

On 24 January 2014 the European Foundation Centre participated in the 8th stakeholder dialogue meeting of the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion (EPAP). The event highlighted the European Commission (EC) policy work in the field, the publication of the Annual Growth Survey 2014 and the update on the roadmap of the Social Investment Package (SIP), providing guidance to Member States for prioritising social investment and modernising their welfare politics.

Lieve Franssen, Head of the Directorate for Europe 2020 social policies at the European Commission, underlined the need for a stronger dialogue with stakeholders and announced a review of the composition of EPAP ensuring a greater involvement of national representatives.

Commission's social policy work in 2014

In 2014 the Implementation of the [Social Investment Package](#) will be a priority with a focus on the effectiveness of social protections systems, a subject addressed in [Annual report 2013 on Employment and social development in Europe](#) published in January 2014. In November 2013 the EC published an [updated version](#) of the roadmap keeping track of the progresses of the implementation of the SIP for the period 2013 – 2014.

The implementation of the SIP will foresee the use of EU funds included Structural Funds, now in a crucial moment as 28 partnership agreements are under negotiations, 180 operational programmes have to be submitted to the Commission. Beside Structural Funds there are other funds have an important component on social policies such for example the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF), the Employment and Social innovation Programme (EASI), the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation.

The EC will also launch a “knowledge bank”, foreseen by the SIP, to help policymakers and experts share social policy experiences while a conference on Social Policy Innovation will take place in May. It will take stock of the work done so far with a focus on activities supported by EU funds. A call for proposals on social integrated services will be also launched.

A conference on adequate minimum income is also in the pipeline for spring (March or April).

A video presenting results of the [3rd Annual Convention against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#) which took place in November 2013 is available.

Further information is available at the following [link](#). The 4th European Convention against Poverty and Social Exclusion will take place on 20 – 24 November 2014. For the next Conventions stakeholders suggested to address topics such as education, housing and migration.

An area that has moved forward is the one on Investing in children with the launch of the dedicated [Platform](#) to identify, evaluate and report on good practices for investing in children, parenting support, and child participation, as well as monitor the implementation of the Recommendation on [Investing in Children](#).

Another subject high on EC's agenda will be gender equality and pensions including the development of [indicators](#) of pension adequacy and sustainability in EU Member States. A conference is scheduled in February on the implementation of the [EU White paper on pensions](#) since 2013.

A mid-term review of Europe 2020 is also currently in the making. At the end of February 2014 the EC will release a communication taking stock of the implementation of Europe 2020 in terms of targets and flagship initiatives. The review itself will take place in 2015, conclusions and new orientations will be published by the college of Commissioners in charge.

The social dimension of the Annual Growth Survey 2014 and the preparation of the National Reform Programmes

In November 2014 the European Commission adopted the [Annual Growth Survey \(AGS\) 2014](#) taking stock of the economic and social situation in Europe and setting policy priorities for the EU as a whole for the coming year. The adoption of the AGS marks the start the fourth [European Semester](#) of economic policy coordination and the European Commission is preparing countries analysis. Country specific recommendations will be published after the The

The European semester will focus on: Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis; Promoting growth and competitiveness; Modernising public administration;Fiscal consolidation;Restoring bank lending to the economy.

The screening tolls included in the AGS 2014 are:

- The [2014 Alert mechanism report](#) to screen EU economies for potential economic risks
- The [Joint Employment Report](#) which assess the social and employment situation in the EU
- The [Report on Single Market integration](#) analysing the results achieved so far and the obstacles still remaining at the level of Member States
- A [staff working document](#) assessing the implementation of country- specific recommendations, illustrating key reforms undertaken at national level

Stakeholders underlined the importance not to relate poverty only to unemployment but to look at social inclusion as a large. European policies, such the Youth Guarantee scheme, should take into consideration that there are groups of population that are poor or at risk of poverty for which employment is not a real option (e.g. seniors, people with severe disabilities).

About EPAP

The [European Platform against poverty and social exclusion](#) was launched in 2010 as a part of Europe 2020, the EU's growth strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

The aim of the Platform is to raise awareness and recognise the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and to contribute to reaching the EU target of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and exclusion by 2020. Although combating poverty is primarily the responsibility of national governments, the EU can help to develop and spread effective and innovative methods and instruments.

Over the past years the platform addressed issues such as: Improving access to work, social security, essential services (healthcare, housing, etc.) and education; Better use of EU funds to support social inclusion and combat discrimination; Social innovation and experimentation to find smart solutions in post-crisis Europe; especially in terms of more effective and efficient social support; New partnerships between the public and the private sector; E-inclusion.

Members of the platform are representatives of EU bodies, civil society organisations, international organisations, regional and local authorities, EU think tanks and foundations.

For further information on the participation of the EFC in the Platform please contact eu@efc.be