



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

EAPN France

***Special European seminar on fuel and
food insecurity***

Paris, 1st of June

EAPN France advocacy note and recommendations

July 2022



FRANCE22
FRENCH PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION

CONTACT

- **Guy JANVIER**, *President EAPN France* – janvierguy@icloud.com
- **Jeanne DIETRICH**, *housing adviser at UNIOPSS, EAPN France representative on the EAPN Europe Strategic Committee* – jdietrich@uniopss.asso.fr
- **Elliot COHEN**, *European affairs officer at EAPN France* – ecohen@uniopss.asso.fr

For more information : eapn.fr et eapn.eu

For the full version of the advocacy note in French, click [here](#).

Who we are

EAPN France is the French branch of EAPN Europe, the European Anti-Poverty Network.

EAPN Europe was created in 1990. It is composed of 31 national networks of national, regional and local associations and 18 large European associations. It fights for making the fight against poverty one of the priorities of the European Union and, ultimately, to eradicate poverty and social exclusion. The participation of people experiencing poverty is a core principle of its action.

EAPN France brings together national associations and regional collectives in the solidarity sector, some of which manage numerous social and medico-social establishments and structures.

These associations and regional collectives contribute to the integration of the most vulnerable people through housing, employment, economic activity, language acquisition or leisure.

UNIOPSS is at the origin of the foundation of the EAPN Europe and of EAPN France.

The EAPN-France network has 4 main objectives:

- Help recognise the possibility, for people who are excluded from the labour market, of working again
- Establish a right to sufficient, stable and predictable resources for the most vulnerable people, through the existence of an adequate minimum income
- Recognise the right to quality social services for all, with support for the most vulnerable.
- To strengthen the voice of poor and vulnerable people in anti-poverty policy-making, because they are also "experts" in the field.

EAPN France wishes to focus its future work on the following themes in particular: the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, access for all to sustainable food, a minimum social income in Europe, the reduction of poor housing, access to education and culture, and strengthening relations with other national EAPNs.

The Seminar

As part of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU (FPEU - 1 January - 30 June 2022), EAPN France is organising an exceptional day on Social Europe in partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in France, the French Interministerial Delegation for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty (DIPLP), the Petits Frères des Pauvres, Secours Catholique, ReVivre dans le monde, the Salvation Army, the National Council of Supported Persons and with the support of UNIOPSS.

EAPN France's main advocacy aim is to advance Social Europe. More specifically, our action is in line with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights,

and particularly principle 20 "Access to essential services" which includes fuel poverty and food poverty, the topics of our seminar.

Poverty is a systemic phenomenon, encompassing housing and food, but also education, health, work, access to the law, access to public services etc. We have chosen to thematise and separate our seminar into two distinct parts, food insecurity and fuel insecurity, while constantly reminding ourselves, on this day and in this deliverable, that the impossibility of living with dignity on one's income or salary is at the root of this endemic insecurity - which is why **our first recommendation is the increase of the minimum wage and minimum income in France and in the EU.**

This European social event, translated simultaneously into English, German, Czech and Spanish, and unique at this FPEU, brought together people experiencing poverty, representatives of French and European associations, experts, MEPs and institutions (European Commission and French administration) for a day of discussion and collective reflection. This booklet of **credible** and **feasible** recommendations is the fruit of our discussions on 1 June.

Food poverty

Food insecurity refers to a situation in which a person does not have guaranteed access to sufficient, quality food that is sustainable and respects their food preferences and nutritional needs, which may lead to or result from social exclusion and disqualification or from an impoverished environment.

This situation concerns more and more people in France and in Europe, especially since the Covid crisis. To remedy this situation, a public policy tool has been massively deployed, developed and financed in recent years: food aid. The free or low-cost distribution of foodstuffs or meals, in social grocery shops, in collective catering centres or on the streets, is a lifesaver for many people and has increased considerably. It is the consequence of an increase in precariousness among European populations.

During our seminar, we dealt with these subjects (food insecurity and food aid), separating them into three parts: Food Aid in France and in Europe, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and food aid, and Health, Nutrition and Food Aid.

Although we are aware that food aid is only a short-term solution to the poverty of households, and that a structural approach would consist in eradicating poverty, as Emmanuel Macron committed to do in 2017, EAPN France has noted, alongside other structures (Secours Catholique, ...), that food aid is not satisfactory: in terms of quantity, quality and nutritional balance, in particular.

The aim of our seminar was not to maintain the current system, but to show the difficulties that beneficiaries encounter with food aid, the waste of food aid, and the additional costs that food aid represents. Our participatory approach has enabled us to come up with solutions and recommendations that are more respectful of people in precarious situations, taking into account their autonomy, their needs and consumption habits, and in line with agricultural practices that are more respectful of the environment and of people.

Our recommendations

POVERTY AND FOOD AID

- Put an end to "small measures" and address food insecurity under the umbrella of the fight against precariousness.
Increase incomes, increase salaries, allow people to live in dignity without resorting to ad hoc aid measures that are expensive and do not solve the problem, such as the recently announced food voucher.
 - A guaranteed minimum income for all legal residents, from the age of 18, subject to means testing. Set at 50% of the French median standard of living, i.e. €919 in 2019, this income should be accessible as automatically as possible.
 - Reduce the non-use of social rights by making them automatic and by strengthening individualised support for recipients.
 - Strengthen income protection so that it better covers vulnerable people, which presupposes not unravelling the existing ones, particularly unemployment insurance, pensions, housing benefits and minimum social benefits.
- Provide meals adapted to the illnesses and state of health of people housed in shelters by town halls, and reheated in the room, in microwaves, for a financial contribution, depending on income.
- Involve sheltered persons more closely in the preparation of meals, in order to improve the conditions of accommodation for sheltered persons, to restore food dignity and to reduce waste.
This service would be managed by the town hall, in collaboration with the housing center. This point is particularly necessary because, today, too many diabetics, for example, in precarious situations, do not have a diet adapted to their illnesses.
- Generalise social tariffs in public catering, automate them, and support the evolution of its supply by more sustainable products and local channels.
- Include foreign students among the beneficiaries of measures to combat food insecurity among students.

EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND FOOD AID

- Redirect the Common Agricultural Policy to support farmers who make an effort to preserve the climate and limit the use of synthetic products.
- Support widely, at national and international level, the conversion, installation and transfer of farms to agroecology, in line with local needs.
Subsidies granted within the framework of the CAP must be directed in this direction.

- Better distribution of the money generated by the agri-food industry for the benefit of farmers and breeders.
The distributor takes too much margin in relation to prices and in relation to what the farmer takes (in France, the latter takes 8 cents on 1 euro of products sold at the end of the chain).
- Territorialise the fight against food insecurity and encourage the development of sustainable models that can be duplicated, for example, the creation of a central purchasing office to negotiate and buy food at attractive prices.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FOOD AID

- Supporting volunteers and people in precarious situations so as to avoid injunctions: adapting and translating the PNNS tool so as to give people the power to act. This will involve more support, for example cooking workshops, to create social links, get out of isolation, enjoy themselves and adapt their diet to the recommendations.

Fuel Poverty

In France, national dispositions ("Grenelle 2" bill) state that fuel poverty is when a person struggles to obtain the energy supply necessary to match its basic needs, because of low incomes or because of their living conditions.

This definition allows us to identify the two main forms of fuel poverty: the lack of means for households to heat their homes properly and the problem of energy inefficient dwellings which are very costly for the people living in them.

At our seminar on 1 June, we dealt with these two dimensions (I. The energy voucher, II. Energy renovation). People experiencing poverty, representatives of administrations, elected representatives and associations discussed the energy cheque, a short-term French tool to fight against energy poverty, and the energy renovation of buildings, a medium and long-term structural tool to fight against energy precariousness.

Together, we managed to come up with a series of recommendations to improve in a very concrete way the living conditions of people in precarious situations in France and in Europe.

Our recommendations

ON THE ENERGY VOUCHER

- Increase housing aids (“APL” in France) by 10% to support the cost of energy.
- Give people coming from housing centres or medico-social structures settling in a social housing the possibility to benefit from the energy cheque, by providing a certificate of accommodation, rather than a housing tax, (impossible for them to provide).
- Make the granting of the energy voucher automatic.
- Intensify communication on the energy voucher.
- Increase the amount of the energy cheque to 700 Euros per year.

ON ENERGY RENOVATION

- Effectively implement the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality (2022/C 243/04), in particular recommendation 7: “prevent and alleviate energy poverty by promoting and implementing energy efficiency improvement measures, including public and private investments in dwellings to stimulate renovations, including in the social housing sector (57); to that end, provide well-designed incentives, grants and loans, together with related advice, also to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, while paying due attention to incentives, in particular among owners and tenants, and the evolution of housing costs, notably for households in vulnerable situations; »
- Shorten the deadlines for the implementation of the energy renovation obligations for housing foreseen in the recast of the Energy Efficiency Directive for housing.
Member States should also, as part of the national building renovation plans, set specific deadlines for achieving higher energy performance classes in line with their trajectory to transform the national building stock into zero-emission buildings. Member States can be more ambitious and have the possibility to introduce national minimum energy performance standards in their national renovation plans.
- Include in the country-specific recommendations made by the European Commission for 2023 (European Semester) the earmarking of funds from the European recovery plan for the energy renovation of social housing and the housing of low-income owners.

- Establish a remaining cost as close to zero as possible for low-income homeowners when they renovate their home. To do this, allocate subsidies rather than an advance renovation loan.
- Direct the European recovery plan funds towards the energy renovation of social housing and low-income owner-occupiers' thermal flats.
- Mobilise funds from the Social Fund for the Climate and the ESF+ for the energy renovation of social rental housing and the renovation of low-income owner-occupied thermal flats.
- Increase ANAH aid for low-income owner-occupiers.