some cases to precarious jobs. In many countries there is a hardening of political, media and public attitude towards Minimum Income beneficiaries. Several countries have introduced obligation to take up public works as counterpart for

receiving Minimum Income. Crisis and austerity measures had a considerable negative impact on availability of enabling services: housing, education, childcare and health care.

Recommendations

Create more work in sheltered employment and social economy, establish youth guarantee plans, local development plans, provide training and job opportunities adapted to needs of MI beneficiaries, Set up personalised active inclusion measures, increase ceiling for combining wages with MI to avoid inactivity gaps, better cooperation between employment services, social services and NGOs, introduce personalised coaches to accompany people.

AGE makes a special recommendation for the active inclusion of older people.

Proposed EU Road Map

Fintan Farrell. EMIN Project Coordinator

The road map is included in the document 'Towards adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes in Europe' and consists of three key parts: awareness raising and public debate, building towards an EU Directive on adequate minimum income schemes and the integration of follow up on minimum income schemes into key EU processes. The full report can be found online, at <https://eminnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/emin-synthesis-report-road-map-2014-en.pdf>

We must build public awareness, for economic, human rights and ethical reasons, and do away with the stigma of minimum income schemes, and aim for good quality schemes. It is possible to have an EU Directive: there is no reason why not! Existing EU commitments, for example 2020, the Social Investment Package, Peer Reviews... all these can be used to support a directive.

Awareness raising and public debate

Stakeholders clearly expressed the need to **launch a public debate on the definition of what is considered as an adequate minimum income**. In all countries and at EU level, campaigns should be launched to promote the progressive realisation of adequate Minimum Income Schemes, based on the rights of citizens in the EU Treaty, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and on the commitments made by Council and Commission on adequate Minimum Income Schemes.

Awareness raising and public debate should focus on the importance of adequate Minimum Income Schemes to enable people to participate in society and to reduce inequality contributing to creating more equal and fairer societies. They should counter ideas about beneficiaries of minimum income being people who profit from society. They should stress the importance of adequate MIS as a basis for high quality social protection systems, acting as 'economic stabilisers'. They should also point to the cost of not investing in adequate MIS and of non-take-up for people and for the whole of society. The Commission should launch a research on the cost for societies of not investing in adequate minimum income and social protection.

An EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Income Schemes

As EMIN, we consider that a key role of the EU in ensuring adequate minimum income protection in member states lies in the development of an EU framework directive.

Why?

- As neither the 1992 Recommendation nor the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation have delivered after all these years, a new start and stronger basis for action is needed.
- The directive would give meaning to the horizontal social clause and to the article on combating social exclusion of the Fundamental Rights Charter.
- It is no longer viable to develop national social policies without considering the European perspective. Common EU level efforts are needed to help achieve high social standards.
- Citizens are strongly attached to the European Social Model. Convergence of costs of living is growing without similar convergence of levels of benefits and wages. This is leading to a highly divided Europe with loss of solidarity and growing distrust of democratic institutions. A Directive on adequate MIS would show commitment to a Union of social values and would help restore confidence.

Content of the framework directive¹ could include (Treaty base for a framework Directive: TFEU article 153.1.h) : common principles and definitions of what constitutes adequate Minimum Income Schemes, common methodology for defining adequacy, including the requirement for systematic updating mechanisms, requirement for common approaches on coverage, efforts to facilitate take up and abolishment of excessive conditionality, common information requirements, common requirements for monitoring and evaluation, the requirement for independent bodies and procedures to adjudicate in cases of dispute between the administration and recipients, the requirement for the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes and establishing the principle of the engagement of stakeholders in the development, monitoring and evaluation of minimum income schemes.

In order to define common principles and definitions of what constitutes an adequate minimum income, the Commission should create a panel of experts, including members of the Social Protection Committee, social partners, NGOs working with people experiencing poverty and representatives of people experiencing poverty to discuss the principles and definitions of what constitutes an adequate minimum income.

The common methodology for defining adequate minimum income should build on the agreed at-risk-of-poverty indicator of **60% of median equivalised income** and the agreed material deprivation indicators, as national references, and the use of **a common EU-wide framework and methodology** for reference budgets, to test the robustness of the level of minimum income and of the 60% threshold. This framework and methodology for reference budgets should be based on **active participation of people experiencing poverty** in the establishment of the baskets of goods and services that form the basis of the reference budgets.

A **positive hierarchy** must be ensured with minimum wages to stimulate active inclusion and reverse the destructive trend of rising numbers of working poor. For **people of non-working age**, such as children and older people, adequate minimum income schemes need to be introduced through relevant social inclusion measures.

¹ See Anne Van Lancker, EAPN Working Paper on a Framework Directive on Adequate Minimum Income, September 2010.

Integrate the follow up on adequate Minimum Income schemes in key EU processes

The Europe 2020 strategy: adequate Minimum Income Schemes are a key instrument to contribute to the delivery of the Europe 2020 poverty reduction target. In order to achieve this, the main instruments under the European Semester have to be re-balanced in order to better reflect the social challenges: the **Annual Growth Survey Annual Progress Report**, the **National Reform Programmes** and National Social Reports should be made obligatory. An **integrated anti-poverty strategy** which includes integrated active inclusion ensuring adequate minimum income, capable of delivering on the Europe 2020 target, developed with stakeholders, including with people experiencing poverty and the organisations that support them, to deliver on the poverty target and ensure access to rights, resources and services. The **social scoreboard indicators** on poverty and inequality must be linked to the broader set of social indicators from the social protection performance monitor and should include specific indicators on adequacy of minimum income. The **horizontal social clause** (article 9 TFEU) must be made operational by the European Commission as part of an ex-ante social impact assessment to assess austerity measures and reforms that are planned by the Member States in their National Reform Programmes and as part of the budget surveillance. The Commission should draw up and agree **obligatory Guidelines or Code of Guidance** for Member States to ensure meaningful engagement of People experiencing Poverty and the organisations that support them in the dialogue process at EU as well as at national level, on the European Semester, the NRPs and the CSRs, and support allocation of funds to ensure effective engagement in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The use of the European Structural Funds to ensure adequate minimum income in the fight against poverty and social exclusion: although Structural Funds are not usually used to finance minimum income schemes, there is evidence that they are likely to be used to support new pilot initiatives, reinforcing administrative efficiency (e.g. in Greece and Italy), and could be actively promoted as part of the requirement to deliver integrated active inclusion strategies.

Social Investment and other key EU processes: the prioritisation of **Social Investment** through the operationalizing of the Social Investment Package, as called for by the Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, should require annual work programmes to drive and monitor the implementation of adequate minimum income, as part of implementation of the Active Inclusion Recommendation, the Recommendation on Investing in Children, the Staff Working Document on Tackling Homelessness and Housing Exclusion and the Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions. The **Social Open Method of Coordination** should be used to exchange best practices on issues such as take-up, coverage and adequacy of Minimum Income Schemes through Peer and Thematic Reviews involving stakeholders, including anti-poverty organisations. The Commission should launch **research on the cost for societies of not investing in adequate minimum income** and social protection. The reports of the **European Social Policy Network** should ensure follow-up on countries' efforts to provide adequate Minimum Income schemes. The **Knowledge Bank** should include data and good practices on progress on adequate MIS in countries.

“The road won't get shorter if we stand in one spot”... so let's make it happen!

Response to the EMIN Road Map

Claudia Menne, Confederal Secretary, ETUC

The work of convincing other actors to support this work is well done. Last week it was agreed to continue the discussion on in-work poverty within the ETUC. The next step will be to discuss the road map, especially regarding adequacy and the proposal for an EU Directive. In particular they subscribe to the road map concerning the removal of stigma and recommendations to link with EU developments such as the peer reviews.

Common principles are needed, together with a document on how to improve schemes. A further important question concerns the links with minimum wage. ETUC is promoting the rate of 60% for median wage as the minimum wage figure which would enable a positive hierarchy with the proposal to have minimum income at 60% of median income.

Discussion focussed on conditionality issues: what use is conditionality to get people into sustainable jobs? Policies are making children get into poverty. People on minimum Income do a lot of voluntary work, which is often not recognised. Quality public services are essential to creating a minimum income. Disability must be taken into account. Supporting a Directive will only be meaningful if it supports the anti-poverty struggle. Minimum Income is not mentioned in the country specific recommendations... they are drafted by the business sector.

Stefan Olsson, for the European Commission, responded that Member States must introduce the right measures to reform social protection systems, learning from other member states. Links to services are very important, as also described in the Reference Budgets project. Sell the concept: it is extremely important to confront political decision makers for this to become an issue of fact.

Workshops

With the participation of Representatives from Civil Society Organisations, Social Partners, Academics and Institutional Representatives

Presenters in the workshops were asked to answer two questions 1) To tell about work they (in their professional and/or personal role) have done which can contribute to adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes and 2) To make suggestions about work they could do or would suggest to be done to help to implement the EMIN EU Road Map for the Progressive realization of adequate Minimum Income Schemes.

Workshop 1: The European Social Policy Network and the Reference Budgets project

The European Social Policy Network

Hugh Frazer, Coordinator European Social Policy Network

Thematic reports include implementation of the EC Recommendation on Investing in children, ROMA and the labour market. Regarding Minimum Income schemes, a report in 2009 looked at Minimum Income schemes in each member state and active inclusion recommendations in different countries. Issues included non-take-up, active inclusion, the impact of emerging crisis and more. A 2012 report showed weakness of adequate income schemes and the need to set up guidelines and we also looked at developing a European Minimum Income scheme, recommending comprehensive active inclusion strategies in member states.

The new European Social Policy Network continues to advise the Commission but is now on a much wider range of issues, producing 35 country profiles on social inclusion protection every year, updated four times a year, and providing an overview of social policy development and priorities. In each country 3 to 4 people are involved, mainly academics, sometimes independent researchers or from consultancies.

Thematic reports are on specific issues such as social investment or long-term health care but much shorter (6 or 7 pages), whereas country reports would be 30 pages. They prepared regular reporting on the European semester, now reporting on the very beginning of the process for the 19th of December.

Country experts also prepare flash reports, if something happens in a country which the Commission considers to be important, creating knowledge banks on social policy issues related to the Social Investment Package, describing new social policies in a country and how can they help other countries, Minimum Income Schemes and how could they be promoted.

The relevance of the EU Reference Budget Project

Anne Van Lancker, EMIN Policy Coordinator

Reference budgets are used in 15 countries: they cover the expenditure of people on low income and are more survival kits on food, housing and health. Institutional cultures differ and so need to be taken into account to define a reference budget in a country. To calculate expenditure you take what people consume; another methodology is based on gathering people across society to define the basket and pricing it and then using survey data or legal requirements.

Reference budgets give people a clear understand of what people need. If you have baskets and products people see clearly what is needed. In countries where free public services then services like education, social housing or transport are free they should be included in the basket but not priced. It really shows what you are giving to people and what they need.

There are dangers linked to using reference budgets as they are constructed as the minimum required, based on families that are healthy and where services are provided. This is not always the case. Reference budget projects are carried out in capital cities but there are differences between city and the country side. They should never be used in a prescriptive way: you should not be told what to do with the money allocated. Reference budgets based on expenditure of low income budget miss out on some of the items, but should rather be based on what is adequate in terms of goods and services.

Stakeholders of the Reference Budgets project are EAPN, European Trade Unions, FEANTSA, Eurodiaconia, Eurochild... The process is launched to have 28 national budget experts contacting their own national stakeholders. They will construct 10 complete baskets, which will be published by the Commission.

Minimum resources for families to participate in society are not a luxury. Baskets are about nutrition, healthcare and personal care, security and childhood, significant primary relationships and life-long learning. There will be discussions regarding what the content for the basket should be in different countries. Stakeholders are key to increasing the credibility of the reference budgets.

Reference budgets should not be a replacement of the actual use of social indicators. They are more a reference to the absolute needs of people. The teams developing reference budgets come to the conclusion that requirements for people to participate in societies are less unbalanced than when you rely on medium income. However In some countries you will not be able to live with a dignified life with the Minimum Income.

Discussion

A reference budget is based on the situation in a particular city and belongs to that city: a reference basket in one city is different from another city. The national budget institute in the Netherlands has its own basket system. If a family with MIN receives far more than the person working this is a danger, which could be used to lower the rate of Minimum Income. The project cannot replace existing data and social indicators.

Cross cutting of the population and discussion within different groups of people when the basket is really important: migrants did not want to show they needed things as they were afraid of being needy. In Spain the Minimum Income is calculated with an indicator that nobody understands. Using reference budgets could be a way to calculate needs in a transparent manner.

Workshop 2: FEANTSA and Stefan Olsson, European Commission

FEANTSA: non take up of Minimum Income

Natalie Boccadoro, FEANTSA

The main findings of the FEANTSA study on non-take up (NTU) of MI by homeless people in France, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Poland, UK and Romania were:

The impact of the policy approach: no data on the focus and extent of NTU of MI schemes, non-take up is higher when measures are targeted or when activation systems are in place, activation strategies are not adapted to homeless people, anti-fraud measures imply increased proof of eligibility and non-take up is lower when there is a stronger political will to deal with homelessness.

Reasons for non-take up include unknown rights, often due to lack of communication, unclaimed rights due to costs, stigma or forced choice, unobtained rights and administrative burdens and discarded rights.

Recommendations on changes: strengthen empirical evidence, change the conception of the law, to take into account increased participation in their development, change implementation of the laws, in attitudes of the administration and in the communication of the measures.

Recommendations for EMIN: non take up is a policy issue and an issue of efficiency, promoting the use of anti-fraud tools (cross-checking, for example) to also check who is not taking up on their rights, and to work on simple measures that make a difference (such as proving an address, simplifying procedures...).

The work of the European Commission on adequate Minimum Income Schemes

Stefan Olsson, Head of Unit, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Mr Olsson presented the current picture as regards the work on MI from a European perspective: the EU provides a very diverse picture on Minimum Income, ranging from Greece where at the moment 138 completely separate, mainly disability-based, benefits exist and where a pilot project on minimum income is being set up, to Sweden, where systems are universal, and are very clear and simple. The European Commission's unit working on Minimum Income is also covering the work with several EU networks, the convention, recommendations on investment in children, follow-up of European semester and EU social fund. There is a resource issue at central, European level.

The situation today, with 28 member states, implies that the commission does not have the same capacity to go in-depth or have an active role on all issues, which is a very different picture from just 20 years ago. It is very important to create a political momentum for an issue. The debate cannot be driven by the Commission, rather from the European Parliament, through projects such as EMIN and by Member State governments (as for example the Youth guarantee initiative which came from the EU Council). Greece and Italy are main focus for the Commission at the moment since there is no system, as well as countries where the level is too low. Need for solid statistical data is a priority. The Reference Budget project is very important to gather the adequate data.

If the network wants to put this higher on the agenda, the Commission needs to get this impetus from the Council and Parliament – EMIN should ensure it works with these as main drivers in this process.

Discussion: *Participants agreed that many factors contribute to non-take up in their countries. Job centres in the UK were mentioned as an example, not having any role in advising people on their rights, on the support they could access, and in some cases even creating a hostile environment for people to enter. It is important to look at costs – often the focus is on how*

much support systems cost, but the cost of being poor or homeless (financial, human, social...) is higher than the cost of guaranteeing adequate minimum rights. In the Czech Republic there is a mainstream public discourse and employment systems discriminate against People experiencing poverty, or specific groups such as Roma, creating intimidation and non-take-up of rights. The political will in Macedonia to address Minimum Income is unclear. 30% unemployment rates show that there are no jobs but the discourse is that people are lazy and should work. In Spain Minimum Income is a regional competence. The Housing First programme is a helpful and inspiring initiative at European level.

Non take up also appears as a 'saving' for countries: is there a hidden agenda? Is it in the interest of the countries not to address non take up? What is the capacity and interest in joining a campaign next year from the different networks? 'Peanuts to politicians' or 'Lemon day' could be interesting initiatives

Conclusions of the workshop are: the importance of respect and transparency, conditionality can act as deterrent, states to be more active in giving information, generating cross European momentum, data gathering is essential, and the importance of looking at all costs, not just the cost of the measures provided (cost of non take -up, human cost, health costs...).

Workshop 3: Social Platform and the European Commission

The Social Platform position on Minimum Income and future work

Pierre Baussaud, Director, European Platform on Social Policy

Pierre outlined the work that the Social Platform has done to keep the question of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes on the EU agenda. In particular he spoke about the position paper that the Social Platform presented to the Informal EPSCO Council in April 2014. The position paper built on the work undertaken in the EMIN project and its key message of:

- a call to all member states to put in place adequate minimum income schemes that are accessible to all that need them.
- the right to an adequate minimum income should be recognised as a fundamental right and should enable people to live in dignity, support their full participation in society and ensure their independence across the life cycle.
- to achieve a level playing field across Europe, an EU framework directive on adequate minimum income schemes should be adopted that establishes common principles, definitions of adequacy and methods to implement the schemes. The full position paper can be accessed at:

http://www.socialplatform.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/04/20140429_SocialPlatform_Contribution_informal-EPSCO_Greece.pdf

He outlined how the Social Platform will build on this work in the context of work it is doing on pushing to have the EU cooperate to develop common high level social standards.

The work of the European Commission on Minimum Income Schemes

Istvan Vanyolos, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Istvan outlined the history of the work of the Commission on this topic and highlighted that the most recent commitments come in the Commission's Social Investment Package. He highlighted that the two key actions to follow up on the commitments that are currently being supported and worked on are this project under EMIN and the project on establishing a common methodology for the preparation of Reference budgets. He gave information on the developments under the reference budget project and drew attention to the fact that more information on this project can be found at: <http://www.referencebudgets.eu/>

Workshop 4: Age Platform Europe

A summary was given of the work that Age Platform Europe did under the project on adequacy of income for older people. The full report from AGE can be accessed at <https://eminnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/emin-2014-adequacy-older-people-en.pdf>

Attention was drawn to the work that the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions is doing on access to benefits and in particular a report it prepared on the non-take-up of benefits. This pointed to the reality that non-take-up of minimum income schemes is a real problem. Access to information on this work can be got at this address: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/access-to-benefits-in-times-of-crisis>

Workshop 5: Dynamics of Minimum Income schemes, and the Social Protection Committee

Research on entry to and exit from Minimum Income schemes

Sarah Carpentier, Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp

Research focused on the exit from Minimum Income schemes in Belgium, with data tracked over four years, on a quarterly basis.

Median duration for entry in 2004 was 8 months. 10% of people remain in Minimum Income Schemes after 4 years. Most people remain for a little time in the system. There is high turnover – contrary to the wrong perception that many people exploit the system forever. In Belgium, there are 89 welfare agencies – the variation in duration between them is as important as between countries in Europe; poverty is a localized issue. One third of those who exit schemes will re-enter them later.

Regarding where people go after exiting Minimum Income Schemes, usually a change in income triggers exit, such as finding a job – for about half of previous recipients. About 40% switch to other forms of social security. Other exits can mean that people become totally disconnected – it can mean being in jail, leaving the country etc. It can also mean non-take-up after a period of initial take-up. People in subsequent schemes usually exit through work – there is no pattern of dependency, people do want to work but it is unavailable to them, or only available for short spells.

Minimum Income Schemes are some of the more decentralized social security schemes, which means less data is available. The current monitoring instruments don't allow for monitoring at the local level. There is too much emphasis on numbers, but a more ethical framework of what is equal and just treatment is badly needed. Story-telling is needed to complement a quantitative analysis.

Discussion

There is a lot of focus on labour market data, because this is easily available. Research was also conducted on people who exit to take up temporary work. We need better insights into this dynamic – what is sustainable activation, and what is not. Data about exits was broken down by gender, age, other profiles, and there are significant differences. Women exit less to work, more often to social security. Third country nationals exit more to work.

Minimum income is very badly measured in the EU-SILC. Recipients are very difficult to reach, some are homeless, refugees, people living in concentrated areas of poverty. Also, it is not possible to get localized data from EU-SILC.

Administrative data should be developed, to allow the bureaucratic process to be simplified. It would be more useful to have automatic rights. Preventive strategies are also urgently needed, including investing in existing and future generations. Policy packages need to look at what brought people in the situation to be recipients in the first place, why they exit schemes, and where they go afterwards.

The Social Protection Committee and Minimum Income schemes

Muriel Rabau, Social Protection Committee

The Committee released an overview of Minimum Income Schemes in all Member States, at the request of an informal EPSCO. The mandate was to look at links between income support and social protection more generally. We also carry out multilateral surveillance in the framework of the European Semester. For the Country-Specific Recommendations, we use some indicators linked to minimum income. They all come from SILC, but also from the OECD.

The SPC tries to link Minimum Income Schemes and the Active Inclusion Strategy. A majority of SPC members want to keep adequate income support in the framework of this strategy, as it has a balanced approach – combining income with quality services, as well as, for those who can work, pathways towards the labour market. The SPC has an Indicators Subgroup, which tries to follow-up in a regular way on the Reference Budgets project. Not all countries want to work on reference budgets though.

Next week, we are organizing a thematic review on the role of income benefits for those who are long-term excluded from the labour market. In the framework of the Pension Adequacy Report, we distributed a questionnaire on the minimum income of the elderly. In the Social Protection Performance Monitor, we put together country fiches, about benefits and their recipients.

Next year, the Indicators Subgroup will receive the mandate to reinforce indicators for risk of poverty for benefits recipients. We want to know who are the recipients, what is the level of the benefits, and it targets specifically those unemployed for 6, 12 and 24 months.

The SPC generally tries to keep the issue on the agenda, and inform the debate with positions reports, reviews etc. It is dispersed work, not a proper follow-up of the Action Inclusion Strategy. However, there is the will of the Committee to continue working on this. It is also important that the impulse comes from the European Commission.

The EMIN Roadmap is a very important contribution. One reason for having adequate income schemes is that it supports growth. It not the most important reason in our view, but in the current climate, where everything is growth-oriented, to have more arguments and more evidence in that direction.

Discussion

Antwerp University conducted a study that showed that the more generous the schemes are, the faster people leave them. This could be an argument to use when trying to persuade decision-makers. Minimum Income Schemes are an instrument which can contribute significantly to the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives, but the links are not made obvious enough. Guidelines are needed at a European level, to end the fragmentation of schemes, which are not even on a national, but often even at a regional level. Targeting

social support sounds like a great idea, but in reality, it only means that a lot of vulnerable groups fall through the gaps and are left behind.

Muriel Rabau confirmed that she would take a lot back to the SPC. The Committee can help in mainly two ways – measuring the situation on the ground, and keeping the visibility of the issue. Unfortunately, we do not have the power to initiate legislative change.

Workshop 6 Social Protection Floors (ILO), European Parliament

Social Protection Floors

Christina Behrendt, Social Protection Department, International Labour Office

In past decades there has emerged a paradigm shift in social protection in developing countries. There is now discussion as to whether poorer countries can afford not to invest in social protection.

The ILO is made up of governments, workers and employers. International labour standards are not compulsory, but recommendations. The Social protection floor concept emerged from discussions at the ILO, and was endorsed by the UN in 2009 (joint UN crisis response initiative). The International Labour Conference decided in 2011 to discuss a possible Recommendation on SPFs in 2012. The ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) was adopted in 2012 as a new international labour standard.

Social protection floors are an integrated policy approach to contribute to the realization of human rights: adequate standard of living, food, health, housing, education, work, and just and favourable conditions of work. With an outcome orientated approach, the two-fold objective of Recommendation No. 202: National social protection floors... provides guidance to members to:

- (a) Establish and maintain, as applicable, social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems: nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. (*Horizontal dimension: Guaranteeing access to essential health care and minimum income security for all*).
- b) Implement social protection floors within strategies for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible, guided by ILO social security standards : Progressively build and maintain comprehensive and adequate social security systems. (*The Vertical dimension: progressively ensuring higher levels of protection guided by C.102 and more advanced standards*).

Social Protection Floors include at least four **nationally-defined guarantees**: access to a set of goods and services constituting essential health care including maternity care, basic income security for children providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services, basic income security for persons in active age unable to earn sufficient income and basic income security for persons in old age.

Guidance provided by the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation R202 provides an **integrated multidimensional framework** to assess national social security systems as a whole and specific programmes against specific criteria based on clear principles:

- Responds to social security needs of the entire population, including the middle class.

- Nationally defined set of basic social security guarantees aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion (not limited to these four guarantees).
- Universal access to health care (including maternity care), aiming at achieving universal health coverage. Health care utilization should not lead to hardship and increased poverty risk.
- Explicitly linking income security for children to access to nutrition, education and care
- Income security (including incomes in cash and in-kind) should allow life in dignity and ensure access to necessary goods and services.
- National definition of minimum levels should allow life in dignity. Regular review through transparent procedure with participation of social partners and other stakeholders.
- Systemic and rights- based approach. Entitlements set out in national law and with accessible appeal procedures. Coordination with related policy areas (employment, economic, other social policies).

How can the Social Protection Floors Recommendation be relevant to the discussion on Minimum Income schemes in Europe?

Adequacy: Basic income security should allow life in dignity; threshold defined at national level. Health: persons in need should not face hardship and an increased risk of poverty due to the financial consequences of accessing health care. Regular review through transparent and participatory procedure.

Coverage: Basic social security guarantees should be provided to at least all residents and (all) children, subject to existing international standards. Universality of protection based on social solidarity. Social inclusion including of persons in the informal economy.

Rights, entitlements, and take-up: Respect of rights and dignity; awareness. Non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs. Entitlements to benefits established by national law and awareness-raising. Complaints and appeal procedures: impartial, transparent, effective, simple, rapid, accessible, inexpensive and free of charge for applicant.

Social protection is an integral part of the ILO's strategic framework. All of the ILO's four strategic objectives are relevant to promoting social justice. The new social security strategy was adopted in 2011 and underpinned by the adoption of Social Protection Floors Recommendation in 2012.

Discussion

EAPN is signatory to the coalition on Social Protection Floors. It provides a comprehensive approach to rights, an inspiring document. Impressive points are the shift from the paradigm to "you can't afford not to", the integrated approach, the ILO recommendation on decent work, the emphasis on outcomes (not just about 'how'), and the complaints and appeals procedures.

The question arises as to whether the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will follow, for example in Mozambique the International Monetary Fund worked with a local team to identify space for social protection. The IMF is also now talking about inequality. The World Bank is more attached to safety nets: flexible and non-permanent.

The link between social protection and democracy, and also the cultural dimension, are important. Avoid using the 'bottom line' but rather bring standards closer to each other.

The European Parliament and Minimum Income schemes

Karima Delli, MEP

Stress the importance of culture. We always look at the bottom, not at the top.

The 2010 Lisbon strategy stated that Europe would eradicate poverty, yet poverty has now exploded. The 2020 strategy does not put people at the heart of policy, at the expense of reality. Work no longer protects people from poverty. The extreme right in the Parliament say that we “can’t give minimum income to lazy people”. Regarding access to work, there is no work, so we need a safety net. There is an explosion of poverty among women, young persons and older people, so we need to shout about the social emergency.

We have a window of opportunity ... as the new Commission is now in place, they have no road map: we have four months to act. In 2010 we voted for a European minimum income, so we must now demand an EU Directive. We need to reconcile EU citizens with Europe: this is a practical idea to respond to their need. Where there are differences we must ‘pull Europe upwards’. We need to change from less social to more social. 60% median income is a good base. Access to minimum is important, for example the RSA system in France is only available to over 25s, and only to those who have worked for two years, which is discriminatory. In 2015 we cannot leave anyone on the side of the road. Juncker has described the “Commission de la dernière chance”: without minimum income the European project will die.

Discussion

In order to progress a Directive, the Social Affairs committee must sign a resolution on minimum income, with a debate in plenary in Strasbourg. Re-demand an initiative and create a citizen’s movement on the issue. Most important will be the European council as all countries are in their own corner. In 2015 a major event is planned to demand minimum income. Life in dignity needs definition.

In 13 countries material deprivation is higher than 60% median income (which in poor countries can bring down the 60% median income...). Minimum income is not enough but needs all the system to support it. All EU policies are accompanied by national measures. Relationship with democracy. Cultural question is what is acceptable, the general question is who will finance it? Who pays for what? A larger definition of income includes not only from social protection but also from income policy and wage policy.

‘Don’t let go, don’t fall into fatalism’.

Closing Plenary

Open feedback from the Workshops

Participants emphasised the cost to society of non-take up and that lack of respect often prevents take up. Minimum income is nested into other dimensions, also democracy/rights are threatened when there is no minimum income.

Action is needed across Europe, using different ways of focusing attention, for example presenting lemons to politicians, or in the UK where they presented peanuts...

Links between EMIN and experts' network and reference budgets project had been discussed. More discussion on the gender issue is also needed.

Discussion also focussed on the need to standardise data: the research on exit/entry to Minimum Income in Belgium is based on administrative data. Some participants consider that the SPC is very dispersed and should have a clear direction.

Questions arose regarding the view that minimum income is good for growth... how can it become good for employment? Active inclusion is good for employment.

The ILO social floor is very useful: it covers adequacy, coverage and take up, in terms of entitlements, and gaps can be clarified. It is not only about national standards, rather we need convergence.

Higher minimum wages are needed. Public opinion is not always in favour. In UK there is no consensus on the 60% basis, as this could maintain people in poverty. A relative measure is a consensual measure.

What's needed to make adequate Minimum Income Schemes a Reality?

Hugh Frazer, EMIN Management Team

These two years' work is only a start. It is impossible to do justice to the discussions. Discussions on social policy have become difficult, also regarding Minimum Income, adequacy, access, coverage, and the different needs of different groups. But what are we talking about? Minimum Income as a building block to the right to a life in dignity. If there is no Minimum Income what hope is there for Europe?

The project occurs at a difficult time: the crisis, the rise in poverty levels, rise in prejudice, impact of conditionality, the emphasis on the impact on growth, and activation without social inclusion.

The achievements of EMIN include a deepened understanding of Minimum Income Schemes, adequacy, coverage and take up, leading to more learning and more data on new useful alliances, involving new stakeholders, and preventing worse things happening, even where there is no progress. In future we must stop misinformation, and state why Minimum Income matters: it is a lifeline to staying active, to reconnect to society. It is essential to inclusion, for equality, flexibility and to enable people to engage in the community. Also the importance of linkages, and listening to people's experience is very important.

The next stage will be to build public awareness, challenge stigma, foster political leadership and support, and do more on sharing linkages between Minimum Income and other schemes, plus the link between Minimum Income and Minimum Wages.

The European Parliament has an important role to play regarding a Framework Directive, Further discussions are needed with Trade Unions, the Commission, the Social Protection Committee, and with national ministries.

Regarding integration in to the overall European process, this takes place in the context of the Mid-term review of 2020, the new Commission, the discussion of the European Monetary Union. Regarding structural Funds, insist on the use of 20 per cent at national level. The Social Investment Package and Minimum Income reinforce each other. There is a need for greater convergence. Minimum Income could be a first step.

Concluding, this has been a very timely discussion, given the growing importance of Minimum Income schemes in the European Parliament, the Commission, Trade Unions, the Social Protection Network, the Social Protection Committee and the ILO connections.

Thanks for your work on adequate Minimum income schemes, the time has come. Gandhi stated that “poverty is the worst form of violence”. Minimum Income is a key to ending this. The first key building block is to ensure Europe creates Minimum Income Schemes!

Appendix 1: Sharing experiences from the EMIN Project

Workshop 1: Ireland, Czech Republic, Greece, Malta and Slovakia

Achievements

Ireland

The Irish Network has brought together NGOs, think tanks and unions. Most were already concerned about minimum income, but the project allowed them to share information and analysis, move from defensive messages on cuts and conditionality to a positive vision, discuss a medium-term plan and plan joint initiatives, such as a 'myth-buster' blog. The project has also allowed for serious discussions with politicians, social partners, academics and Government officials

The project involved a lot of discussions with politicians about their views on minimum income, but also about what they thought was 'sellable'. NGOs, think-tanks, academics: The discussions to develop the reports and roadmap and the conference focussed the minds of our constituencies on a positive vision on minimum income, where before the main focus had been responses to cuts or new conditionality. The reports have had an impact on thinking in key ministries and have been positively received.

The Roadmap has been built up through discussion in the network, the views of politicians and decision-makers and feedback from workshops at the network conference. The aim for 2015 is to build a campaign/advocacy network on adequacy, linking current welfare rates with reference budgets and specific costs for different groups, including the cost of disability, take-up, removing bureaucratic, information and social barriers and coverage: promoting solidarity and avoiding marginalisation of excluded groups (e.g. migrants, asylum seekers) and conditions which remove people from coverage.

The main decision-makers are the Minister and Department of Social protection and the Financial Departments which set their parameters, to be influenced through public opinion – Message, social solidarity "it could be me/us" , politicians – message costs on not providing adequate coverage and media – with a message, and examples of impact and fighting myths about dependency

Czech Republic

Since the start of the project the organisation has grown, from 8 organisations at the start to 24 by the end of the project.

Targeting audience of politics and decision makers is necessary for changing the social politics and legislative: The national EMIN conference was held under the auspices of the Vice-president of the Senate of the Czech Republic Mr. Zdeněk Škromach who explained the idea of minimum income as a tool for improving the social benefit system for the poor. 31 persons working in governmental institutions and public administration attended the Conference. EAPN sent an interpellation to Mrs. Michaela Marks, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, including argumentation in favor of the scheme of minimum income, leading to a meeting of several NGOs with her is planned for January. Targeting an audience of mainstream public is necessary for changing opinions of poor people in the Czech Republic. The mainstream public opinion is that people receiving social benefits don't want to work. On 7th October, the day of the National Conference, Czech TV broadcasts in main news programme wide reportage about poverty and minimum income scheme in Czech Republic. The main message was that people receiving social benefits can survive, but faced with unexpected expenses they have to borrow money and can fall in debts. They don't deserve contempt but help. Concerning this issue several articles in newspaper and magazines were published in the critical period.

Regarding whether the project helped national partners to decide on clear (SMART) campaign objectives for an adequate and accessible minimum income scheme, this is not yet the case. But there

are first steps done to continue the campaign. The reason is that part of people experiencing poverty can't reach the benefits although they guaranteed by the law. The minimum income scheme introduces equity and better accessibility in case of material need. Example of indicators for 2015 are: identifying and establishing criteria for minimum income scheme, and Revised legislation to protect people experienced poverty against over indebtedness, which decision maker can act on it and when: during 2015 we plan negotiations with the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, the Ministry of justice and the Ministry of finance, following-up on successful projects realised during the European year of poverty 2010. The best arguments to convince these decision makers to act are reducing poverty in the Strategy 2020, responding with equity for people experiencing poverty, and helping people experiencing poverty means supporting social cohesion. We plan to measure success by the end of 2015 by the understanding minimum income scheme on the level of the government and local authorities, and the number of (semi-)successful negotiations, articles and similar.

Greece

In the Greek case, within its differences (piloting a scheme of MIS for first time), the initial levels of collaboration was minimal and internal to the members of the Greek Network. EMIN offered the opportunity (given the timing) to bring many new organisations and institutions in a closer dialogue and consultation over the MIS that the country needs and deserves within the current circumstances. In our consultation meeting(s) we engaged in a dialogue with more than 30 new entities (organisations and persons) during the project life cycle

Malta

The achievements have been the first research study of the sort in Malta, greater visibility for the Anti-Poverty Forum in Malta (EAPN Malta), another building block on a previous study on Reference budgets by Caritas Malta, they have addressed certain myths in Malta regarding welfare beneficiaries, and close collaboration with policy-makers (invited by the Social Affairs Parliamentary group to make an official presentation).

Slovakia

The project intensified existing contacts and improved collaboration with NGOs associated in Slovak Anti-Poverty Network, stimulated exchange among academic experts, NGOs and people experiencing poverty. Project (final conference) has good media coverage, however, it rather encouraged those already convinced about the importance adequate MIS than was capable to help increase awareness of those who are not favour of adequate income sufficient to live in dignity for those who do not work and disagree with their unconditional support.

Learnings

Ireland

In Ireland the approaches to Collaboration which have worked have been to demonstrate the added value of collaboration in information-sharing and extra resources for research and analysis, to build from the current (short-term) work and (long-term) aspirations of members and build medium-term strategies, and to discuss our issues widely with politicians of all parties, officials and social partners. Our capacity has been limited by resources and by the time-constraints of members: it is easier to ask a member to do a task than to find time for more meetings! Our capacity has been strengthened by the range of expertise, knowledge, experience and goodwill of members, the broader networks within which members connect and the complementarity of information between, for example, NGOs and think tanks.

Most public awareness raising has been carried out by members individually, there was no attempt to create a new public 'brand'. The plan for next year is to build a joint public awareness platform between most of the main organisations in the area. The project has been most useful in building

awareness among large and small NGOs of how their issues fit into the broader national and European picture and building awareness among politicians of the impact of minimum income decisions on people's lives.

The development of a medium-term road map has been the core of this project, using research, analysis, discussions with politicians etc. and refinement by the partners and the participants in the conference. The main conclusion has been the need to combine measures based on needs (reference budgets) and on social cohesion (at risk of poverty line) and to incorporate particular costs for groups, such as the cost of disability. We have gathered a wide range of proposals on policy and tactics. Participants emphasised the need to argue from social solidarity ("it could be me/us") and to allow the voice of people affected

The resources were vital to allowing the research and analysis. In Ireland, there is a lot of goodwill between social organisations (NGOs, think tanks, unions). We needed the two years to lay the groundwork for a bigger campaign. EAPN Ireland was well placed to coordinate because we don't have as big a public 'brand' as most others and therefore can be a neutral space

Czech Republic

In terms of finding the right approaches, we have to use the human approach, if there are so many political people they don't like to listen to and we need more stakeholders to have influence on public. In terms of capacity to build collaboration, time is needed, as one year is not enough.

Awareness raising: given that poverty is such a negative issue, we have to present a human story, and we have to have the main Czech media on „our side“. In terms of capacity to do awareness raising, one year is not enough

Building road maps for the progressive realisation of adequate Minimum Income Schemes in collaboration with other actors, we have to prepare an action plan to continue our campaign, there is also a need to involve others actors: trade unions, business representatives, stakeholders.

We did not create any other system to manage project, we used Basecamp and usual systems of communication. Again, in terms of time, one year is not enough.

Greece

The EMIN project was a continuous learning process mainly because it brought many new insights from the MIS implementation countries. The exposure to so many different examples enhanced our understanding over the right approach (rights and dignified level of adequacy) and tools such as reference budgets. This knowledge was disseminated to targeted audiences including people in poverty in many ways.

Concerning collaboration, it has brought into light that dialogue even within opposing positions of stakeholders can be achieved. EMIN allowed that and this was a great achievement for the parties involved. We have established strong links of collaboration with many relevant stakeholders such as academics, who are left out of the process of monitoring the pilot scheme (it will be done by the World Bank who has supposedly designed the scheme).

Malta

The lessons learnt are: the importance of research initiatives by the non-governmental side; such research initiatives give credibility to NGOs and networks working in the field of poverty and social exclusion; families living in privately rented accommodation stand a higher risk of poverty and deprivation ; minimum income schemes, albeit they provide resources against absolute poverty reasonably well, they do not provide enough for a family to participate in the life of the community particularly where the household is living in a commercially rented dwelling; it also reveals that the

total income per annum for SA and SUP beneficiaries is below the 60 per cent of the national equivalised income.

Slovakia

It is incredible difficult to do sustained work on such a topic when organisations are very underfunded and have to make various pragmatic choices, which can make it difficult to confront authorities.

Future work of EMIN

Ireland

For the European Road map, promote a Europe-wide lobbying campaign for a Directive – a useful focus even if not winnable in the short term. Irish Road Map: A broader national alliance built on the Irish MIN ‘core’. A combination of public promotion of the medium-term vision of a minimum income linked to a reference budget and the at risk of poverty line, with additional costs such as disability factored in, information to counter hostile myths about recipients and research on costs and strategies to avoid creating poverty traps.

In Ireland we are building a network of NGOs, think tanks and unions on the basis of the Irish MIN group, Built from agreed principles and aims, and generate wider support for our vision/roadmap among political parties and officials

Building public support will entail a ‘two-speed’ media strategy: promoting a medium-term vision and coordinating short term lobbying and campaigning around, for example, the annual budget, a ‘myth buster’ website for campaigners, journalists and politicians, the use of straight-forward and inclusive language in media work, and support the voice in the media of people affected by low income.

Czech Republic

Future work entails: Czech politicians' efforts to support European politics and institutions, training public officials about the forms of support of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, connect social services and services provided by labor offices providing benefits and strengthen their mutual respect, linking better and more effectively social policy, public health issues, inclusion in education, active politics of employment, environment and housing at the level of legislation, public administration, public administration, regions, cities and municipalities.

Building National Minimum Income Networks and/collaboration with a broad range of actors: to obtain more financial resources for organizing meetings, seminars and conferences to enhance awareness concerning minimum income scheme. During the campaign to provide assignment between partners in the national minimum income network according to their specific focus, eg. the Salvation Army - the homeless people, Diacony of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren - the elderly, Poradna při finanční tísni (Debt Counselling) - people in debts, IQ Roma servis – Roma people living in excluded communities, Christian and Work – co-operation with trade unions, Platform of social housing – equity to live in dignity etc.

Building public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes: Before the enactment of minimum income to revise the legislation protecting people against over-indebtedness. To strengthen elements of prevention in social rehabilitation services rather than to save people from the consequences of poverty and social exclusion and to support community principle in the provision of benefits, social services and social housing.

Greece

Identify key alliances at policy making level when it comes to Greece to support the establishment of info in collaboration with the new entities and key stakeholders that had participated at the EMIN workshop. Build on arguments that involve technical characteristics (not only what is needed but how

is achieved) in collaboration with the academic community. Schedule a specific communication plan to meet and lobby with actors commonly identified

Use PEPs to enhance the involvement of those affected mostly into the process. Identify ambassadors of the cause and the idea that do carry legitimacy, respect and acceptance by the people.

Explain and define adequacy and feasibility through:

- informal solidarity networks,
- NGOs and other than EAPN network,
- debate at TV discussion panels,
- use social media,
- radio short messages or discussions,
- articles in free magazines

Malta

The need for research given the dearth of data on the social conditions of welfare beneficiaries; the need for bold statements to the policy makers to address certain pockets of concentrations of poverty; advocacy to show that activation measures should be balanced out with adequate income schemes; addressing seriously the benefit trap (precarious work, low minimum wage); opportunity to discuss tax evasion (not just welfare fraud) as an attack on the sustainability of social services. Although non-take up is not a big issue, there are two particular groups (migrants and persons with mental health issues) which require attention.

Slovakia

Possibly films, TV series about the life of poor people/children could move people and persuade them that the present state is not just and change is needed.

Workshop 2 Austria, Iceland, Netherlands and Germany

Achievements

Common achievements have been: making the topic more visible, showing what Minimum Income is, including for those who are not recipients, confirming that the European dimension of the work has contributed to greater visibility at national level, increasing knowledge of how the issue is being addressed at European level and in other countries and giving a space for people experiencing poverty to express their concerns.

Netherlands

Minimum income is described in the report as split into: 1/social assistance 2/ state guaranteed pension and 3/minimum income for disabled. Major changes are underway in laws governing these (pension age upped to 67...). Take-up is good but non-take up of the supplements (rent, children, childcare...) is low. Access is becoming more difficult (for youth for example). The political will to maintain the benefits remains although increases are not being considered.

Network achievements:

- Decided to look into MI schemes and target groups: why are they important, do they represent a trap? How can we improve it?
- Quite difficult to gather information for the report, not many participants at the Conference, mainly people experiencing poverty
- The initiative provided opportunities to broaden the network, more groups joined.

- The network has potential and is in a position to show what possibilities exist in NL that could improve situation in other countries (for example on the guaranteed state pension)
- The network would like to see pensions considered in the discussion

Achievement that could not have happened without the project: initiated cooperation with the national institute of budgeting

Iceland

Committees have started work on Minimum Income, including NGO, Government and local authorities. The Nordic welfare system hopefully will influence the work. Each resident is entitled to Minimum Income as replacement income if they have no other income. Municipalities have the main responsibility for deciding on level and distribution of MI.

The Welfare Ministry introduced the 'Welfare Watch' after the crisis involving NGOs, businesses, local authorities. This initiative is very open to listening to the Anti Poverty Network. A 'Prosperity report', developed over a year by a group of stakeholders (NGOs, government, local authorities...) on how to move away from the charity approach to the rights approach, helped change the language used in addressing the issue.

Network achievements:

- Quite easy to get information for the report
- One new member (Home Association) has joined the network following this work, very strongly on this subject. Helped visibility and strengthened expertise in the network. Also more connections to the university and network of local authorities
- More connections to relevant Ministries.
- People experiencing poverty spoke at conference.
- One of the biggest achievements was the acknowledgement that the system is very complicated for the beneficiaries. Visibility was facilitated through the network.
- The European dimension of the work allowed for greater visibility.

Achievement that could not have happened without the project was working with high level in Ministries and addressing their lack of knowledge.

Germany

Network achievements have been:

- Contacts with people experiencing poverty
- Making the network more publicly visible
- Making the public know there is a project in Europe and Germany on this
- Conference brought PEP to the fore, helped them to be heard
- Multiplier effect in changing the difficult patterns of life
- NAK (National poverty conference) members were also interested in joining the Conference

Austria

In Austria the guaranteed Minimum Income is needs-oriented. Minimum Income is given out by provinces but discussed at national level. There is a high non-take up rate, in some provinces, only 25% of people entitled to Minimum Income actually take up this support. A very high poverty rate among third country nationals, particularly youth, is creating social instability and growing inequalities, since they have no access to Minimum Income.

Network achievements:

- Lobbying on MI has been ongoing for some time within the network
- The project allowed for increased structure in the work on MI

- Good conference attended by many participants on a relatively new topic, which attracted new interest
- The work allowed for more collaboration with the Ministry, University and people experiencing poverty themselves
- Single-parent families are not supported by any lobbying as such, and this work allowed their concerns to become more visible
- The project and conference provided a good opportunity for representatives of Ministries to be able to speak eye to eye with PEP or people in need on adequate MI

Achievement that could not have happened without the project: the Conference was a great achievement

Lessons learned

Common lessons have been: Important in raising human rights agenda, showing that it is not about deserving/non-deserving, but that all have the same rights, putting on the agenda the fact that charity is not enough, a rights-based approach is needed, the importance of focusing on third country nationals (citizens vs residents), the link between situation and systemic causes should be made more visible, and the importance of letting people know what the system is and what the consequences are on people.

In **Iceland:** the Second year was still a working experience, the report should also be in national language for accessibility of information, the conference should have been a learning/working conference – it happened in the middle of writing the report and gathered ideas, so now would be the time to have a conference to disseminate findings in our countries, good to have had the funding to do this work, the European dimension – as a non-MS finding the data was more difficult, and expectations were high that the cooperation within the group would be bigger, this could be improved

For **Germany,** money is not the most important thing for PEP – they want to be treated fairly and well in the job centres, they want to feel it is a matter of rights, they want to be treated with dignity; it was important that this message was communicated to the political level, the project showed what the role of NGOs is in lobbying for PEP and also helping in accessing rights for PEP themselves, and it showed importance of NGOs working together.

In the **Netherlands** they learned how difficult it is to talk about MI in our country, how much information there is and how inaccessible it is, very complicated; attracting participants at the Conference was difficult; the project allows to also highlight the role of the EU, how it can help promote certain agendas and the European dimension showed that all countries are decreasing efforts.

In **Austria** the European network is added value since it adds credibility to the work; the biggest challenge is that politicians say a MI scheme already exists so why discuss it? Human rights and minimum income could be discussed, not just social rights; the general public does not seem to care about the theme but the project could promote this; the project made the work of the NGOs more visible in assisting PEP access their rights; made it clear that people in Ministries do not know what it means to be in poverty; it is good to emphasise how big the administrative/bureaucratic burden is in applying for this support; it is also important to provide a bridge between top level and PEP and recipients of Minimum Income.

The future work of EMIN

Suggestions:

For the Roadmap

- For EAPN to produce its own data on poverty, how Minimum Income affects it, not just basing the work on government data
- More funding is needed for continuing the work

- Ensure that advocacy on an adequate minimum income continues
- Produce an interactive map of MI schemes (not just a table) – visually easier to read

National Minimum Income Networks

- Bring cases forth on infringement of human rights to European Court of Human Rights
- ‘Prosperity report’ process in Iceland to be used as a model on how to work between NGOs/government in future within the network, the Minimum Income report will represent the beginning of a new dialogue.
- organize a workshop/meeting on what came out of the conference in the Netherlands – what is the trap in Minimum Income and how to get out of it
- Produce a booklet produced on experiences of recipients of Minimum Income.
- No plans to set up a EMIN in Austria, a working group on MI exists already bringing together different stakeholders, and a group exists at ministerial level to which the report will be presented.
- Continue the empowerment process of people experiencing poverty through self organisation

Public support

- Organise Flash mob with media coverage on a key date (17.10 or another appropriate day)
- Use social media
- Produce a ‘Giving poverty a face’ report to show there is a story/person behind these schemes, a needed extension of the theoretical report
- Initiate a ‘Lemon campaign’ at European level to reflect the initiative of the Austrian network, who offered a lemon to the provinces that were not doing well on MI, where ‘something is sour’ – ensure the lemon shows what is going wrong and what should be done
- Focus on one theme, one goal for all the countries
- Have a radio programme on poverty (example of homeless radio facilitated by APN Hungary)
- Use local not just national media and ensure that PEP get heard in the media while ensuring personal dignity is respected
- Previous suggestion of the MI initiative of EAPN to convince MPs to spend a day with a person living in poverty on minimum income could be considered.

Workshop 3 – Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Poland

Achievements

There is a confusion with the wording of minimum income and minimum wage in Hungary due to the two words in Hungarian being synonymous, there was a discussion regarding how this can be solved, maybe by speaking about cash benefits as minimum income to make the distinction more clear.

There is a great need from all countries to further involve people experiencing poverty, in the different countries there was little to no involvement of people experiencing poverty. Also the social ministry should be involved says Ryszard from Poland.

A discussion was had on the differences there seemed to be between the countries. Where in Poland for example the current situation is very different from the other countries in terms of the effects of the crisis and Poland’s current growth. Does growth make it easier to have discussions and agreements

regarding MIN? The discussion was had that of course there was a recession even though Poland was not hit hard by the crisis, because of the effects of the crisis the Ministry of finance wants to restrict expenditures.

The group spoke that it seems like the same argument is used as in other countries; the Commission still gives the same advice to Poland as other countries. It shows that the arguments of the crisis is used to hide the main aim which is to reduce social assistance and the welfare state in the countries, means Sian.

Growth doesn't necessarily help.

It is very interesting to speak about non-take up, of course the issue of non-take up is bigger than in others. Politicians in Europe speak about the misuse of benefits, but this is a very small percentage. The group believes that we should address the problem of non-take up a lot more than we do, EAPN should be leading on this. The example of Norway was raised, who have 40 000 youngsters who are not in education, support, work or training, and receive no benefits at all. The politicians use the (few) cases of misuse as a scapegoat, to justify cuts.

To influence policy you need strong support, strengthening your sector as well as working with other people is a good way to gain support.

The overall main achievement was awareness raising.

Learning

The broadening of interest groups has been a big learning point. When working with awareness raising it proved to be important to describe the problem but even more important to name possible solutions. The arguments should be framed differently for different actors.

It's important to build up a common understanding, as well as be flexible with your allies. Dissatisfaction can be base for united work. Sometimes enough to find smallest common base. Another learning was how to work bottom up; participatory techniques. Make the language easier to understand.

The EU level is vital, it is good for comparing work as well as the policy context sets trends and ideological arguments. It is also of importance, means the group, to use face-to-face as well as technology to collaborate and spread information.

Be aware of the political situation and use it in your favour, identify stereotypes and prove against myths.

Insuring adequate income across the lifecycle is a nice way to package EMIN.

Other main learnings in the group was the importance of getting Social NGOs on board, to generate debate through social media, to spread information and encourage collaboration.

Future work of EMIN

There is a need to be proactive and innovative with the practical solutions of EMIN, for example out the benefits on programmed cards instead of giving people paper sheets to pay with in the grocery store.

There was a discussion about the cost of inadequate systems, but there is very little research. Need to build solidarity within the system.

Activities to build support, usage of social media of importance. Impact social protection on poverty and inequality.

The issue of the EU level needs to be looked at from its political context. A reference budget on its own can never be the answer. The situation varies between countries and there was a discussion of the risk of reference budget being used to drive down the minimum income.

Need to build support for framework directive, with questions like: What's in it for everybody? Why is it a good idea? To have this framework level playing field, to link benefits to activation etc. To speak about why an EU directive makes a difference, to find arguments for these questions.

Workshop 4: (Denmark, Bulgaria, Latvia, Spain, Serbia)

Achievements

Bulgaria

Importance of process: starting from a smaller group and attracting partners: (internal EAPN Bulgaria activity, in which different NGOs' representatives took place; within the project process different stakeholders were involved, including social workers, social researchers and people receiving minimum incomes and different social benefits; mapping of different interested stakeholders; representatives of different stakeholders took part in the National Conference: Union of Economists in Bulgaria, Solidarity Bulgaria, Open Society Foundation, Plovdiv University, Trade-Union "Podkrepa", Bulgarian Women's Lobby, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, National Statistical Institute, Institute for the study of Society and Knowledge at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, NGO for parents with many children, Association of Retirees, Family Policy Institute, etc...

Importance of exchange with other EU member states: presenting the situation in FYROM; taking part in the NC in Romania; review of the reports of Denmark, Poland, Ireland, etc.

Importance of EU level: following EMIN project

Denmark

Regarding collaboration, results were achieved by taking part in other positive platforms. We use digital newspapers, public meetings and are sending messages directly to political and administrative decision makers by mails and in meetings, committees.

We have three target groups: 1) social NGOs, 2) trade unions for social workers and low wage groups and 3) policy makers. We spent most effort with social NGOs because they understand best, communicate broadly and participate in key committees. The downside is that they do not have as much influence. Denmark has got an official poverty line, decided in parliament, where we contributed to an expert committee and MPs. Our two priority goals in 2015 are that 1) young people under 30 years old must have the same minimum income and rights as other adults, 2) The government must act for people living below the Danish poverty limit. Both goals depend on decisions in the parliament. Exposure occurs through partners we collaborate with already: social NGOs, trade unions, committees. The arguments are that the polls show that the majority is against poverty. Government is measured on social responsibility, at the election in 2015. Our results will be measured on Government initiatives.

Latvia

- NGOs: increased the understanding of provision of own information and influence possibility on adequate and accessible MIS development in country
- local municipalities: the understanding increased on more effective use of laws and regulations in country in interests of inhabitants; the understanding developed on guidelines of NGO on development of MIS
- the State institutions: the understanding increased on actual needs of inhabitants; the discussion was opened with society on adequacy and accessibility of MIS and minimum income; the understanding developed on guidelines of NGO on development of MIS

- Saeima of the Republic of Latvia: the interest of inhabitants increased on actual needs of inhabitants; the discussion was opened on adequacy and accessibility of the minimum income
- The European Parliament: 9 EP deputies from Latvia got the understanding on guidelines of NGO on development of the MIS
- The media: the knowledge of national and regional media increased on guidelines of NGO on development of adequate and accessible MIS

Spain

The research on minimum income was new for EAPN. There were some developments raised by Caritas, a member organization, and the trade union Comisiones Obreras (not EAPN). The high level event organized by EAPN in September 15th was attended by more than 100 participants in Madrid, including representatives of the media, EAPN members, trade unions, academics, practitioners, members of political parties, members of the Spanish Parliament and national authorities. Similar meetings were held in the following Autonomous Communities, with excellent impact at this level: Navarra, Extremadura, Madrid, Galicia, Asturias and Murcia. Other types of relevant collaboration during this phase of the project were with the European Commission, UNICEF Spanish Committee (on MI and child benefits), Trade Unions, Victims of Unemployment Association (Asociación víctimas del Paro), and a group of Spanish MEPs.

We held several meetings with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. We presented the report and tried to reach to agreements in order to push for a reform of the current system managed at the State level. The Social Inclusion Network, held by the Ministry with the regions and NGOs, met on 2 Dec and decided to push forward this reform, by means of a working group. After the debate with the Trade Unions, they reached an agreement with the Ministry of Employment to extend the non contributory MI to the long-term unemployed with family (to be implemented). We distributed the Report among the members of the Spanish Parliament. There were several mentions of the Report at the sessions. We have had several meetings at the regional level with the Autonomous Communities authorities. The Report helped to map the regional situations and fuelled the debate. We invited to the Event and began to develop a political relation with Jochen Müller, political advisor of the representation of the EC in Spain. He recalled the EC recommendation for Spain in relation to the MI: "we must strengthen the organizational capacity and coordination between employment and social services; the administrative burden of access to minimum income hinders a smooth transition between social assistance and reintegration into the labour market ". We agreed with him the need to consider this into account in the Semester.

Roadmap: regarding campaign objectives for an adequate and accessible minimum income scheme, we want to help reorganize and streamline the MI systems in Spain at the state level and at the Autonomous Communities (a multi-level task), using as rationale the Spanish Report. We have included the MI as a core proposal for May General Elections, and we want to lobby for it in view of the 2016 National Elections. And success: a) changes in regional legislation (for 2015) / b) Political parties who might have adopted EAPN's proposals as part of their agenda for the national elections / c) Progress in harmonization of both systems (state and regional) / d) More consideration within the Semester (CSR and NRP).

We want to push forward a Directive for MI at the EU level, working with the Spanish MEPs, using the EMIN and the Spanish Reports. Success will be to get more Spanish MEPs involved in supporting a MI Directive, by working with those already on board, and getting others to support the initiative.

Serbia

The project has raised awareness on the importance of adequate minimum income. The number of EAPN Serbia member organizations taking part in discussions on minimum income scheme has doubled since the beginning of the project. The number of organizations advocating for extended outreach and taking of minimum income scheme increased modestly – CSOs were more focused on criticizing introduction of conditionality to existing minimum income schemes.

The project matched some of the activities of Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, a governmental body designing policy alternatives in social services. The Unit assisted in organizing the national EMIN conference and provided complementary presentation from their project aimed at conducting an econometric analysis of existing minimum income scheme.

The two target groups of our awareness raising campaign were CSOs dealing with social inclusion issues and experts and practitioners in the field of social protection. These two groups were reached by participating in EMIN workshops and by providing comments on the draft national report. Some CSOs also took part in public protest against introduction of conditionality in minimum income scheme.

The roadmap is yet to be defined in Serbia. In 2015 EAPN Serbia activities will be focused on facilitating access to minimum income and at withdrawal of conditionality of it. Financial social assistance should be accessible to more families and followed by engagement in public works only at the users' free will. Financial social assistance is the ultimate income opportunity for poor families, it provides for mere survival and is far below fair compensation for work input demanded at conditional public works.

EAPN Serbia will create alliances with CSOs and try to motivate institutions (Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit and the Institute for Social Protection) to raise the issue before the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Learning

Bulgaria

- Need to have preliminary orientation where we want to reach – well defined goal;
- Need to know who and how has influenced the current situation;
- Need to know how to alleviate differences and enforce general interests and common good;
- Collaboration with partners on different topics like EAPN Manifesto, Alliance for EU semester, EMIN, etc. mutually reinforce and intensify each other;
- Problems and limits of collaboration: collaborationism not at any price;

Need for meaningful Pan EU methodology for determining adequate minimum incomes based on price levels of basic goods and services. To test it in all countries, check the distance and then check whether it is possible - if not, then not a single step but a long term strategy for a change in the basic proportions of incomes

Independent participatory social impact assessment of income policies; MLSP; National anti-poverty strategy requires SIAs but they are not implemented; minimum income schemes are the basic activity of social assistance offices; by the end of 2015 available SIAs

Budget advocacy – through proactive engagement of Civil Society Organizations with the government budget to make the government more accountable to the people and promote transparency; to compel the government to be more alert to the needs and aspirations of people in general and the deprived sections of the community.

Denmark

Regarding collaboration, approaches are not academic exercises. We must choose among some that already exist and cooperate with those who have the same goals. We can help sharpen goals and strengthen efforts together

We have limited resources to organize, coordinate. We can help with documentation, analysis, dissemination, participate in others' events, and help to organize conferences that promote our purpose. It might sound weak, but we have greater influence and get further out, than if we place ourselves in the middle.

In terms of what works in relation to awareness raising, at first we thought it was newspapers and journals, but it turned out to be online newspapers, events with social NGOs and committees. We should not spend so many resources on our own website, more on using others', who have much more capacity than we do, and want the same as us. In terms of building road maps, if we understand how to connect our goals with others, we can go far. If we say: general improvement of basic income, we stand almost alone. If we prioritize minimum income for young people and better support for those living below the poverty line, we get farther.

In terms of capacity to deliver projects we cooperate closely with an NGO, who have more capacity to organize events and internet newspaper, which reach our target groups. More professional marketing and lobbying is welcome.

Spain

Dialogue with other civil society stakeholders and actors is a must, and integrated visions, with robust data, are more accepted than simple political messages, particularly when referring to budget. In terms of capacity to build collaboration, debate at the regional level, lobbying at the regional parliaments, take profit of every chance to talk/lobby about this matter, and update the Report.

In relation to awareness raising, social networks and strong media work function best. In terms of capacity to do awareness raising, disseminate and do awareness at the regional level, as well as the state level, and relating the proposals to the EU framework.

In terms of building road maps for the progressive realisation of adequate Minimum Income Schemes in collaboration with other actors, we need to work further on Reference Budgets. One of the biggest obstacles that are mentioned to a generalized system of MI is the regional differences. Therefore, there is a need to calculate the cost of living with this participatory methodology, in each of the 19 regions. EAPN has become a reference in this subject, we must nurture this with updates and different events, as well as presence in the social networks. In terms of capacity to deliver projects, we've got a lot of experience. We may need more working hours for coordination.

Serbia

In relation to building collaboration, Government does not consider CSOs' suggestions and experiences seriously and generally uses cooperation with CSOs just for legitimization purposes. Parliament and its committees should be used more as a proxy to decision makers. In terms of capacity to build collaboration, EAPN Serbia should raise its visibility more in order to strengthen its position in advocacy process. EMIN has contributed to strengthening inner cohesion of the network.

In relation to awareness raising, media in Serbia are reluctant to dealing with 'social' issues. Social media should be utilized much more in promoting adequate and accessible minimum income. CSOs can make their voices heard when they are united. In terms of capacity to do awareness raising, EAPN Serbia should use internal resources for awareness raising in more efficient way. Different members of the network can build coalitions in different areas. In the last 1-2 years EAPN Serbia has become recognized by the media in Serbia.

In terms of building road maps for the progressive realisation of adequate Minimum Income Schemes, objectives should be based on a human rights approach. Wider political consensus should be reached around major objectives. Public debates should be maintained on a regular basis. In terms of capacity to mobilise to achieve the objectives, EAPN Serbia needs stronger coalition in order to push forward. The coalition should include not only CSOs, but also practitioners, academia, institutions.

In terms of capacity to deliver projects, when it comes to SeConS, our capacities were substantial and we have large experience in delivering complex projects. When it comes to EAPN Serbia, it has just been established as a legal entity and its work still depends on SeConS management capacities. EAPN can 'borrow' human and technical resources from other members, too. 4-5 organizations make up the

core of EAPN Serbia. We need more engagement from other members in order to increase capacity for projects winning and delivering.

Future work:

Bulgaria

- Exploring the compatibility of adequate minimum income schemes with the current distribution of incomes and identification of main barriers.
- Elaboration of proposals for a way out.
- Assessment of the price of inadequate minimum income in terms of human health, human life, demographic change, mortality, illiteracy, migration, depopulation, economic decline.
- Check up points in different EU countries: comparing price levels of basic food items for example in Lidl or Billa, etc.
- Providing continuity of the established collaboration - involvement in the next activities
- Dissemination of results to different stakeholders.
- Reaching new stakeholders – broadening the network.
- Reaching young people – through social networks
- Media campaigns: presentations and organizing media events;
- Documentary film
- Publishing of the findings
- TIA (There Is an Alternative) against TINA (There is No Alternative) approach - Presenting good practices (for example, Germany 30 years ago; welfare states)
- Presenting findings in front MPs, incl. hearings at the Parliament

Denmark

We know much more now about realistic aims and partners, nationally and at EU level, so will use the experience. We are in the beginning of a long process, it takes years. We will cooperate with MEPs and MPs and the national representations for the European Parliament and Commission. Most people and organizations are positive, except for short-sighted employer organizations and politicians who will push wages down with low minimum incomes and do not understand that welfare creates growth. In terms of building public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes there is a widespread public understanding of minimum income, social security, health, education and work. All except the rich, need community and would like to pay taxes to get it. It is the general understanding we need to address. We should not be too technical and narrow. We must ally ourselves with other friendly organisations to get the message out. We need facts and authentic stories, not just feelings, and to help politicians who want the same as we do.

Latvia

Ideas for building of National Minimum Income Networks and collaboration with abroad range of actors

Building of NMIN:

- increase of capacity of EAPN-Latvia;
- increase of number of members of EAPN-Latvia throughout territory of Latvia;
- expansion of the network of cooperation partners;
- research in Latvia and abroad on development opportunities and results of NMIN;
- preparation of the project for 2016-2020;
- training of professionals of EAPN-Latvia.

Abroad collaboration:

- in the level of institutions of European Union, including EAPN;
- in the level of Baltic States (with Lithuania and Estonia);
- in the level of states of Baltic Sea (with Baltic States, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Russia and Poland);
- in the level of border countries (with Baltic States, Sweden, Russia and Belarus);

- in the level of commonwealth countries (with European Union countries, other Northern countries, Ukraine, etc.).

Ideas to build public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes

- Education of society (general and leader development).
- Fortification of feedback between society and legislator (Deputies of Saeima, MEPs)
- Fortification of the cooperation and contracts between state institutions and NGO (Memorandum of NGO and the Cabinet, agreements with local municipalities, etc.).
- Activization of NGO and integration into decision making processes (commissions of Saeima, work groups of ministries and municipalities); training of NGO professionals.
- Improvement of quality of laws and regulation and provision of accessibility to inhabitants; improvement of communication with social services.
- Explaining of actual problems (absence of “consumer basket” in the country, etc.) and immediate solution; cooperation of NGO with the Ministry of Welfare a.o.
- Integration of society in public events in Latvia and abroad on matters of welfare increase (in meetings of Latvian presidency, PeP, Social Platform a.o.)
- Systematic provision of NGO information in media on necessity of adequate MIS.

Spain

High unemployment levels and long-term unemployment are structural problems within the globalized economy, they are not due to the crisis. Therefore, the EU should have a “strong social corridor” in all Member States (MI, but also Minimum Wages and Family packages/Child benefits) to prevent people falling into extreme poverty, due to lack of income. Social cohesion is a mandate of the EU, as well as a shared responsibility with the Member States. This should be considered at the macroeconomic governance level. To invest in poverty prevention is more efficient than to spend tackling chronic social exclusion, marginalization and inter-generational transmission of poverty. In the EU and in many Member States, an increase in domestic consumption is needed to revamp the economy and take it out of recession. MI has a key role in re-inserting millions into the consumption markets. A strong MI system also means an impulse in job creation, and consequently, an unemployment reduction.

Ideas for building of National Minimum Income Networks and/collaboration with a broad range of actors include debating and engaging with trade unions, fighting against the idea of “incompatibility” of MI with temporary or part-time work, and relating MI to additional benefits, such as family packages and child benefits. There is a connection to child poverty reduction, as well as to the need to combat poverty of large and lone-parent families. This will raise the attention of Family and Child Organizations. Speak about “increasing the MI budget”, but also of rationalizing the access and reaching all the right targets. Speak about efficacy and efficiency. This will be useful with the reluctant budgetary authorities. Relate the most of your discourse to the EU framework (Active Inclusion Recommendation, for example) and try to raise the attention of this matter with the EC representative, regarding your CSRs, at the EU level.

Ideas to build public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes include launching a MOOC on Minimum Income in Europe, to have a special report on the matter in Euronews, with interviews to the MEPs, Mr. Schultz, Mme. Thyssen, Mr. Juncker..., lobbying Eurostat in order to launch a Special Eurobarometer on Minimum Income and other social stabilizers. Also to get graphic artists to prepare a cartoon on this fictional situation, available through the commercial circuits, through Amazon, for example. Other ideas include broadening the audience by means of a collective Web serial (web fiction), made by young and creative directors from every MS taking part in EMIN. We can discuss the plot, but it should be fun and witty.

Serbia

Ideas for Advocacy work to make progress on the National and/or European Road Map: Serbia Antipoverty network and SeConS will use all events to present finding from the report and organize additional meetings with those are responsible for this issue. Relying on NGOs representing poor and trade unions (which are losing their societal grounds) might not be enough. In a specific Serbian context, these actors do not have adequate political leverage. The network ought also to include professional and other associations of middle classes as they are more vocal and can exert political influence. This also means linking MIS to other issues as in Serbia the issue of MIS cannot gain wide public support due to three decades of political and economic crisis, impoverishing of large portions of population, but at the same time prevailing discourse of austerity.

Building public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes entails linking the MIS issue to other issues with broader public support. For example, linking MIS to quality of education arguing that increasing financial capacities of families at risk of poverty would increase their capacities to send children regularly to school, which will increase the quality of public schools, which will bring benefits to all segments of society that are dependent on public education system, including the middle class which is far more influential and vocal than the poor.

Workshop 5: Italy, France, Romania and Luxembourg

Italy

- Increased support from 9 organisations in March 2013 to 18 organisations in October 2014 (all non-profit organisations: social organisations, working with older people, homeless, and national bodies of ATD and FEANTSA, as well as less usual organisations such as an association against the mafia). In the past these organisations worked in parallel. The aim of fighting for a 'life in dignity' brought people together.
- Collaboration, especially with the University of Milan and the Trade Unions.
- Awareness-raising: working with grass roots and national organisations, using specialised 'social' media, contact with members of parliament.

For the future: a European Directive must refer to the European Charter of Fundamental Human Rights; integration between different sectors: social, environment and health, work with trade unions: support at EU level can strengthen support at national level. Organise local and national events to sensitise local organisations and individuals. Show how Minimum Income is an active policy.

France

Though there is already a Minimum Income system in France (the RSA), the system is not easy, especially the necessary accompanying measures. The RSA is managed by the 'départements'. There has been a lack of visibility with the Trade Unions, and a shortfall in consultation with people experiencing poverty. The success of Minimum Income must depend on strong local implementation policies: some départements are very active some not. For example the Hérault département worked with users on how to communicate on the RSA to other users: they must be heard, in order to improve the system. Though the 2012 national plan against poverty includes RSA, implementation is difficult in the light of the future reorganisation of regions and départements.

Learning: push our demands, work out what and how; avoid repetition in research (for example regarding age limits); relate to the government multi annual plan, with the Conseil Général; organise a televised campaign and train social workers.

For future work of EMIN

Ideas for Advocacy work to make progress on the National and/or European Road Map (Be as specific as possible)

- Nationally: Extend the process toward representatives (deputies, senators...) of social affairs in order for them to become ambassador of the project
- To be consulted: Persons experienced poverty, volunteers, social workers
- To work with sociologue to have a less stigmatized approach.
- Tend to a consensus between EAPN France.

Ideas for building of National Minimum Income Networks and/collaboration with a broad range of actors

- Constitute network – subgroups in EMIN as peers : between countries with the same questions (i.e. Luxembourg, Belgique, France)
- Work on what could be the value added / bests practices in France regarding the other countries and in return identify thematics from other countries to be explored and adapted to France
- Promote good practises from other countries : i.e about active Inclusion policy :
- Supported contracts: hours adapted to PeP needs, juridical aspect, financial support, trainings to make people durable inserted , guidance (could be partially financed on FSE 20% inclusion) : cf details on report FRANCE)
- Minimum income : fluctuant according to the amount of work
- Participation of service users / pep: settled by some local councils

Ideas to build public support for adequate Minimum Income Schemes (please include ideas other than reports and conferences)

- Non-take up: In France, government is developing a simulator of rights (testing phase, to be accessible by beginning 2015)
- Use EMIN works through 5-year-government plan to fight against poverty and for inclusion
- Build a working group : local councils + associations + PeP
- TV campaign, brochures for volunteers, trainings together (professionals and volunteers)
- An other conference in France, in collaboration with Local Councils

Romania

Although there is a minimum income scheme inspired by the French model there was little awareness. Minimum Income is linked to family support, and the system is being reformed. However it does not achieve a decent life. The EMIN project enabled them to bring on board more actors as well as beneficiaries, through focus groups, other people experiencing poverty, as well as central authorities and the directorate general on social assistance. A national conference in the parliament brought together a wide range of national actors, including two ministries, 25 organisations, central and regional authorities, academics, employers, church organisations and people experiencing poverty. Structural Funds focus on social inclusion in the labour market. However this can be a trap for people who attend training, as they then lose their Minimum Income support. The social economy has an important role, leading sometimes to borrowing models from elsewhere.

The learning has been: creating partnerships, involving the people concerned, and using the media.

Regarding the future: Involve more stakeholders, co-opt grassroots organisations to create links, pool expertise and perspectives. They hope to integrate their work in Minimum Income with other groups, and concentrate on the links between Minimum Income and minimum wage. Meet up with MEPs and members of the national parliament to become ‘ambassadors’ of a Minimum Income policy, to raise the capacity of understanding Minimum Income, then work directly with the ministry.

Luxembourg

Caritas is part of a working group on Minimum Income which has been in place for over eleven years. However social offices are not present in the dialogue. Implementation is the greatest problem, with 65 per cent non take-up, mainly through fear of 'social enquiry' or fear of having to reimburse funds following a change of circumstances. Refugees are the largest group of people who take up Minimum Income. Most of those who deal with people needing Minimum Income took part in their conference. The collaboration on Minimum Income is not formal, but is good. A national media campaign: officials are now part of the discussion. Since Luxembourg is a small country informal contacts work well, and it is hoped that new legislation will take into account their discussions.

For the future: Represent civil society in the national debates. Passing through the Trade Unions is not always satisfactory. Funding is needed to understand better, for example, the reasons of non-take-up. Case studies will help to plead the case. Further thematic work, on children and young people for example, especially as Minimum Income is limited to over 25 year olds. Research advocacy.

In discussion: don't defend a 'level' but rather ensure 'how people access services'. Trade Unions have an important role in the implementation of Minimum Income, so need to become allies especially in maintaining public services. There is also a need to dismiss the myth that Minimum Income allows employers to reduce pay levels.

Appendix 2: List of participants

EMIN National Coordination	
RYBACZEK-SCHWARZ Robert	AUSTRIA
FEMI-MEBAREK Anna	AUSTRIA
VANDERMEERSCHEN Elke	BELGIUM
DEVILLERS Jonathan	BELGIUM
MINEV Douhomir	BULGARIA
JELIAZKOVA Maria	BULGARIA
SATSIAS Nikos	CYPRUS
KARAOLI Eleni	CYPRUS
SCHWARZ Karel	CZECH REPUBLIC
KOCMANKOVA Dagmar	CZECH REPUBLIC
LARSEN Per K.	DENMARK
BAERENTZEN Allan	DENMARK
MERE Kärt	ESTONIA
TRAMBERG Irma	ESTONIA
SAARELA Tiina	FINLAND
KIILUNEN Jaako	FINLAND
Laurent DAVID	FRANCE
Sylvie HANOCQ	FRANCE
DUKOVSKA Biljana	FYROM MACEDONIA
CAROVSKA Mila	FYROM MACEDONIA
HOFMANN Michaela	GERMANY
ZÜRCHER Julia	GERMANY
MARINAKOU Maria	GREECE
ZIOMAS Dimitris	GREECE
LASZLO Johanna	HUNGARY
JASZ Kristina	HUNGARY
HANAN Robin	IRELAND
DEANE Audry	IRELAND
TEODOSI Nicoletta	ITALY
GIRONE Adele	ITALY
ODDSDOTTIR Vilborg	ICELAND
BJOERNSDOTTIR Hanna	ICELAND
BALGA Laila	LATVIA
CALITE Lelde	LATVIA
LAZUTKA Romas	LITHUANIA
GEORGES Nathalie	LUXEMBOURG
KRECKE Lydie	LUXEMBOURG
GRIMA Saviour	MALTA
MCKAY Leonid	MALTA
WESTERHEIM Dag	NORWAY
ENGEN Johanna	NORWAY
BOTHMER Jo	NETHERLANDS
LEEMKUIL Sonja	NETHERLANDS
PLOWIEC Kamila	POLAND
SZARFENBERG Ryszard	POLAND
FARINHA RODRIGUES Carlos	PORTUGAL
PINTO Liliana	PORTUGAL
MANAILA Raluca	ROMANIA
MIHAITA Daniela Elena	ROMANIA
VUKOVIC Danilo	SERBIA
CVEJIC Slobodan	SERBIA
	SLOVAKIA
MALGESINI Graciela	SPAIN

JORQUERA Gabriela	SPAIN
	SWEDEN
DUFFY Katherine	UNITED KINGDOM
EVANS Carol	UNITED KINGDOM
EMIN Thematic coordinations	
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BOCCADORO Natalie	FEANTSA
BULTEZ Jean-Pierre	AGE
SPEAKERS	
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BAUSSAND Pierre	Director Social Platform
BEHRENDT Christina	ILO Social Protection Dept.
BOLAND Seamus	EESC
Carpentier Sarah	University of Antwerp
CESARINI SFORZA Letizia	Vice President EAPN
DELLI Karima	MEP
FARRELL Fintan	Project Manager EMIN
FRAZER Hugh	
MENNE Claudia	ETUC
OLSSON Stefan	European Commission
RABAU Muriel	Vice President ESPC
Van Lancker Anne	Policy Coordinator EMIN
VANYOLOS Istvan	European Commission
STAFF	
BASARAB Tanya	EAPN Secretariat
DAHMEN Sigrid	EAPN Secretariat
EPINAT Nellie	EAPN Secretariat
FERRO Amana	EAPN Secretariat
GOMEZ CAMPOS Alicia	EAPN Secretariat
HELFFERICH Barbara	EAPN Secretariat
JONES Sian	EAPN Secretariat
MATTSSON Regina	EAPN Secretariat
PENA CASAS Ramon	OSE
GUESTS	
BRANDELLERO Patrizia	Evaluator
CASADO ALONSO Maria José	
GEOGHEGAN Pauline	Rapporteur
GONZALEZ FERNANDEZ Marga	
O'DONNELL Joan	EMIN Ireland
STIGLIC Ziva	Slovenia
SELAK ZIVKOVIC Aleksandra	CROATIA
SEIDEL Philippe	AGE
PINET Jean-Pierre	ATD Quart Monde
NICKL Tobias	Bank fuer Sozialwirtschaft
TERMOTE Henk	Belg Resource Centre for fight against poverty
HOFMEIER Erik	Bundesagentur für Arbeit
GUINANDIE Jeanine	Conseil Généralde la Charente
FREDAIGUE Laëtitia	Conseil Généralde la Charente
GAZULLI Vinifreda	Directory Public Health Albania
DE BOEVE Edwin	DYNAMO
BERKEMEIER Judithe	EESC
RITCHIE David	EU Health Specialist
YGHEMONOS Stecy	Eurocarers
MALLET Catherine	Eurodiaconia
BURGER Stephan	Eurodiaconia

TORRES REVENGA Yolanda	Eurofound
FARRER Linden	EuroHealthNet
CONZE Susanne	European Comission
KLEVER Emma	European Movement
COCOZZA Liliane	European Social Action Network
STRIANO Mauro	FEANTSA
LELIE Peter	FPS Social Security
KABASINSKAITE Dale	Intern. Fed. Of social workers
ZANCANARO Irène	IRS
STERCKX Jos	Kenniscentrum Sociaal Europa
LEYDET Ludovic	Les petits frères des Pauvres
PROESMANS Arne	Netwerk tegen Armoede
FUCHS Miroslav	Permanent Rep. Of Czech Republic
TOURNIAIRE Audrey	Rep. Des Institutions Françaises de Sec. Sociale
KOSMAN Patrick	Secours Catholique Paris
STIGLIC Ziva	Slovenia
LEONORI Luigi	SMES
VANHOODYDONCK Herlinde	Social Platform
COUDRAY Sterenn	Solidar
SCHNEIDER Eva-Maria	Solidar
JOURDAN Stan	Unconditional Basic Income Europe
JARMUSZCZAK Maria	Warsaw University
COLLINS Mary	Women's Lobby
GROTH Malpuri	Women's Lobby
MOYART Clémentine	Youth Forum

Appendix 3: Conference Programme

Morning Work shops

- 8.45 **Registration**
- 9.15 **Welcome and Brief Introduction**
- 9.30 – 12.20 **Workshops: EMIN: Achievements, lessons learned and next steps**

Afternoon Conference

- 13.30 *Registration*
- 13.45 **Opening Plenary: Chair, Letizia Cesarini Sforza, Vice President EAPN**
- Video Messages from activists with direct experience of poverty (**Portugal and Denmark**)
 - **Maria Arena**, Member of the European Parliament - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
 - **Stefan Olsson**, Head of Unit, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- 14.30 **EMIN: Achievements, lessons learned and ways forward**
- **Robin Hanan** EMIN Ireland and **Ryszard Szarfenberg** EMIN Poland: Achievements and Lessons from the work of the EMIN Project
 - Synthesis from the 30 National and 2 Thematic Reports: **Anne Van Lancker**, EMIN Policy Coordinator
 - Proposed EU Road Map for the Progressive realization of Adequate Minimum Income Schemes: **Fintan Farrell**. EMIN Project Coordinator
 - Response to the EMIN Road Map: **Claudia Menne**, Confederal Secretary, ETUC
 - Questions and Comments
- 15.30 *Tea/Coffee Break*
- 16.00 **Workshops: Building momentum for Adequate Minimum Income Schemes**
- 17.15 **Closing Plenary: Chair, Barbara Helfferich, Director, EAPN**
- **Open feedback from the Workshops**
 - What's needed to make adequate Minimum Income Schemes a Reality? **Hugh Frazer**, EMIN Management Team
- 18.00 *End*