



EAPN Appeal for Adequate Minimum Income for all:

WHAT EAPN WANT

If you are concerned about poverty and social exclusion...
READ BELOW about what the European Anti Poverty Network demands.
AND SUBSCRIBE to the EAPN APPEAL on www.adequateincome.eu !

How things are, how things should be

- *“The way people look at you is humiliating. You are not considered a human being”¹*
We want an **end to the stigmatisation** of people who can not get a job or one that takes them out of poverty: a **change in how people in poverty are represented** by public opinion, media, and policies.
- *79 million people were at risk of poverty in the EU in 2007². National and EU policies focused on growth and jobs through the liberalisation of the internal market have resulted in growing poverty and inequalities. The current crisis makes this failure even more devastating for people in poverty.*
We want a widely shared political acknowledgment that poverty is not acceptable, and that this fight should be a priority. **Minimum Income schemes provide social assistance of last resort. They are lifelines for people facing poverty, and should be central to this fight.**
- *Huge numbers of people are still not covered by even basic Minimum Income schemes. Recent reforms, increasing the conditionality of benefits, undermine the right to social protection. This contradicts the 1992 EU Recommendation recognizing the “basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity”, the 2000 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the 2008 Commission Recommendation on Active Inclusion..*
Member States must turn their public commitments into concrete reality.
- *People experiencing poverty are facing multiple obstacles to accessing Minimum Income. Complexities of existing systems often prevent people from taking up their rights.*

1,4 PEP reference

2,3 Cf: EC Proposal for the Joint Report on SP and SI 2009 — SEC(2009) 141

Minimum Income Schemes should be made **accessible to all**.

- *Most Minimum Income supports do not take people out of poverty. Benefits are losing their purchasing power, while the cost of living is booming.*
People should have a right to **“adequate”** financial support, allowing a standard of living considered as **decent** with regards to the real costs of living and the standards of the society they live in.
- *In 2007, 8% of those at work were facing poverty³. Precarious jobs and bad quality work are increasing; even more are affected under the current crisis.*
We want the implementation of Adequate Minimum Income to be the catalyst for a fairer sharing of resources: **decent minimum wages** should be set above high standard Minimum Income.
- *“They should sit and listen to us”⁴*
People experiencing poverty should participate in the shaping and implementation of Minimum Income schemes; they are part of the solution.

Next steps

1. **A new priority for the EU** - We need a real shift in EU policies towards making progress on reducing poverty and social exclusion. The 2010 European year against poverty should mark the beginning of a different post-Lisbon strategy period. The eve of the EU Parliament elections is the time to take seriously people’s concerns.
The need for a social Europe must to be a dominant theme in the current European Elections campaign, and today’s EU decision makers must be forced to deliver on poverty.
 2. **Public support** – Public opinion and decision-maker’s mindset to Minimum Income schemes must change: they are a key element of social protection systems, and a vital investment in the future of our society.
We need large numbers of people to sign the EAPN appeal for Adequate Minimum Income, to demonstrate that a life in dignity for all is a shared ideal for Europe.
 3. **Using EU existing tools, now!** - Formal EU recommendations should be made to Italy, Hungary and Greece to immediately implement **Adequate Minimum Income schemes**.
 4. **Stop punitive cuts in Minimum Income, now!** - Some current policies unfairly and inefficiently increase the conditionality of benefits, and inflict financial penalties on people already facing hardship.
The EU Commission should give clear warnings against these attacks on the right to Adequate Minimum Income. Minimum Income is a prerequisite for inclusion to the labour market, and a vital prevention tool against deprivation in the current crisis.
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5. **Take Active Inclusion seriously** - The October 2008 Commission Recommendation on Active Inclusion underlines that the integration of people further from the labour market requests: adequate income support, inclusive employment policies, and high standard services.
Such a Recommendation should change the paradigms of employment policies, as well as the approach to issues related to services.
6. **Revitalize the OMC** - The Open Method of Coordination on Social Inclusion and Social Protection (OMC SIS), welcomed by EAPN in 2001, has lost its impetus. It must become again a source of hope and concrete progress made: through improved governance, implementation targets, more effective mutual learning, supported by EU funding.
Through the implementation of the Active Inclusion Recommendation, we expect the OMC to deliver rapid progress on ensuring accessibility and adequacy of Minimum Income schemes.
7. **An EU Directive on Minimum Income** - People want the EU to deliver on what really matters for them in uncertain times. Soft mechanisms have not been enough to make significant progress in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Steps should be taken to put in place an EU framework to defend high-level social standards. **A framework directive on Adequate Minimum Income schemes would be a strong message that poverty matters.**
8. **A common fight for dignity** – Joint progress must be made on Minimum Income at the same time as decent salaries for a fairer society. We support the fight for fair living wages.
We urge Trade Unions at national and European level to join our appeal.