

# Annual Report 2017

*EAPN-Fin is an open network for people, organisations and action groups working against poverty and social exclusion. EAPN-Fin is a member of EAPN, European Anti-Poverty Network.*



## 1. STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK

The most important resource of the Network are the member organisations. In the year 2017, the Network had a total of 45 members. Three new organisations joined the Network (Omaishoitajaliitto – Carers Finland), FinFami Uusimaa and Nuorisoyhteistyö – Allianssi (Finnish Youth Cooperation).

The **website of EAPN-FIN** ([www.eapn.fi](http://www.eapn.fi)), was updated regularly. Information was also spread through social media on Facebook [www.facebook.com/eapnfin](http://www.facebook.com/eapnfin) and Twitter [www.twitter.com/eapn\\_fin](http://www.twitter.com/eapn_fin).

Information about the activities and events of the Network to its members was distributed via a newsletter and email. In 2017 five newsletters were sent. The newsletter can be subscribed by anyone interested on our website. In this way, information can be obtained by both Network members, experts and interested citizens. End of 2017, the newsletter had about 350 subscribers – a third more than in 2016.

### International activities

EAPN-Fin has a representative in the EAPN Executive Committee, EXCO and EU Inclusion Strategies -group of EAPN (EUISG), which both met three times in 2017.

The European Anti-Poverty Network coordinated the EMIN, European Minimum Income Network -project in 2013–14. The second phase of this project started in 2017 and will continue till the end of 2018. The Finnish EMIN-network was set up in August 2017. NGOs, trade unions and researchers were called to join the network. The project promoted a minimum income high enough to cover basic needs.

### Representation in 2017

- EAPN Executive Committee: EAPN-Fin's representative was EAPN-Fin's chairman Tiina Saarela.
- EU Inclusion Strategies workgroup and its Steering group: representative was EAPN-Fin's vice chairman Jiri Sironen.
- EAPN General Meeting (EXCO and EUISG) and Capacity Building training in Dublin, Ireland 19.–21.10. 2017: representatives were chairman Tiina Saarela, vice chairman Jiri Sironen and PeP-group coordinator Mikko Siltanen.
- The annual, 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of People Experiencing Poverty was held 9–10.11.2017 in Brussels. Finland was represented by a delegation of four persons, Jouni Kylmälä acting as national coordinator.

## 2. STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

### EU Semester and 2020-Strategy advocacy

EAPN-Fin is following up closely and influencing the Finland's national aims of Europe 2020 -strategy to eliminate the risk of poverty or social exclusion for 150,000 people by 2020. Influencing EU Semester is partly national and on the other hand connected to European level. Advocacy work towards **the European Semester** and Europe 2020-strategy was done among other things through EUISG.

At the end of 2017 **Poverty Watch Finland -report** was published for the first time. It is available in Finnish and in English. It contains the latest statistics and trends related to poverty, as well as EAPN-Fin's views on the measures needed to reduce poverty.

As part of the advocacy work towards the European Semester, the Finnish network has **cooperated with the Commission's Representation in Finland**.

EAPN-Fin made its own **national shadow country-specific recommendations**. In connection with the publication of the national recommendations of the Commission, EAPN-Fin made a **position statement and background paper** together with SOSTE, Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health.

### **The European Pillar of Social Rights**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> April The European Commission launched a communication and a recommendation on the European Pillar of Social Rights. It includes the first concrete initiatives to execute the pillar. In November 2017 the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament signed A Proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg, Sweden.

### **Meetings, seminars and conferences connected to EU-processes:**

- **23.1.2017** European Pillar of Social Rights: Going Forward Together, conference in Brussels, vice chairman Jiri Sironen.
- **5.4.2017** meeting with director Barbara Kauffmann, DG EMPL ja Finnish officials for employment and social affairs – Christof Cesnovarin and Miia Rossi-Gray – vice chairman Jiri Sironen.
- **25.4.2017** Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth, Brussels with youth and social inclusion in the spotlight. Jiri Sironen attended as member of the Finnish delegation.
- **26.–27.4.2017** DG ECFIN Stakeholder Seminar for Civil Society Organisations, EAPN-Fin board member Tarja Pajunen.
- **19.5.2017** Discussion forum of European Economic and Social Committee on the White Paper on the Future of Europe, Helsinki, vice chairman Jiri Sironen.
- **15.9.2017** Discussion on the future of Europe arranged by The Finnish NGDO Platform to the European Union, Kehys, chairman Tiina Saarela.
- **11.10.2017** Seminar on the future of EU, Helsinki, vice chairman Jiri Sironen and Anna Järvinen.
- **21.11.2017** Anna Järvinen and Jukka Haapakoski, The National Organisation of the Unemployed were heard on the European Semester by representatives from the Commission

### **Lobbying and advocacy on national level**

EAPN-Fin made its own thesis for Finnish municipal election.

The network was heard by a central national working group aiming at reducing inequality.

EAPN-Fin has been forming a citizen's initiative which was proposed by a board member Yrjö Mattila, Finnish Society of Social Rights. It aims to raise discussion on reducing poverty. The initiative will be launched in 2018.

### **Work groups**

The basic work of the Network is performed by work groups. In 2017, active work groups were Child Poverty, Health and Poverty, Social Policy and The Group of People experiencing Poverty, PeP which changed its name to the Citizens' Action Group. The groups met several times during the year.

### ***Child Poverty work group***

The group surveys the poverty situation of families with children and of children themselves, and provides synergy among those already working on the issue. In the group there are members from 11 NGOs. The group for instance prepared proposals on reducing child poverty for EAPN-Fin's position paper for the national working group on reducing inequality. It also gathered information on housing problems of families with children and brought up the economic consequences of divorce. Group met four times in 2017. It was lead by Sari Laaksonen from the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters.

### ***Health and Poverty work group***

The work group updated the Social Protection Check List, which can be found on EAPN-Fin web page.

The group completed a questionnaire on the fulfillment of § 11 of the Law on Social and Health Patient Fees. The law paragraph rules that social and health patient fees are to be reduced or not to be collected in case the fees endanger person's basic livelihood. The questionnaire was answered by 884 people. The results show that paragraph 11 of the law is widely unknown and it is hard to implement. Based on the enquiry results EAPN-Fin called for a clear, nationwide guidance and more informing and training for professionals on implementing the law. It also demanded the fees to be fair and reasonable. The results were published at the beginning of 2017 and they were presented in several seminars in 2017. The group was lead by chairman Tiina Saarela.

### ***Social Policy work group***

The work group met twice and had additionally online meetings. It took part in updating the report on Poverty-explainer, Poverty – Causes and Consequences and also in preparing the first Poverty Watch on Finland. It was lead by vice chairman Jiri Sironen.

### ***Citizens' Action Group***

The Group of People experiencing Poverty, PeP changed its name to Citizens' Action Group. It met 13 times and did two networking trips outside capital area, in Heinola and Turku. The group action was coordinated by Pep-coordinator Jouni Kylmäla and board member Matti Cantell.

At the ***Poverty Group of Finnish Parliament***, EAPN-Fin was represented by chairman Tiina Saarela. Network secretary Anna Järvinen performed as expert secretary representing SOSTE, Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health.

### **Events and seminars**

EAPN-Fin arranged eight events or seminars in cooperation with several partners.

**9.2.2017** Poverty and charity food aid in Finland

**15.2.2017** How to help people with financial crisis in debt and payment problems?

**9.3.2017** Discussion on European Semester

**1.–2.4.2017** Event on shortening working hours in the Social Forum of Finland

### **The seminars in cooperation with the Poverty Group of the Parliament of Finland**

**22.3.2017** Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, provides Basic social assistance since 2017 – what has changed?

**24.10.2017** In-work poverty

**22.11.2017** Finland 100 years – poverty trends in Finnish history

In addition EMIN-project was presented in SOSTEtalk!-event in Oulu 3.–4.10.2017.

EAPN-Fin member VVA ry coordinates **the Night of the Homelessness** 17.10. EAPN-Fin did the advance informing on the event in summer 2017.

### **3. STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

The change of the name of the group from the Group of People experiencing Poverty to Citizens' Action Group reveals that the group has got stronger also as a social actor. It is not only for sharing experiences but also taking part in public discussion and influencing politics.

EAPN-Fin is responsible for appointing the Finnish delegation to the European Meeting for People Experiencing Poverty, PeP in Brussels. In 2017 it was held on 9.–10. November. Taking part in the meeting was coordinated by Mr. Jouni Kylmälä, who assembled the group and was responsible for the preparations for the meeting. Other members in the delegation were Ms. Eeva-Maria Grekula, Mr. Rauno Haapanen and Mr. Juha Salden.

The theme of the meeting was in-work poverty. The group organized a seminar on the topic with the Poverty Group of Parliament of Finland on the 24<sup>th</sup> October. The key note speaker at the seminar was university lecturer of the University of Jyväskylä, Mikko Jakonen. Three poverty experts from the Pep-group participated in the panel.

Also the second Nordic PeP meeting in Stockholm 11.-13.10.2017 got into the current theme of in-work poverty. Mr. Rauno Haapanen participated. The meeting produced a Nordic leaflet on the issue: Working poor, leave no one behind: Is it criminal to be poor?

After the two international meetings the group held an open reflection meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> October to spread the latest facts on in-work poverty.

In addition to Nordic and European meetings the group started building network outside the capital area on which the group has formerly focused on. In autumn 2017 group visited two towns, Heinola and Turku to meet people working against poverty and social exclusion. During 2017 the network strived to increase cooperation between the Citizens' Action group and EAPN-Fin board.

#### **Respectfully about Poverty -journalism award**

Citizens' Action group organized for the second time Respectfully about Poverty -journalism award. The jury which chooses the the award winners was assembled with an open invitation in EAPN-Fin networks and social media.

The jury consists of people that have experienced poverty. It met three times and assessed the 40 articles and programmes that had been signed up for the competition. Board member Matti Cantell and secretaries Anna Järvinen and Erja Saarinen enabled the jury's work.

As a result of the jury's work **a guide on respectful writing about poverty** was published. It was edited by EAPN-Fin secretary Erja Saarinen.

Anna Järvinen participated in the meeting of the international project group on 30.–31.3.2017 in Vienna, Austria. Experiences were shared with countries who started granting the award in 2016. New countries taking up the award were briefed.

The award presentation was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November. About 35 persons were present, seven of them journalists. The main recognition was granted to freelance journalist Jani Kaaro for his blog *Paraneeko köyhyys rahalla? – Can you solve poverty with money?* The honorary award was granted to journalist Anu Silfverberg for her online column *Onko työttömiä olemassa? Do the unemployed exist?* The second honorary reward was given to journalist Laura Pörsti and photographer Sirpa Päivinen on their article in Kirkko ja kaupunki -magazine *Työttömyys ajoi Martin-Éric Racinen köyhyysloukkuun – Unemployment lead Martin-Éric Racine to poverty trap.*

#### **4. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE, INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND RESOURCES OF THE NETWORK**

The network's assets are the members, their material and work input, and their cooperation with their stakeholders and with people who have experienced poverty and exclusion. EAPN (Europe) supports the participation in the activities of the European network in form of travel and accommodation support.

EAPN-Fin is not a registered organisation, nor has it any fulltime employees. The home organisation of the Network is SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health, which means that SOSTE supplies the network with the services of a part-time secretary and with financial administration and PR services. Anna Järvinen of SOSTE was the secretary until the 1<sup>st</sup> October and Erja Saarinen also of SOSTE for the rest of 2017.

From the **EAPN grants application round**, the network received support for the PeP coordination, translation and for the update of the Poverty-explainer to add material on EU Semester and Europe 2020. From EMIN2-project financed by EU Commission **the Network got financing for Finnish EMIN-network** and carrying out the project in Finland.

EAPN-Fin has a **Board** elected by **the General Meeting**, which included in 2017 the Chairman, Vice Chairman and 12 Board members. The Board met 7 times in the reporting year.

##### **Board Members 2017**

Tiina Saarela, Chairman, Center for Diaconia and Society

Jiri Sironen, Vice Chairman, Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention

Matti Cantell, Finnish Federation of Settlements

Juha Keränen, last months of the year Leena Valkonen, National Organisation of the Unemployed

Anja-Riitta Ketokoski, HYVA

Sari Laaksonen, Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters

Anastasia Lapintie, Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö –Krits, Nationwide non-profit aftercare organisation

Pirjo-Riitta Liimatainen, The Finnish Association for Mental Health

Tuula Luoma, Finnish Red Cross

Minna Markkanen, Guarantee Foundation

Yrjö Mattila, Finnish Society of Social Rights

Tuula Paasivirta, Kuka kuuntelee köyhää -verkosto

Tarja Pajunen, The Central Association of Finnish Pensioners

Anne Perälähti, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health

The General Meeting was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2017. At the meeting, statutory matters were discussed: the Annual Report of 2016, financial statement, activity plan and budget for 2018 and the election of Board members.