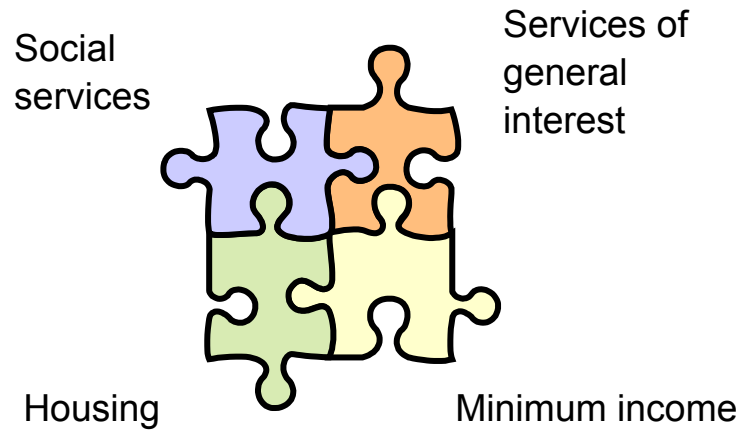




Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

7th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty Egmont Palace – Brussels, May 16 - 17, 2008

4 pillars in the fight against poverty



Supported by
The European Commission



Organised with the assistance
of The European Anti-Poverty
Network (EAPN)

Hosted in Egmont Palace by the Belgian Government



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The basic purpose of this meeting is to listen to people experiencing poverty, and to establish a dialogue with policy- and decision-makers in the field of fight against poverty and social exclusion at the European level and at national levels. It is also about stimulating activities and initiatives including marginal groups into the processes of seeking solutions and building strategies and policies to improve their lives.

PROGRAMME

Egmont Palace –8, Place du Petit Sablon – 1000 Brussels

FRIDAY MAY 16, 2008

- 9.30 **Welcome words** by the Conference Chair
Ms Vesna **LESKOŠEK**, Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 9.45 **Opening Speech**
Ms Marjeta **COTMAN**, Minister for Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia
- 10.00 **Messages of greeting**
Mr Jérôme **VIGNON**, Director, Directorate Social Protection and Integration, European Commission

Mr Jean-Marc **DELIZEE**, State secretary to the Fight against Poverty, Belgium.
- 10.15 **Experience Report**
Ms Salome **MBUGUA** from the 6th Meeting of People experiencing Poverty
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00-12.30 **7 Workshops - 4 themes**
- Housing
 - Minimum income
 - Services of general interest (energy, water)
 - Social services
- 12.30-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00- 16.00 **7 Workshops – 4 themes**, continued
- 16.00-16.30 Coffee break
- 16.30-18.00 **7 Workshops – 4 themes**, continued



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20.30 Conference dinner
Halles des Tanneurs

SATURDAY MAY 17, 2008

9.30 – 10.30 Workshops: **preparation of the reports**

9.30 - 10.30 **Market place: Participation, a growing up process**

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.30 **Reports** of the workshops in plenary
Open dialogue

12.30 – 13.15 **Closing Plenary session**

- Mr Vladimir **ŠPIDLA**, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- Ms Romana **TOMC**, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia
- Mr Martin **HIRSCH**, High Commissioner for Active Solidarity against Poverty, France
- Mr Marian **HOŠEK**, Deputy Minister for Social Policy, Social Services and Family Policy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic
- Mr Ludo **HOREMANS**, President of European Antipoverty Network

13.15-14.30 Lunch

15.00 End of the 7th Meeting



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The European meetings of people experiencing poverty: driving the participatory agenda

The Lisbon European Council (2000) agreed to implement a European strategy in order to “make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty in Europe by 2010”; one of the strategies adopted - tackling poverty and social exclusion - is key to going forward with this commitment and must include all the stakeholders, including people who are experiencing poverty.

A process going forward....

- 2001 The Belgian Government leveraged its experience in participation since 1994 and capitalised on its Presidency of the European Union to launch the 1st European meeting of people experiencing poverty which reviewed four issues: **housing, health, training and incomes**. The big conclusion of this first event was that **people experiencing poverty had the knowledge and expertise to analyse exclusion, and aimed to take part in society** and the decisions that affect their life.
- 2003 In 2002, the Belgian Government suggested a 2nd Meeting - an initiative taken up by the Greek Presidency. EAPN was asked to prepare it, but time was short to carry out proper groundwork with the delegations. The topic was “**good participation practices**”. The preparations and workshops produced **attempts to create models for participatory processes** and a **demand from the delegates: people experiencing poverty want to be able to talk face-to-face with policy-makers on policies that affect them**. Responding to this demand, the Greek Presidency asked the June Council for the European Meetings to become a **recurrent process**, like the Social Affairs Round Table.
- 2004 The topic chosen under the Irish Presidency reflected the demands that came out of the 2nd Meeting, and focused on dialogue between people experiencing poverty and policymakers under the title, “**Participation is a two way street**”. In a reversal of traditional roles, **the “authorities” now became regarded as “guests” of the people experiencing poverty**, and interfaced directly with the delegates in workshop discussions. The meeting concluded with an **open forum between people experiencing poverty and a panel of policy-makers**. A DVD made at the event will provide a tool for extensive use by the EAPN national networks to build awareness among national and regional policy makers.
- 2005 The Luxembourg Presidency chose to explore **images and perceptions of poverty**. A bigger focus is put on media productions - patchworks, paintings and photographs - brought in by people experiencing poverty. These creative endeavours were collected together into an exhibition staged at the Liverpool Round Table. A catalogue of the works was published. The Luxembourg Presidency showed the depth of its involvement by taking a powerful message to the June Council of Ministers, **calling on all EU countries to organise the same kind of Meeting**. Many EAPN national networks gradually began to set up similar kinds of meetings at national and/or regional level.
- 2006 Preparations under the Austrian Presidency encompassed all aspects of poverty and social exclusion around the topic “**How do we cope with everyday life?**” The groundwork done by the delegates revealed the **proactivity and energy of people experiencing poverty**. Each delegation of people experiencing poverty prepared a poster and presented it to the plenary session: it was an unforgettable highlight of the 5th Meeting. The posters were collected into an **exhibition** staged at the Finland Round Table, in the Commission building in April 2007, and at the first National Meeting of people experiencing poverty in the United Kingdom in July 2007. The 5th meeting evaluation revealed a need to take stock of the first five Meetings.
- 2007 The 6th Meeting, under the German Presidency, decided to channel this priority through, and chose as the topic, “**Strengthening Progress, drafting next steps**”. It saw 130 delegates from 27 countries and 97 representatives of European and national authorities meeting on 4 and 5 May in Brussels. Delegates and guests gave the Meeting topic visual expression through symbolic objects. Without playing down the progress made on the social front, the delegates emphasized that the aim of eradicating poverty by 2010 is unrealistic when there are clear signs that poverty is spreading. The 6th Meeting clearly showed that participatory processes widen the prospects for and help increase workable **empowerment**. There was also found to be more joint work being done by associations and public authorities, and a demand for ongoing dialogue at national level.