

Fran McDonnell

1. Visibility, institutional voice and fields covered in 2016/17

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is the largest European network of national, regional and local networks, involving anti-poverty NGOs and grassroots groups as well as European Organisations, active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It is committed to the participation and empowerment of people experiencing poverty. At present, there are 31 national networks of voluntary organisations and grassroots groups and 13 European Organisations, of which IFSW -E is one. Last year the fee for IFSW -E was 200 Euros.

Fran McDonnell has been the Organisational Representative since September 2015 and Ian Johnston is an executive member of EAPN and attends the Executive meetings (EXCO). In this position, he is not allowed to also act as European Organisational Representative. This position is for three years. Having 2 people involved from IFSW has helped to raise our visibility.

Fran and Ian attended the EAPN General Assembly which took place on 28/29th October in Bruges. The 2016 – 2018 Strategy and Action Plan was agreed. The main priorities are:

- To continue to make progress towards effectively mainstreaming social concerns, reducing poverty and inequality and ensuring that public policies, programmes and intervention reach people living in poverty, including the most disadvantaged.
- To ensure more people with the experience of poverty and social exclusion can actively promote fundamental human rights.
- There are a number of actions that involve countries in contributing data on poverty for example to:
 - The Development of National Poverty Watch ‘reports’ prepared by EAPN members highlighting key trends in poverty and practices in their countries and recommendations.
 - Short assessment of 2017 EU Country Specific Recommendations with Country Specific Recommendations based on members’ national inputs as to whether they have been met.
- EAPN and members to actively monitor and engage with the implementation of key social policy areas, such as investing in children, homelessness and active inclusion and that they should be reflected in European Pillar of Social Rights.
- Development of a Briefing/Position paper on Financing Social Protection, which defends the claim that it is possible to finance high quality welfare schemes in all EU member states and to progressively realise this ambition. The issue of tax justice will be addressed in the Paper.
- Input to the debates and discussions on UK withdrawal from the EU, which seeks to ensure that social outcomes are prioritised in the decisions taken in relation to the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU.

Since the GA, EAPN were successful in their bid with ETUC to develop work on European Minimum Income Scheme (EMIN). Fintan Farrell, the previous acting Director of EAPN, is the Project Manager. The European Parliament is drafting a new report on Minimum Income Schemes as a tool to fight poverty. See the draft report [EP Draft Report, Minimum Income policies as a tool for fighting poverty Feb 2017](#) written by Fintan. EMIN project partners EAPN and ETUC will follow the development of the report carefully.

2. Actions in this period

- a. Actively contributing to capacity building and campaigning and lobbying activities at a European level

Fran and Ian contributed to capacity building sessions at the GA and have contributed wherever possible feedback on documents, strategy, consultations particularly the Pillar of Social Rights. This can be challenging when there are short time frames, making it difficult to engage with IFSW E members to get feedback.

EAPN requests to lobby appropriate government Ministers and key officials have been sent to members. Some lobbying activities have been successful such as the request sent out to members on 18th January 2017 asking them to lobby their MEPs on the European Parliament report on the European Pillar of Social Rights, as most of the main amendments went as EAPN wanted.

- b. Passing on info about EAPN's lobbying activities, and publications to our members.

Fran is on the mailing list of European organisations representatives and receives consultations, documents and information from EAPN. Relevant information is sent through to the IFSW E President and Secretary for information and circulation, as appropriate. These have included:

- Regular newsletters and updates
- The European Commission Country Specific Reports 2017 See [here](#). This is a key document in the European Semester cycle when the Commission assesses progress on the Country-specific recommendations, and in theory on progress on the different Europe 2020 targets. These reports are the key documents which form the basis of the Commission's proposals for Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) in May.
- The EAPN Position Paper on the European Pillar of Social Rights and their draft response to the Consultation. 21/08/16 <http://www.eapn.eu/15644-2/>. In this position statement EAPN sets out 4 concrete steps to ensure real impact of the Pillar:
 - A new Paradigm: a transformative EU strategy that invests in social rights and reduces poverty and inequality
 - Invest in concrete measures to guarantee social standards,
 - Use funds to deliver on social rights – a new EU poverty and inequality programme underpinned by an anti-poverty strategy at all levels
 - Champion real democracy and participation

- The individual EU-PERSON country reports presenting the most up-to-date information and research on the situation for people with disabilities regarding legal capacity law in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo and Turkey. There have been achievements since 2013 in highlighting and advocating for the domestic law reforms necessary to achieve compliance with Article 12 CRPD. [Click here for reports](#)
- The European Commission's White Paper on the 25 March 2017 on the Future of Europe. See [here](#) the **Press Release** and [here](#) for the **White Paper**.
- EAPN Publication on Energy Poverty Good Practices <http://meszerics.eu/pdf/energypoverty-goodpractices.pdf>.

c. Encouraging our members to work more closely with EAPN's member organisations in their own countries

The list of EAPN country networks was sent out to members so that links could be made. However, it would be helpful to develop a more proactive approach to this objective. One option would be to do a survey of IFSW E members to find out what the current levels of engagement with EAPN country networks are and the extent to which IFSW E members are contributing to, for example to:

- consultations such as the Pillar of Social Rights through country networks,
- involvement in contributing to data and examples of the impact of poverty in relation to CSRs and the capacity to get involved in National Poverty Watch reports.

This would enable IFSW E Executive and the EO representative to look at how we can contribute more effectively to providing relevant information and responses to consultations in a more organised and timely way. It would also hopefully provide some examples of good practice for IFSW members, who are considering making links nationally with EAPN networks.

d. Participating in the task Force on Poverty and Human Rights.

Fran is representing IFSW-E on the EAPN Task Force on Poverty as a Violation of Human Rights, which is a significant piece of work. It was agreed at the GA that the Task group should have another year to complete the work of developing a Toolkit, to develop a legal section and further examples. The work is due to complete in October 2017.

3. List of key points that you consider that should appeared on the Work Programme.

The main action points can remain the same but perhaps in c and d some specific actions could be added:

- a. Actively contributing to capacity building and campaigning and lobbying activities at a European level. This could be enhanced by having some better information about members' involvement with EAPN. (See c.)

- b. Passing on info about EAPN's lobbying activities, and publications to our members.
- c. Encouraging our members to work more closely with EAPN's member organisations in their own countries. Consider a survey of IFSW E members to find out what the current levels of engagement with EAPN country networks are and the extent to which IFSW E members are contributing.
As mentioned above this would enable IFSW E Executive and the EO representative to look at how we can contribute in a more organised and timely way. It would also hopefully provide some examples of good practice for IFSW members, who are considering making links nationally with EAPN networks.
- d. Participating in the EAPN Task Force for Poverty and Human Rights. It would be very helpful if members could provide Fran with examples of human rights based approaches to:
 - Developing political and economic strategies and rights based development
 - Influencing public policy including lobbying / advocacy
 - Tackling poverty through service delivery at a practice level
 - Campaigning and alliance building
 - Awareness raising and capacity building
 - Taking legal action.

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