



# Fighting Poverty

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EUROPE

Posted by: European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)



## Electing Champions for a Social Europe campaign

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In 2013-2014, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and its members (at the time, 29 National Networks and 18 European Organisations) carried out a pan-European campaign entitled Electing Champions for a Social Europe. The campaign managed to gather the commitment of **over 10% of the newly elected MEPs to fighting poverty, social exclusion, inequalities and discrimination**. Read more on the [campaign website](#).

EAPN and its members represent in total hundreds of organisations on the ground working with thousands of European citizens as well as other partners supporting a social Europe.

Since 2014, EAPN has been working closely with both pledge signatories, as well as other MEPs, to ensure that the fight against poverty and social exclusion is supported and mainstreamed in parliamentary activities. Some key reports and opinions have been adopted – find a non-exhaustive list

below – and several key events supported by MEPs during this legislature.

## Key issues

### Europe 2020 and the European Semester

#### **EP Resolution on Employment and Social Aspects of Europe 2020 adopted in Strasbourg - rapporteur Marita Ulvskog (S&D), acting chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee (2015)**

The report, adopted in plenary by a good majority, included some important commitments promoted by EAPN and the Semester Alliance, including the need for benefits to be spread throughout society, on access for the most vulnerable to social security and the labour market, on civil society involvement, on the job potential of the green economy & on IMF, demand for quality jobs and ILO warnings on the risks of growing inequalities.

#### **European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2015 - 2014/2222/INI - rapporteur Sergio Gutierrez Prieto (S&D) (2015)**

EAPN worked closely with the rapporteur, particularly on the alignment of the European Semester with Europe 2020, the failure on the poverty target, and the need for strengthening the social dimension and rebalancing it with economic priorities, and supported investment in quality work, reinforcement of social protection and minimum income, action on energy poverty, and access to services, particularly affordable housing, as well as increased priority to participation, including civil society.

– View the voting data [here](#), via VoteWatch.eu

#### **Draft EMPL Opinion on the Employment Guidelines (2015)**

A letter was sent from the EAPN President and Director to the members of the EMPL Committee, asking them to support a number of specific amendments, around stronger wording on the fight against poverty and an ambitious Guideline 8, supporting quality employment and inclusive labour market, and civil dialogue and stakeholder engagement. The letter was also translated by

some of our national networks (ES, PT) and sent to their MEPs (and UK).

- Read the letter [here](#)
- View the voting data [here](#), via VoteWatch.eu

### **Draft EMPL Opinion: European Semester for economic coordination - implementation of 2015 priorities - rapporteur Sergio Gutierrez Prieto (S&D) 2015/2010 INI**

EAPN worked closely on the Employment Committee Opinion with the Rapporteur and with the Greens / EFA Adviser and shadow rapporteur – Jean Lambert (Greens) – on Amendments from the Semester Alliance. The Semester Alliance input was taken up almost completely for the Greens proposals and was adopted by the Employment Committee. Proposals made on Europe 2020, poverty, minimum income, access to services, homelessness, pension and gender gap and stakeholder **engagement**. This then contributed to the **overarching report by the ECON Committee** whose rapporteur is Dariusz Rosati (EPP) (2015/2210 (INI)). When the ECON report went to final plenary vote on 29 October 2015, the majority of the EMPL committee voted it down with 409 (ie 65% against), because it didn't take on board enough social issue. This is a very strong action by the Committee!

- [Here](#) is the link to the EMPL Committee's opinion
- View the voting data [here](#), via VoteWatch.eu

### **EMPL Opinion EMPL Opinion on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation of 2016 priorities (2016/2101(INI))- Sofia Ribeiro (EPP)**

EAPN worked closely with the shadow rapporteurs, and many of EAPN proposals taken on board, some verbatim calling for poverty and inequality to remain a top priority, the importance of adequate minimum income and support for EU framework and role of social protection, the importance of Europe 2020 and the need for civil society engagement to be on a par with social partners in the European Semester. The vote was on 25 October 2016.

View the voting data which will appear soon [here](#) via VoteWatch.eu

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## Poverty & Social Rights

### **EP Resolution: Meeting the Poverty Target in the light of increasing household costs. 2015/2223(INI) - Rapporteur Tamas Meszerics (Greens)**

EAPN worked closely with rapporteur, with Task Force meetings. Also asked by rapporteur to provide key input for a handbook on Energy Poverty, as follow up. EAPN is down as co-author with logo, writing the main introductory chapter on causes and consequences, and also providing good practice examples from our members. Several of EAPN proposals taken on board, including a call for an integrated EU strategy on poverty, impact assessment on minimum income schemes and progress on adequacy, access to ESIF funds and more effective spending on poverty, commitment to the three pillar approach on energy poverty and ban on winter disconnections; new commitment to deliver on EU poverty targets and re-balancing of the semester to ensure progress; investment in social housing and energy efficiency that can benefit the poor.

- See [here](#)

- View the voting data [here](#), via [VoteWatch.eu](#)

### **Own initiative report on the European Pillar of Social Rights 2016/2095(INI), rapporteur Maria João Rodrigues (S&D)**

The rapporteur spoke at EAPN policy conference on Social Pillar in June, spending the afternoon session in policy conference dialoguing with EAPN members and the European Commission. EAPN worked closely with her and the shadow rapporteurs, particularly Greens and S&D. Currently awaiting final plenary vote.

## Events

- December 3, 2014 - [Semester Alliance Hearing \*Strengthening the legitimacy of the European Semester to get smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth\*](#)
- September 11, 2015 - [EAPN-ETUC Seminar \*Decent Work, Quality Jobs and\*](#)

*Poverty – The Missing Link in Europe 2020 what way forward?*

- March 1, 2016 – Semester Alliance Hearing *The AGS behind; the Semester ahead*
- March 3, 2016 – European Parliament Hearing *How can Social Innovation contribute to reaching the poverty reduction target of Europe 2020?*

## Child Poverty

### **Draft own initiative report: Ines Zuber: Inequality with a focus on Child Poverty (2015)**

EAPN, Eurochild and other EO members were very active on the report. We spoke at the hearing and made proposals of amendments many of which have been taken on board. We were also invited to be part of a small Task Force to follow up the idea on a Child Guarantee.

Key proposals taken on board:

1. The reference to EAPN and Eurochild explainer 'Towards child well-being in Europe – an explainer on child poverty in the EU' and the Eurochild assessment report on 2014 NRPs and NSRs.
2. The recognition that the main factors affecting child poverty are wealth-redistribution, income support, provision of enabling services, labour market policy,
3. That child poverty stems from poverty of families, with low-income and large families more at risk of poverty, while income redistribution has a major impact on reducing cycles of social inequality and deteriorating national wage policies and social protection systems are increasing the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The report calls for a large number of important recommendations including:

1. Increasing effectiveness of support to children but also parents who are unemployed and to tackle working poor. (unemployment benefit and adequate minimum income) including statutory adequate minimum wage.

2. Establish a road map to implement the Investing in Children Recommendation, through the National Reform Programmes and Social Reports, setting a sub-target on child poverty... and a core priority in 2016 AGS.
3. Recommends that MS implement or enhance universal welfare benefits targeting children.... And regrets the growing tendency of MS to move away from universal support policies towards more means-tested support, as evidence shows that universal support policies offer better protection against child poverty.
4. Recognizes the role of civil society including children's rights and anti-poverty organizations, in ensuring EU policy coherence and calls for strengthened civil dialogue.
5. Calls for MS to put in place mechanisms to promote children's participation.
6. Calls for a Child Guarantee with a specific fund to ensure that every child has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and nutrition, as part of a European Integrated plan to combat child poverty, offering support to parents to come out of exclusion.

- View the voting data [here](#), via VoteWatch.eu

### **Written Declaration on Investing in Children, adopted with 428 in favour (2015)**

Proposed by Eurochild, and initially launched with 11 MEPs, the written declaration on investing in children was backed by the [Investing in Children Alliance](#) which EAPN is a member of. There was a mobilizing campaign carried out, involving EAPN members. The Declaration was adopted with 428 in favour, which is the most voted declaration since 2011. It has helped put the Investing in Children Recommendation back on the political map after it lost visibility after the new Juncker Political Guidelines came in.

- See more information [here](#)

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## **Blog Posts Related to this Issue:**

- [Fighting poverty: giving a European response to a European major issue](#)
- [Reducing poverty: political groups' positions on the Zuber report](#)
- [The Youth Guarantee: ideas for improvement](#)
- [What can we learn from our neighbours? A few examples of implementations of the Youth Guarantee](#)