

**8th European Meeting of People Experiencing
Poverty**

May 15 – 16, 2009

Egmont Palace
8 Place du Petit Sablon – 1000 Brussels



**Where
we
live**

**What
we
need**



The basic purpose of this meeting is to listen to people experiencing poverty, and to establish a dialogue with policy- and decision-makers in the field of fight against poverty and social exclusion at the European level and at national levels. It is also about stimulating activities and initiatives including marginal groups into the processes of seeking solutions and building strategies and policies to improve their lives.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

FRIDAY MAY 15, 2009

- 9.30 **Welcome words** by the Conference Chair
Mr Martin ŽÁRSKÝ, Head Department of Social Services and Social Inclusion, Czech Republic
- 9.40 **Opening Speech**
Mr Marián HOŠEK, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic
- Experience Report**
Mrs Eva SZARVAK from the 7th Meeting of People experiencing Poverty
- 10.00 - 11.00 **Workshops – 1st Session**
Where we live. What we need.
- **Housing**
 - **Financial Inclusion**
 - **Basic services**
- Presentations of the realities with visual supports and practical examples
- With the participation of:**
- **Mr Jérôme VIGNON**, Director, Directorate Social Protection and Integration, European Commission
 - **Mr Jean-Marc DELIZEE**, State secretary to the Fight against Poverty, Belgium.
 - **Ms Brigitte WEINANDY**, Member of the SPC
 - **Mr Marián HOŠEK**, Deputy Minister for Social Policy, Social Services and Family Policy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic
 - **Mrs Gabriele ZIMMER**, MEP
- 11.00 - 11.30 **Coffee break**
- 11.30 - 13.00 **Workshops – 2nd session**
Where we live. What we need (continued)
- 13.00 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 – 16.00 **Workshops 3rd Session**

Were we live. What we need (continued)

- 16.00 – 16.30 Coffee break
- 16.30 – 18.00 **Workshops: National Delegations**
Preparation of the Workshops Reflexions and of the 2010 goals:
2 - 3 reflexions on the workshops
2 - 3 goals for 2010
- 20.30 – 23.30 Conference dinner

SATURDAY MAY 16, 2009

- 9.30 – 10.30 **Reflexions on the workshops** (by delegation; 2-3 reflexions in 2 minutes for each delegation)
- 10.30 – 11.15 **Open discussion**
- 11.15 – 11.45 Coffee break
- 11.45 – 12.15 **Conclusion Plenary Session**
- **Mr Vladimír ŠPIDLA**, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
 - **Mr Martin HIRSCH**, High Commissioner for Active Solidarity and Fight against Poverty, France
 - **Mr Czeslaw WALEK**, Deputy Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities, Czech Republic
 - **Mr Juan MATO**, Deputy Director of Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Social Policy, Spain
 - **Mr Ludo HOREMANS**, President of European Antipoverty Network
- 12.15 -13.15 **Tree 2010:**
2 goals in 2 minutes for each delegation. Symbolic objects to hang on the 2010 tree.
- 13.15 – 14.45 Lunch
- 15.00 End of the 8th Meeting

The European meetings of people experiencing poverty: driving the participatory agenda

The Lisbon European Council (2000) agreed to implement a European strategy in order to “make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty in Europe by 2010”; one of the strategies adopted - tackling poverty and social exclusion - is key to going forward with this commitment and must include all the stakeholders, including people who are experiencing poverty.

A process going forward....

- 2001 The Belgian Government leveraged its experience in participation since 1994 and capitalised on its Presidency of the European Union to launch the 1st European meeting of people experiencing poverty which reviewed four issues: **housing, health, training and incomes**. The big conclusion of this first event was that **people experiencing poverty had the knowledge and expertise to analyse exclusion, and aimed to take part in society** and the decisions that affect their life.
- 2003 In 2002, the Belgian Government suggested a 2nd Meeting - an initiative taken up by the Greek Presidency. EAPN was asked to prepare it, but time was short to carry out proper groundwork with the delegations. The topic was “**good participation practices**”. The preparations and workshops produced **attempts to create models for participatory processes** and a **demand from the delegates: people experiencing poverty want to be able to talk face-to-face with policy-makers on policies that affect them**. Responding to this demand, the Greek Presidency asked the June Council for the European Meetings to become a **recurrent process**, like the Social Affairs Round Table.
- 2004 The topic chosen under the Irish Presidency reflected the demands that came out of the 2nd Meeting, and focused on dialogue between people experiencing poverty and policymakers under the title, “**Participation is a two way street**”. In a reversal of traditional roles, **the “authorities” now became regarded as “guests” of the people experiencing poverty**, and interfaced directly with the delegates in workshop discussions. The meeting concluded with an **open forum between people experiencing poverty and a panel of policy-makers**. A DVD made at the event will provide a tool for extensive use by the EAPN national networks to build awareness among national and regional policy makers.
- 2005 The Luxembourg Presidency chose to explore **images and perceptions of poverty**. A bigger focus is put on media productions - patchworks, paintings and photographs - brought in by people experiencing poverty. These creative endeavours were collected together into an exhibition staged at the Liverpool Round Table. A catalogue of the works was published. The Luxembourg Presidency showed the depth of its involvement by taking a powerful message to the June Council of Ministers, **calling on all EU countries to organise the same kind of Meeting**. Many EAPN national networks gradually began to set up similar kinds of meetings at national and/or regional level.
- 2006 Preparations under the Austrian Presidency encompassed all aspects of poverty and social exclusion around the topic “**How do we cope with everyday life?**” The groundwork done by the delegates revealed the **proactivity and energy of people experiencing poverty**. Each delegation of people experiencing poverty prepared a poster and presented it to the plenary session: it was an unforgettable highlight of the 5th Meeting. The posters were collected into an **exhibition** staged at the Finland Round Table, in the Commission building in April 2007, and at the first National Meeting of people experiencing poverty in the United Kingdom in July 2007. The 5th meeting evaluation revealed a need to take stock of the first five Meetings.
- 2007 The 6th Meeting, under the German Presidency, decided to channel this priority through, and chose as the topic, “**Strengthening Progress, drafting next steps**”. It saw 130 delegates from 27 countries and 97 representatives of European and national authorities meeting on 4 and 5 May in Brussels. Delegates and guests gave the Meeting topic visual expression through symbolic objects. Without playing down the progress made on the social front, the delegates emphasized that the aim of eradicating poverty by 2010 is unrealistic when there are clear signs that poverty is spreading. The 6th Meeting clearly showed that participatory processes widen the prospects for and help increase workable **empowerment**. There was also found to be more joint work being done by associations and public authorities, and a demand for ongoing dialogue at national level.
- 2008 The 7th Meeting, organized under the auspices of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU and entitled ‘**Four Pillars in the Fight against Poverty**’, focused on four topics: **social services, services of general interest, housing** and **minimum income**. These four elements were chosen because they constitute four important fields in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It was attended by 124 delegates with experience of poverty from the EU Member States and approximately the same number of representatives of national governments, the European Commission, European non-governmental organisations and social partners.

Reports on www.eapn.eu

