



European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland

Press Statement - for immediate release

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EAPN Ireland welcomes the publication of The Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights however questions the lack of ambition represented by the target to reduce poverty.

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland welcomes the publication of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the inclusion of headline targets relating to poverty and employment. However, EAPN Ireland has concerns that the plan lacks ambition around poverty and the integrated approach necessary to address inequality and social exclusion. An in-depth analysis of the plan must be conducted in order to establish whether the plan can adequately respond to the needs of those living in poverty and most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Action Plan builds upon the targets of EU2020 strategy and proposes headline targets in the areas of employment, skills, and social protection to be achieved by 2030.

The primary targets for 2030 include:

1. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be **reduced by at least 15 million, at least 5 million of these should be Children.**
2. **At least 78%** of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment.
3. **At least 60%** of all adults should participate in training every year.
4. These new targets will be supported by a **revision of the Social Scoreboard**. The revised Scoreboard will track Member States' trends and performances, enabling the Commission to monitor progress towards the implementation of the Social Pillar principles.

The Commission has also presented, as a concrete action under principle 4 of the Pillar, a recommendation on **Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)**. This Recommendation provides guidance to Member States on policy measures to gradually transition between emergency measures taken to preserve jobs in the current crisis and new measures needed for a job-rich recovery.

The European Commission has invited the European Council to endorse designated targets and calls on the Member States to define their own national targets in order to contribute to the implementation of the plan.

EAPN Ireland Director Paul Ginnell states *“One notable development is setting of a target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU by at least 15 million by 2030.*

There are around 90 million facing this risk now. While the previous target, to reduce poverty by 20 million by 2020, was not met, we question the introduction of a reduced minimum target for poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic calls for more ambition and stronger action in order to mitigate the inequality perpetrated by the pandemic.”

He continues: “The Irish Government has an obligation to the people of Ireland to implement the Pillar of Social Rights in a manner that goes beyond what is called for within the Action Plan, this will assist in the fulfilment of a commitment within current Government strategy, The Roadmap for Social Inclusion, to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive states within the EU by 2025.”

Mr Ginnell concludes: “We must now scrutinise the targets and aims within the plan in order to establish whether it will ensure the realisation of the principles within the Pillar of Social Rights and act as a robust tool to address the causes of poverty and inequality in Ireland and across Europe.”

Ends.

Please find further information on the European Pillar of Social Rights [here](#).

You can read about the Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights [here](#).