



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### Member States must support investment in a strong European Social Fund (ESF) if they are serious about Poverty Target

Brussels, 21 June 2012 – Today, 18 social NGOs have sent a joint letter to Prime Ministers ahead of their General Affairs Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June, urging them to back the European Commission's proposal on the Cohesion policy budget and on the European Social Fund (ESF) for social inclusion and fighting poverty. This proposal is vital as nearly 1 in 4 persons are already experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the EU, a situation that demands urgent social investment. Still, a vast majority of Prime Ministers are ready to reject this proposal, jeopardising any potential delivery on the Europe 2020 poverty reduction target and, more widely, any kind of recovery, and giving signs of indifference to the - more and more numerous – people living in poverty and social exclusion.

The European Commission made a proposal in October 2011 to allocate 25% of the Cohesion policy budget to the European Social Fund (ESF) and to earmark at least 20% of the ESF for social inclusion and fighting poverty.

*"Rejecting the European Commission's proposal is unacceptable considering the current poverty and inequality rates in the EU and how fast they increase every day",* said Fintan Farrell, Director of EAPN. *"This proposal is key to ensuring social investment that could support the implementation of the Active Inclusion Recommendation and the commitments made in the Europe 2020 flagship initiative 'Platform against Poverty'",* he added.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May, a coalition of 18 NGOs launched their **campaign and petition EU Money for Poverty Reduction NOW!**, calling on Member States to back the European Commission's proposal and secure:

- The allocation of at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy budget to the European Social Fund (ESF);
- The earmarking of at least 20% of the ESF to social inclusion and poverty reduction.

Alongside initiatives at EU and national levels carried out by the NGOs involved, **this campaign aims at gathering as much support as possible through the petition:**

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/EU\\_Money\\_for\\_Poverty\\_Reduction\\_NOW\\_1/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/EU_Money_for_Poverty_Reduction_NOW_1/)

The campaign will run till the end of this year, when Member States adopt the Multi-annual Financial Framework and Cohesion Policy budget for the next 7-year cycle (2014-2020), including the ESF's budget.

/END/

#### Useful information:

Read the [social NGOs joint letter to Prime Ministers](#).



The campaign **EU Money for Poverty Reduction NOW!** is coordinated by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) together with its members the European Federation of National Organisations

Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), Caritas Europa, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), Eurochild, Eurodiaconia, AGE Platform, Salvation Army, Mental Health Social Exclusion Europa (SMES Europa), as well as the Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform), Solidar, the European Women's Lobby, the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) Europe, Mental Health Europe, Workability Europe and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Europe.

**For more information on this press release and on the campaign, see** EAPN's website:

[www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu) and **contact:** Vincent Caron, EAPN Policy Officer [vincent.caron@eapn.eu](mailto:vincent.caron@eapn.eu) or Fintan Farrell, Director of EAPN [fintan.farrell@eapn.eu](mailto:fintan.farrell@eapn.eu).