

# **European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), Ireland**

## **Activity Report 2005**

Submitted to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in respect of National Lottery Funding under the National Anti Poverty Networks Programme

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## Summary of activities in 2005

Work areas	<b>1. Empowering</b> anti-poverty groups in Ireland to understand and influence EU policy	<b>2. Promoting</b> social inclusion in Ireland and across the EU	<b>3. Building</b> networking in Ireland and across Europe
<b>Objectives for 2005 to 2006</b>	Continue and develop training and information services to allow anti-poverty groups and people experiencing poverty to understand and influence EU policies	Support members in influencing EU policy and its implementation in Ireland	Increase membership involvement, continue strong input to EAPN (Europe) and strengthen partnership with Bulgarian Anti-Poverty Network
<b>Activities in 2005</b>	<p><b>Training</b> Total of 350+ attended day or half-day regional sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 6 on NAPs Inclusion (4 in Jan, 2 in Dec)</li> <li>➤ 4 on employment</li> <li>➤ 1 on influencing EU policy (national)</li> <li>➤ 1 on Structural Funds, linked to AGM</li> </ul> <p><b>Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New website with thorough policy guide section</li> <li>➤ 21 issues of <i>Flash</i>, with special briefings in most</li> <li>➤ 1 issue of EAPN Ireland <i>Review</i></li> <li>➤ Distributed 5 Issues of EAPN (Europe) <i>Network News</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>NAP Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Workshops (see training)</li> <li>➤ Briefing pack for members on how to engage with the new plan</li> <li>➤ Submission on Poverty-Proofing</li> <li>➤ Leadership role in EAPN (Europe) and support for other networks</li> </ul> <p><b>Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Written briefing and three regional training and consultation workshops on the European Employment Strategy and National Reform Programme, followed by submission to Irish Programme 2005-08</li> <li>➤ Lobbying at national and EU level on the content of the new integrated Guidelines on Growth and Jobs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Structural Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Members' seminar at 2005 AGM.</li> <li>➤ Produced Briefing</li> <li>➤ Briefing to help members input to next NDP and Structural Funds Programme</li> <li>➤ Information meeting and a meeting with Department of Finance, followed by correspondence on social inclusion</li> <li>➤ Lobbying at national and EU level on EU Structural Fund regulations and guidelines for 2007-2013.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future of Europe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Active role in National Forum on Europe</li> <li>➤ Strong input to debate on Lisbon Strategy reform – including Oireachtas Committee hearing and report and member involvement in European petition</li> <li>➤ Member briefing, discussions on Services Directive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengthened Board representing a broad range of members</li> <li>➤ Board planning sessions to refine our strategic plan</li> <li>➤ Successful AGM</li> <li>➤ Very strong Irish contribution to EAPN (Europe)</li> <li>➤ Working Groups on Employment and Structural Funds</li> <li>➤ Delegation to Fourth European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty</li> </ul> <p><i>(Mostly from other funding sources)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide support for 'Share the Learning' Project (CPA funding)</li> <li>➤ Exchange visits with Bulgarian Network (European Commission)</li> <li>➤ New EU project 'Setting Minimum Standards at European level' (European Commission)</li> </ul>

## **Work Area 1**

### **Empowering anti-poverty groups in Ireland to understand and influence EU policy**

#### **1a Training and support**

A series of training sessions were organised across the country, mainly linked to consultations or preparations for Government meetings. One-day or half-day sessions involved a total of about 320 participants from nearly as many local community groups. These included:

- Regional workshops to prepare for the NAPS Social Inclusion Forum, organised with the Community Platform in Galway, Dublin and Cork in January 2005. These engaged a total of over 250 people for a full day. They started with a training session by Robin Hanan, EAPN Ireland, and were followed by workshops on six topics to be covered in the Social Inclusion Forum. The evaluation feedback was very positive (to the question “*Did you find the first session speaker gave a clear understanding?*”, 100% answered ‘yes’)
- Training sessions in September/October 2005 in Dublin, Galway, Waterford and Limerick on the EU Employment Strategy and the Irish National Reform Programme. Again, these were followed by policy discussions which contributed to the development of our submission to the National Reform Programme (see below)
- A national training and information session on the new round of Structural Funds, 2007-2013, in Collins Barracks Dublin, in association with our AGM, attended by 25 people. This was addressed by Brian Harvey (consultant), Sean Regan (CWC) and Paul Ginnell (EAPN Ireland), with participative workshops. The full report of this session is on <http://www.eapn.ie/policy/126>.
- Sessions in Longford and Letterkenny to prepare for the NAP Inclusion consultations in December 2005

EAPN Ireland staff also presented a training workshop on ‘*EU policy-making and how to engage with it*’ for the inaugural seminar of ENAR (European Network Against Racism) Ireland.

Staff of EAPN Ireland also presented a number of training modules to cross-border and international colleagues. These have made an important impact on the standing of Ireland in European social policy circles. These included:

- A PowerPoint presentation on ‘*engaging with the NAPs Inclusion*’ for a workshop at the EAPN (Europe) General Assembly. To our knowledge, this has since been translated and adapted for use in at least eight other EU languages by EAPN networks
- A presentation explaining the NAPs Inclusion, TSN (NI) and NAPS (Republic), for the ‘*Mind The Gap*’ cross-border community development project in Letterkenny in November 2005
- Two major presentations of an hour and a half each, one as a training session in Castilla La Mancha (70 participants) and one as the opening session of the General Assembly of EAPN Spain (Seville, October 2005, 180 delegates) on the NAP Inclusion

All of the above presentations are on [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie)

EAPN Ireland also led the planning and delivery of the ‘Share the Learning’ capacity building programme for the National Anti Poverty Networks (funded separately by Combat Poverty Agency).

### 1b [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie)

Much of the time and energy of staff during the year went into building up our new website [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie) as a portal to make Irish and EU anti-poverty policies accessible to members. The site started in March as a blank page and by the end of the year it included over 200 ‘main’ web-pages and several hundred PDF file attachments.

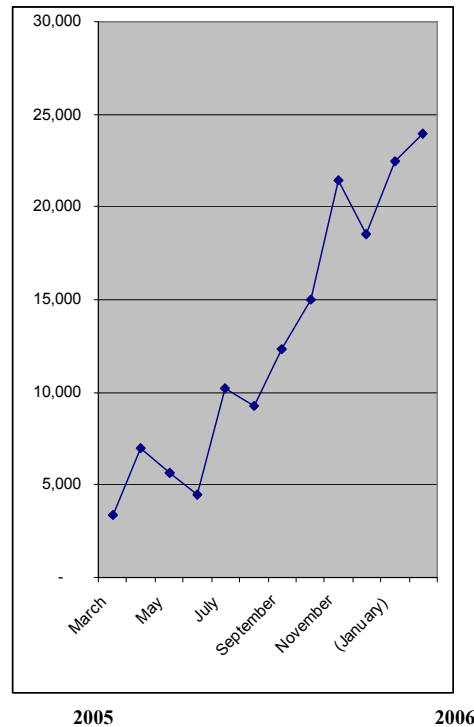
The most important new feature is a policy section, which provides news, background information and links for a large number of policy areas which affect poverty. The pages are written with busy non-specialists in mind and are designed to guide a ‘beginner’ through from simple explanations to more detailed briefing, and provide links to all the main information sources.

The website was publicised through special mailings, including e-mails to any websites with links to our old site (identified through Google) and an article in CPA’s ‘Poverty Today’

The main areas covered by the website are laid out in **Annex A**.

**Table:**  
**‘Hits’ on [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie)**

March	2005	3,400
April	2005	7,026
May	2005	5,627
June	2005	4,479
July	2005	10,172
August	2005	9,296
September	2005	12,336
October	2005	15,011
November	2005	21,474
December	2005	18,546
<b>Total 2005</b>		<b>107,367</b>
(January	2006)	22,485
(February	2006)	23,964
<b>First 12 months</b>		<b>153,816</b>



### 1c Publications

**EAPN Ireland Flash** came out 21 times in 2005. It was circulated fortnightly to just over 2,000 recipients in Ireland (mostly by e-mail, although it also went by post to about 40 groups which do not have e-mail). Flash is produced by the EAPN (Europe) office in Brussels and EAPN Ireland edits it for an Irish audience and adds news and information for our readers. EAPN Ireland staff provided advice to the Fundacion Luis Vives on how to adapt the Flash for a Spanish audience.

**EAPN Ireland Review** (16 pages) came out once, in November 2005, a special issue on the NAP Inclusion, with a circulation of about 2,500. We also continued to circulate about 500 copies of **EAPN (Europe) Network News** every two months to addresses in Ireland.

## 1d Members' Briefings

Briefings were prepared by EAPN Ireland staff and attached to most issues of EAPN Ireland Flash. These were usually two pages, but ran to 16 in the case of the Budget issue.

Briefings in -2005 included:

- the 'revised' Lisbon Strategy (several times);
- National Employment Action Plan;
- National Reform Programme;
- the next round of Structural Funds;
- Make Poverty History Campaign;
- the new Project on Setting Minimum Social Standards Across Europe;
- UK Presidency EU Summit on Social Policy;
- Engaging with the new NAP Inclusion consultations (several times);
- Budget 2006;
- Ireland's Rural Development Strategy; and
- gender policy consultations

## 1e Media and journals

EAPN Ireland major articles in 2005 included:

- **Studies:** a major article on the future of the European Social Model (paper from a conference organised by the Jesuit Commission for Faith and Justice, October 2005)
- **National newspapers:** An **Irish Times** opinion page article on the Lisbon review (January 2005). Letter on the correspondence pages of the Irish Times and Irish Independent on the Services Directive, January 2006. The EAPN Ireland and OPEN press release on poverty traps *Out of Traps* provoked widespread coverage, including major articles in all of the national broadsheets (front page in the Irish Independent), 11 radio interviews and several news bulletins.
- **Poverty Today:** Review of the interim report on the NAP Inclusion (Spring Issue) and article on the new EAPN Ireland website (Summer Issue)
- **On the European Social inclusion strategy** (in *Documentacion Sociale*, the main Spanish Social studies magazine). This article has become the set text in a course in the University of Seville
- **On Irish community groups engaging with the EU constitution** in a book called '*Including the Excluded*', produced by the UK-based Combined Board for European Social Development
- **In the Italian Journal of Social Policy** on Irish approaches to poverty-proofing.

## **Work Area 2**

### **Promoting social inclusion in Ireland and across the EU**

#### **Background**

In addition to support for members in taking up their issues, EAPN Ireland has concentrated for a number of years on three areas where we work to influence policy. These are:

1. The European Social Inclusion Strategy and the Irish National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAP Inclusion)
2. The European Employment Strategy and Structural Funds, and their implementation in Ireland
3. The Future of Europe debate, now focused on the IGC and Irish National Forum on Europe

These reflect the areas where we work with our partners in the EAPN (Europe) Task Forces. In all of these areas, we inform members of the issues, with briefing papers and seminars, consult them on their priorities and concerns and involve them in preparing proposals, submissions, and responses. Regular liaison has been built up with the key decision-makers (politicians, Irish officials, European officials).

In 2005, a number of 'headline' EU policies which affected these work areas took on a new priority, especially the reform of the Lisbon Strategy earlier in the year and the Services Directive later in the year.

#### **2a. NAPs Inclusion**

Supporting anti-poverty groups in engaging with the NAPs Inclusion has been the main core of the work of EAPN in Ireland and across the EU for some years. This became a priority again in the second half of the year during the first discussions on the 2006-2008 plan.

EAPN Ireland was represented on the planning group for the second NAPS Social Inclusion Forum (January 2005) and took a leading role in organising one-day regional meetings for anti-poverty groups to prepare for the Forum. We presented the training element and prepared the educational materials for these regional seminars in Galway, Dublin and Cork. These seminars were organised on behalf of the Community Platform by EAPN Ireland, Age Action, Community Workers Co-op and Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.

They sessions attracted an unexpectedly high turnout of nearly 250 participants, and the conclusions were fed into the NAPS Social Inclusion Forum at plenary and workshop level, and was incorporated into the report. The NESF made an extra 50 places available at their forum for people who had taken part in the previous seminars.

Some documents from this process on the internet include:

- The EAPN Ireland PowerPoint presentation to the regional seminars (at [http://www.eapn.ie/pdfs/23\\_Presentation%20on%20NAPS%20Jan%202005.pdf](http://www.eapn.ie/pdfs/23_Presentation%20on%20NAPS%20Jan%202005.pdf))
- Robin Hanan's PowerPoint presentation from the opening plenary of the Social Inclusion Forum (<http://www.nesf.ie/dynamic/docs/Robin%20Hanan.pdf>)
- The report of the Social Inclusion Forum, including summary report from regional seminars (<http://www.nesf.ie/dynamic/docs/2nd%20NAPS%20Report.pdf>)

**An academic's verdict...**

"b. Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations

"EAPN has been successful in gathering and centralizing information on the objectives of the social inclusion OMC (Open Method of Co-ordination) and on the participation of NGOs in the NAP process. It has also contributed to the development of the political objectives of the OMC Inclusion through regular formal and informal contact with the Social Protection Committee and written positions.

"Each Round of the Action Plans for Inclusion has been analyzed by the national networks of the EAPN. **To date, it has been the most active and influential non-governmental actor in the OMC Inclusion process...**"

Chapter 10: *Participation in the Open Method of Coordination*, from: *The Open Method of Co-Ordination in Action*, Jonathon Zeitlin and Philippe Pochet, SATSA and Peter Lang press, 2005

EAPN Ireland liaised with the Office for Social Inclusion on their consultations for the next Plan (2006-2008). Briefings for members and other community groups helped prepare for the OSI consultations and encouraged submissions.

During the year, EAPN Ireland made a submission on the review of Poverty-proofing which was influential in developing the NAP Inclusion thinking.

The EAPN Ireland Coordinator continued to chair the EAPN Europe 'Review Group on Social Inclusion' which co-ordinates EAPN work on the social inclusion strategy.

Some contributions to EAPN colleagues overseas in this capacity included:

- Helping edit a book on EAPN national networks' reactions to the mid-term reviews of the NAPs Inclusion
- Preparing a training presentation on engaging with the strategy, presented to the 2005 General Assembly in Liverpool and subsequently adapted and translated into at least eight languages. This was based on a previous presentation for the EAPN 'Orientation Seminar' for members of EAPN Executive and working groups in Luxemburg on March 2005
- Speaking at a plenary session, with the Luxemburg Minister for Social Affairs and a representative of the European Commission, in a European conference on the future of the Social Inclusion Strategy organised under the Luxemburg presidency.
- A keynote presentation to the first of a series of EAPN Italy (CILAP) seminars on the new NAP Inclusion, on the topic of 'minimum income in Ireland', followed by an article in Italy's premier social studies journal on 'poverty-proofing in Ireland'

- Presentations at a special seminar on NAPs Inclusion for EAPN Castilla La Mancha and at the opening of the EAPN Spain General Assembly in Seville, both in October
- Chairing the NGO preparatory session at the UK Presidency Round Table on Social Inclusion in Glasgow in October

EAPN Ireland also co-ordinated and lead a joint application by NGOs, Ministries and research institutions from 7 countries for a major two-year project on the potential and limitations of setting minimum social standards across the EU. This project received funding, having been rated first out of the several hundred applications from across Europe, and is now up-and-running (see [www.eapn.ie/policy/140](http://www.eapn.ie/policy/140)).

## **2b Employment**

In 2005 EAPN Ireland continued to convene a small working group on employment policy, which includes Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE), Dublin Employment Pact, Pavee Point and National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII). The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) joined in late 2005. This group works to promote a social inclusion perspective in the European Employment Strategy and the Irish National Employment Action Plan (NEAP).

In February, the working group produced a briefing for anti-poverty community groups on the issues and recommendations in the 2005 National Employment Action Plan. This was updated in August to take account of changes at EU level and the new National Reform Programme. The working group is seeking a meeting with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Enterprise and Small Business to raise issues related to the implementation of Ireland's employment strategy.

In September, this group prepared a national seminar in which national organisations (INOUE, NWCII, PLANET, Pavee Point, MRCI, Irish Refugee Council and the Forum of People with Disabilities) proposed a number of recommendations for the employment chapter of the National Reform Programme for 2005-2008.

Following this, three regional training and consultation workshops for member groups were organised in Galway, Limerick and Waterford. The information from these events was the basis of the EAPN Ireland submission to the National Reform Programme.

Philip O'Connor (Dublin Employment Pact) was the EAPN Ireland representative on the EAPN (Europe) Task Force on Employment. This group coordinates analyses of the revised EU Employment Strategy and the annual National Action Plans (NAPs Employment/ NEAP) and lobbying to increase their focus on social inclusion. This included the drafting of a new 'EAPN Toolkit on engaging with the Employment Strategy'.

Philip O'Connor also represented the network at a seminar on the Joint Programme for Working Life Research in Europe in Brussels in February.

## **2c Structural Funds**

EAPN Ireland, having engaged with the Structural Funds over a number of years, has placed itself in a key position to have an input into the next round of Structural Funds, and the NDP 2007-2013 in Ireland, and ensure the involvement of its members in the process.

Discussions on the next round of Structural Funds and the successor to the NDP (2007-2013) became a major priority from about March. EAPN Ireland produced a briefing on the issues coming up in the new round which was distributed widely (see [www.eapn.ie/policy/97](http://www.eapn.ie/policy/97)).

As mentioned above under 'Training', a national training and information session was organised on the new round of Structural Funds, 2007-2013, after our AGM in Collins Barracks, Dublin, attended by 25 people.

A follow-up workshop for community organisations was organised in July 2005, followed by a meeting with the Department of Finance (accompanied by Social and Family Affairs and Enterprise Trade and Employment) on the priorities for the next round and ways in which community organisations can participate. Nine national organisations took part, including the Secretariats of the Community and Voluntary Pillar and the Community Platform.

As a follow up to this meeting, and the official announcement in August of the NDP 2007-2013, EAPN Ireland sent a letter to the Department of Finance which has been endorsed by its members and sought further clarification on issues of social inclusion and the consultation process regarding the next NDP and Structural Funds Programme. (A follow-up meeting with the Department was held in early February 2006).

At a European level EAPN Ireland has played an important role in the development of EAPN Europe's new Structural Funds Manual. This involved a member of staff taking part in a Workshop in Prague in May.

EAPN Ireland has also actively lobbied at national and EU level to influence the EU regulation and the Community Strategic Guidelines which outline the EU's priorities for the next round of Structural Funds

## **2d The debate on the Future of Europe**

EAPN Ireland gave priority during the first part of the year to promoting the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy, the 10-year EU economic and social plan (2000-2010).

In January, we led a delegation which made a presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs. This resulted in a report issued by the Committee containing our submission and calling on all Government Departments to promote the social dimension in their inputs to the Review.

“Ninth Report of the Joint (Oireachtas) Committee on European Affairs. **Report on the Lisbon Strategy, (Part 2) Strengthening The Social Dimension. Published March 2005.**

“The European Council of Lisbon in 2000 agreed a strategy to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. For the European Union to achieve its aim the social dimension of the Lisbon Agenda cannot be neglected and must remain an important element in the overall strategy.

**“In light of this, the Joint Committee recommends that each Government Department should give the appropriate weight to the social dimension of the Lisbon Agenda during its negotiations and in particular in the context of the Mid term review.**

“The Joint Committee thanks the representatives of the European Anti Poverty Network and the Community Platform who made presentations to the committee and for the submission received”

(full report on: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/Committees29thDail/EuropeanAffairsReports/Lisbon2Rep.doc>)

EAPN Ireland briefed community organisations in Ireland on the importance of the Lisbon Review, and over 60 Irish organisations signed the SOS Europe petition if the Platform of European Social NGOs (along with hundreds of colleagues from across Europe), which was presented to the Commission President and published in Brussels newspapers before the ‘Spring Summit’.

The issue was raised several times by the EAPN Ireland representative in the National Forum on Europe. Following two meetings with European Commission Vice-President Margot Wallstrom, during her visit to Dublin in February 2005, a useful correspondence started with her policy advisor on the issue.

An opinion article in the Irish Times, and a response by the Taoiseach, brought the debate into public prominence. We believe that the Irish contribution played an important part in the favorable outcome of the Summit.

Briefing for members was also organised around the special summit on the future of the European Social Model, in Windsor Castle in September 2005.

#### **A commentator’s view**

“European voluntary organisations have taken out full-page advertisements to defend it; ...The ‘it’ is the social Europe – the idea that European economic development should be balanced by a strong social policy for full employment, protection of workers, generous systems of social protection and a firm commitment to ambitious policies for social inclusion.....

“Alarm bells rang. European social organisations formed a campaign ‘Save Our Social Europe’...

“Some of these comments must have hit home because, when European governments met in Brussels this Spring, they reaffirmed the principle of the balanced development of the economic. Social and environmental pillars...”

Brian Harvey *‘Battle for the soul of social Europe’ Action on Poverty Today, (CPA) Summer 2005*

EAPN Ireland is one of the most active members of the Observer Pillar of the National Forum on Europe, which provides an opportunity to debate issues with decision-makers and to bring broad EU discussions back to our members. In the early part of the year, this concentrated on the EU Constitutional Treaty but, after the French and Netherlands votes against the Constitution, it shifted focus to the ‘reflection period’ on the future of Europe called by the European Council.

Within the Forum, EAPN Ireland representatives intervened in eight debates, listed at Annex B, some of which were influential in influencing Government positions in EU discussions. Our Coordinator was also a judge in the finals of the Forum schools debate on the future of Europe.

Since 2002, EAPN Ireland has been a member of the ‘Observer Pillar’ of the Irish *National Forum on Europe*, which brings together political parties and civil society groups to discuss issues in the future of Europe, especially but not exclusively, Treaty/Constitutional issues.

The Network uses this as an opportunity to dialogue with politicians and to link anti-poverty groups to debates about Europe in Ireland. We made inputs to nearly all the ‘plenary’ sessions, including debates with Commission Vice-President Wallstrom (which led to a continuing correspondence with her advisor during the controversy on the Lisbon Strategy) and President Barosso.

Some presentations about Irish experiences on the Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights included one to a European conference of ECAS (Brussels, May 2005) and one for the North-West Ireland Community Forum (Derry, June 2005), both available on our website.

An article on the EAPN Ireland mobilization of community groups to influence the text of the draft EU Constitution was chosen as the Irish ‘good practice example’ in a book called ‘*Including the Excluded – From Practice to Policy in European Community Development*’ (Policy Press, June 2005)’. The editors added, in a tribute to the funding provided under the National Anti Poverty Networks Programme, “*this example of lobbying at European level is unusual in community development. For the most part, community development organisations do not have the capability to pursue this route*”

An EAPN Ireland presentation to the Forum in April 2005 was drawn up on the basis of considerable discussion within our membership and provoked a lively debate at the Forum’s ‘submissions day’ This paper was subsequently discussed at the EAPN’s European Executive Committee and formed the basis of an EAPN (Europe) position paper on the Constitution.

**An insider's view:**

The so-called 'Social Clause' (Article III-117) was perhaps the most important achievement of the IGC (Inter-Governmental Conference) in respect of social policy. It requires the EU, in defining and implementing all of its policies to "take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion and a high level of education, training and protection of human health." The reference in the article to 'social exclusion' was inserted on the proposal of the Irish government following the intervention of the European Anti-Poverty Network at the (Irish) National Forum on Europe.

From: "*What the Constitutional Treaty Means: the Economic and Social Dimension*", Institute of European Affairs, by Tony Brown (advisor to the Convention on the Future of Europe which drew up the Treaty)

EAPN Ireland has used the 'reflection period' to present the importance of balancing the economic and social sides of EU development. Interventions in this regard include:

- A presentation to a Jesuit Conference on 27 September (also addressed by the Taoiseach), followed by a major article in *Studies*
- The keynote presentation to the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) Conference on 'the Future of Europe' in November
- A presentation to the European Council of Citizens' Action (ECAS), which links consumer advice centres across the EU, on the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Articles in a number of journals and magazines

Later in the year, the network began to concentrate more on the Services Directive and its potential impact on social services in Ireland and across the EU. A number of members' briefings and a presentation to a meeting in the European Parliament office in Dublin in December 2005 built up to a major effort in January 2006 to influence the Directive. This will be reported on more fully in the 2006 Report.

***From the 5<sup>th</sup> report by Chairperson Senator Maurice Hayes on the work of the National Forum on Europe***

*"The Constitution is important but it only provides a tool for people to make decisions..."*

— *Mr Robin Hanan, EAPN, Member of the Special Observer Pillar 17 February 2005*

Mr Robin Hanan presented (a submission to the Forum) on behalf of EAPNI (European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland). He said that in the EAPNI's view, the fight against poverty needed to be at the top of the European Union's agenda. The European Constitution is seen by the organization as a small step forward. Of critical concern was how the aspirations in the Constitution might be realized. It was put to Mr Hanan that the greatest instrument for removing poverty was a job. In response, while agreeing that job creation was important, he replied that the provision of services was also critical to poverty reduction and he did not agree with a "job at any price" philosophy. The difficulty in adequately defining poverty was raised. And the concept of "mainstreaming" social exclusion to ensure every piece of a new European legislation would have to include an analysis on how it would influence social policy was urged.

## **Work Area 3**

### **Building the network in Ireland and Europe**

#### **3a. Membership recruitment and participation**

Paid-up membership has moved from about 100 to close to 150 organisations, up from only about 35 a few years ago. This is largely attributed to participation in training events and to follow-up information and consultation. Circulation lists for information are over 2,000, including decision-makers, journalists and ‘multipliers’ like the ‘info-points Europe’.

Members and others participate well in training, seminars and policy consultations. For example over 350 people, mostly from grass-roots community organisations, took part in the training events organised or led by EAPN Ireland in 2005.

The AGM was held in Collins Barracks this year, with a presentation on the new website and a seminar on the next round of Structural Funds and the National Development Plan (2007-2013).

#### **3b Management, planning and staff**

The Board met six in 2005. There was also a special planning think-in in June, facilitated by Eileen Kavanagh of Dunrath Training and Development.

A Board members’ web-page was created, with all Board documents (minutes, background papers, legal documents, procedural documents, plans, reports etc.)

Induction and briefing sessions were run for new members and a comprehensive Board Members’ pack was published (this is on [www.eapn.ie/pdfs/111\\_Board%20pack3.pdf](http://www.eapn.ie/pdfs/111_Board%20pack3.pdf)).

Following the departure of Policy and Support Worker Brian Carty to the European Parliament in December 2004, he was replaced by Paul Ginnell in April 2005.

Alex McMahan (Administrator) and Robin Hanan (Coordinator) have continued in their posts.

#### **3c. EAPN (Europe)**

EAPN Ireland links to the work of the European network through an active participation in its Executive Committee, Task Forces, General Assembly and seminars.

Patrick Burke represents the Irish Network on the European Executive Committee (ExCo) and has been active in the new ‘Mainstreaming Group’ on equality policy within the network.

EAPN Ireland supported the Irish delegates to the fourth *European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty* (Sancha Magat and Olga Dubyna, Migrants Rights Centre of Ireland; Joan Courtney and Breda Dunne, One Parent Exchange & Network). Robin Hanan chaired one of the workshops and took part in the planning group. The meeting was hosted in Brussels by the

Luxemburg Government with the organizational support of EAPN (Europe). The theme was 'images of poverty and the media'.

Declan Jones (Focus Ireland) and Paul Quinn (Board member) took part in the EAPN (Europe) training in the Netherlands in May 2005.

A five-person delegation from EAPN Ireland took part in the first EAPN (Europe) 'orientation event' in February in Luxemburg. This was designed to allow active members in Task Forces to discuss and share ideas and strategies across the network.

In November, six delegates from Ireland played an active role in the 2005 General Assembly of the European network.

### **3d. Networking in Ireland**

In Ireland, the Network is committed to working in partnership with other organisations with similar aims, particularly the Community Platform (which brings together 26 national organisations committed to the fight against poverty and inequality) and with other National Anti Poverty Networks. We also supported the Equality Coalition.

EAPN Ireland supports the 17<sup>th</sup> October Committee, led by ATD 4<sup>th</sup> World, which plans and promotes the annual Irish commemorations of the World Day for the Eradication of Poverty at the Famine Memorial in Dublin.

EAPN Ireland continued to work closely with the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI) and Combat Poverty Agency (CPA). Robin Hanan made a presentation to a seminar by OSI and CPA on transnational funding. The network also supported the CPA-led project 'Mainstreaming Social Inclusion' which finished with a seminar in Brussels in May.

EAPN Ireland was part of the MakePovertyHistory Coalition, which planned the large demonstration in Dublin before the G8 summit and lobbies generally on the Millennium Development Goals. We were active in informing Irish community groups of the issues in the campaign.

Robin Hanan served on the editorial Advisory Board of the multi-cultural journal *Metro Eireann* and is a member of 'Dialogue for Democracy' (a small study group bringing together TDs from all parties, the Secretary General to the Taoiseach's Department, the Dublin City Manager, NGOs and academics organised by the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice) which is publishing a report (through the IPA) shortly.

### 3e Bulgaria-Ireland Partnership

The Network has worked in partnership with the emerging Bulgarian Anti-Poverty Network (BAPN) for several years. In April, a four-person delegation from the BAPN visited Ireland. We organised a programme for them with a special emphasis on structural funds.

- **Day 1:** Visit to Sonairte ecological centre, County Meath, Newgrange Megalithic ‘Passage Graves’ and Mosney ‘direct provision’ centre
- **Day 2:** Meeting with Bulgarian Ambassador to Ireland, in the Embassy; general briefing on structural funds and inclusion (EAPN Ireland); Briefing on the work of the CSF Gender Equality, by the Head of Unit; Briefing by ADM on structural funds and social inclusion.
- **Day 3** (Hosted by Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed): visit to a range of projects in Tallaght, meeting with the Mayor of South Dublin and the Tallaght Partnership, working lunch with EAPN Ireland Board.
- **Day 4** Visit to Cara Park Community Services, learning about courses, laundry, childcare centre. Visit to Northside Civic Centre. Visit to Ballymun, meetings with community groups and re-generation company.
- **Day 5:** National Forum on Europe, Plenary session and briefing by Chairperson Senator Maurice Hayes. Meeting with Enlargement Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs followed by meeting with senior officials from Combat Poverty Agency

In July, a four-person Irish delegation made a return visit to Bulgaria. They were Joe Gallagher (Community Training Workshop), Kay Lynch (Dublin Northside Community Law Centre), Margaret Cranley (Cara Park Traveller Centre) and Paul Quinn (researcher and community development worker, Wexford).

During their visit to Bulgaria, they met with or visited:

- Maria Ilcheva, Social Enterprise Fund (SEF) Bulgaria
- A social innovation awards ceremony
- Representatives of the Roma Parliament, Sofia
- A Bulgarian member of Parliament
- Experts in the Department of Sociology, Sofia university, on civil society, poverty reduction and structural funds in Ireland and Bulgaria
- Mr William Popov, from a disability NGO

The group brought a lot of information and returned with many more queries and requests for contacts from the Bulgarian groups which they visited.

# Financial Report, 2005

## Summary

<b>Income</b>	165,364
<b>Expenditure</b>	163,222
<b>Balance</b>	<b>2,142</b>

## Income

National Anti Poverty Networks Programme	150,220
Website grant (CPA)	5,000
Membership	2,209
Travel refunds	7,650
Misc	285
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165,364</b>

### Other projects in hand (not covered by this financial report)

European Commission	
➤ <i>Count us in</i>	
➤ <i>Setting Min Social Standards</i>	-
CPA for NAPS Consultation	-

## Expenditure

<b>Overheads</b>	
Staff	110,782
Staff expenses	2,160
Building Expenses	5,027
Office Expenses	6,358
Equipment	1,220
Financial expenses	2,661
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>135,808</b>
<b>Work Area 1: Information and Training</b>	-
Review, Network News, Flash	3,400
Regional meetings	1,321
Out of the Poverty Traps Report	2,904
NAPS Consultation meetings	425
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>43,048</b>
<b>Work Area 2: Policy and Advocacy</b>	
Website	4,977
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>21,477</b>
<b>Work Area 3: Strengthening the network</b>	
Networking in Ireland	1,248
EAPN (Europe) membership & Training	1,989
AGM/Annual Report & Conference	1,385
EAPN Ireland Board	2,483
EAPN (Europe) meetings	9,541
Executive Committee member expenses	5,342
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>21,988</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>163,222</b>

## Annex A

### Some of the topics covered by [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie)

#### Policy Guide ‘main’ pages

##### **Poverty in Ireland and across the EU**

- What do we mean by poverty?
- Statistics

##### **Five EAPN policy priorities**

- EU Social Inclusion Strategy, including the National Action Plans (NAPs Inclusion) and the Lisbon Strategy
- EU Employment Strategy and the National Employment Action Plans
- Structural Funds, and National Development Plan (NDP)
- (Enlargement of the EU)
- The debate of the future of Europe, especially the EU Constitutional Treaty

##### **Ten groups at risk of poverty: issues, policies and organisations**

- Children: Child poverty and children’s rights
- Disability and Poverty
- Homelessness, housing and accommodation
- Lone Parents
- Migrant Workers
- Older people and poverty
- (Prisoners and ex-offenders)
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Travellers and Roma
- (Unemployed)

##### **Ten policy areas: challenges and responses**

- Debt, credit and financial poverty
- Drugs - misuse and poverty
- (Equality, racism, discrimination and poverty)
- Food poverty
- Global poverty
- Health and poverty
- Homelessness, accommodation, housing
- (Literacy and educational disadvantage)
- (Minimum income and minimum wages)
- (Rural poverty)

##### **Project on Setting Minimum Standards across the EU**

##### **Influencing EU and national policy**

##### **Jargon-busters**

#### Other Sections of the Website

##### **Home**

- Includes ‘latest news’, ‘who we are’ etc.

##### **News**

##### **Publications**

- Includes back issues of ‘Flash’, Review, press statements, policy papers etc.

##### **Events**

##### **Training**

- With a large section on EAPN and other training resources

##### **EAPN Ireland**

- Includes reports, plans, main documents (legal basis) etc.

##### **Useful Links**

##### **Contacts**

## Annex B

### Inputs to the National Forum on Europe

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject and keynote speakers</b>	<b>Subject of EAPN Ireland intervention</b>
<b>7 February</b>	<i>Getting to know the New Constitution: Bringing the Economic and Social Context to the fore</i> Mr John Monks, ETUC; Mr Tom Noonan, IBEC	Social inclusion and the Constitution
<b>10 March</b>	<i>Getting to know the New Constitution: Communicating Europe.</i> Commissioner Margot Wallström	The Lisbon debate and the French referendum
<b>7 April</b>	<i>Getting to know the New EU Constitution: How can National Parliaments have their say?</i> Mr Eckart Guth, Deputy Secretary General of the European Commission Mr Jan Zahradil, MEP, Czech Republic	Democratizing the Institutions. Introducing the delegation from Bulgarian Anti Poverty Network
<b>April</b>	Submissions day	Submission on the Constitution
<b>2 May</b>	<i>Getting to know the New EU Constitution: Freedom, Security and Justice</i> Minister Michael Mc Dowell, Minister for Justice Professor Jo Shaw, Salvesen Chair of European Institutions at the University of Edinburgh	Refugees and migrants in the new Europe
<b>9 June</b>	<i>Economic Governance</i> Professor Billy Keegan	Unemployment and employment (Eric Conroy, INOU for EAPN)
<b>30 June</b>	<i>The Big Picture</i> Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.	The ‘reflection period’ and social policy
<b>20th October</b>	<i>Key issues facing the European Union during the period of reflection</i> Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs	Rebuilding confidence in the ‘social Europe’

## **Annex C**

### **EAPN Ireland Board Members, 2005**

(*) Catherine Joyce, replaced by *Anne Jennings	Irish Traveller Movement
(*) Karen Kieran, replaced by *Candy Murphy	One Family
Declan Jones	Focus Ireland
*Dier Tong	Africa Centre
*Donal Toolan	Forum of People with Disabilities
Frances Byrne	OPEN Network of Lone Parent Groups
(*) Ide Lenehan	Drogheda Community Forum
Joe Gallagher	Community Training Centre (Horticulture)
Kay Lynch	Northside Community Law Centre
*Louise Richardson	Older Women's Network
Margaret Deaton	Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed
Patrick Burke	Threshold
Paul Quinn	Independent researcher
*Peter Herrmann	European Science Organisation and Consultancy
Philip O'Connor	Dublin Employment Pact

\* Joined the Board during the year

(\*) Left the Board during the year

### **Staff**

Robin Hanan, Coordinator

Paul Ginnell, Policy and Support Worker

Alex McMahon, Administrator

Janice Ransom, Project and Research Coordinator, European Project on Setting Minimum  
Social Standards Across Europe

## **Annex D - EAPN Ireland - basic information**

EAPN Ireland was set up in 1990 as the Irish national network of the European Anti Poverty Network ('EAPN Europe'). Members in Ireland played an important part in establishing the European network, which now has a strong organisation in each of the 'old 15' and most of the new EU member states.

EAPN Ireland works to empower members, and anti-poverty groups generally, to understand and influence EU policy and its implementation in Ireland and to build contacts and learn from colleagues across Europe.

### **Membership**

Membership is open to:

*"... voluntary organisations, community groups or other bodies whose principal and explicit objectives are to combat poverty, inequality and/or social exclusion and who subscribe to the objectives... (of EAPN Ireland)"*

*(EAPN Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association)*

Individuals, and organisations whose focus is not primarily anti-poverty work, may join as 'associate' or non-voting members.

At the end of 2004, EAPN Ireland had over 150 paid-up members and a broader mailing list, for most publications, of just over 2,500.

### **Aim**

*"to empower and represent the interests of people living in poverty or suffering discrimination, primarily through influencing European Union policy and its implementation in Ireland"*

*(EAPN Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association)*

### **Objectives**

1. To put the fight against poverty and social exclusion on the political agenda of the European Union.
2. To promote and enhance the effectiveness of actions against poverty and social exclusion.
3. To campaign for and with individuals and groups facing social exclusion.
4. To assist groups and organisations in Ireland in developing a European dimension to their work.
5. With the participation of and consultation with people living in poverty, to identify the needs of people living in poverty.
6. To monitor the impact of European developments on poverty and social exclusion in Ireland.

*(EAPN Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association)*

## Management

EAPN Ireland is controlled by its members through Annual General Meetings, which decide policy and elect a Managing Board. The Board is responsible to the members for the day-to-day management of the organisation and employs staff.

The Board meets seven times a year, in addition to one or more special planning days and seminars on particular topics (for example, in 2004 on planning).

The Board and staff use the EAPN (Europe) guidelines for gender-proofing and our own broader equality check-list in developing policy and plans.

EAPN Ireland sends delegates to EAPN Europe General Assemblies and has a place on the European Executive Committee (ExCo), currently filled by Patrick Burke, Director of Threshold.

Most of the work of EAPN (Europe) is carried out through 'Task Forces'. Each national network has a member linked to each task force, but most of these are 'corresponding' members and only a minority are full members.

### Basic structures of EAPN Ireland and EAPN (Europe)

