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# Social Inclusion cross cutting policy tools

Comment Paper, EAPN



On behalf of  
**European Commission**  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

## Social Inclusion cross cutting policy tools Comments and Statements

### EAPN (European Anti Poverty Network)

The tools for review in France at the end of June address fundamental issues of coordination, comprehensiveness, integration, participation and partnership in policy development and implementation: these are key issues in guaranteeing sustainable policies to address social exclusion. The description paper by the DGAS highlights policy tools which are clearly focused on providing clear structures for cooperation and mainstreaming of social inclusion at national level across policies and financial commitments. It highlights mechanisms for interministerial cooperation on social exclusion, promoting the participation of stakeholders, including people experiencing poverty, and addressing the challenges of decentralisation and the different levels of policy making.

The policy document for review is also extremely relevant in the current new framework of streamlining of the OMC on social protection and social inclusion, which adds a horizontal, overarching scope to the objective of social cohesion.

#### **1) Brief assessment of the possible relevance of the strategy/policy/measure to other EU countries (e.g. what social exclusion problems it could potentially solve, the strong points of the good practice, the points to be strengthened or avoided, etc.)**

The Document de Politique Transversale (DPT) which allows for a structured assessment of the financial commitments by the State to actions aimed at social inclusion, but is also used in screening across 26 programmes covering the competence of different Ministries, clearly addresses the need for mechanisms to guarantee that mainstreaming is actually implemented and monitored. Monitoring how a Member State addresses a specific policy challenge by screening its budgetary commitments to that objective clearly provides a means to:

- Clearly highlight the need to give a political priority to social inclusion in the definition of budgets and programmes
- Gain a quantitative assessment of budgetary commitments to social inclusion mainstreaming
- Clearly specify what budgetary commitments are made to the objectives and actions described in the NAP/incl
- Give an insight into how Structural Funds are being used in France to deliver on the objective of social inclusion

Moreover, in its screening role of other policies, the DPT can

- Clearly influence the priority setting in the National Action Plan on social inclusion.
- Influence the definition of other policies and how they take into account the horizontal objective of promoting social inclusion
- Since the outcomes of the use of the DPT will be submitted to Parliamentary debate, this will increase opportunities for the National Parliament to be involved in the priority setting of the NAP/incl too.

The French practice under review is highly relevant to other EU countries for a number of reasons:

- It overcomes the gap between rhetoric and actual policy formulation since it is attached to the budgetary process
- many countries have one element or the other among those described in the background document (comité interministériel, conseil national, observatoire...), but most are not linked and put into an encompassing strategy as in the case of the French example.
- It has the potential of really addressing some of the cross-cutting issues which lead to social exclusion and poverty and which span across several policy areas and are therefore of the competence of different Ministries.

**2) Brief assessment of the potential transferability of the policy/measure (as a whole or parts of the approach) in other EU countries and of the likely conditions or obstacles for its application**

- This is a very new initiative, and there is very little grounds at the moment to assess whether this tool is adequate and can be reproduced elsewhere.
- Linked to this, the development of indicators, and of monitoring and evaluation processes is still under way. It is therefore a little premature to discuss whether this model is transferable to other countries.
- The model nonetheless appears to be possibly relevant to both centralised and decentralised Member States
- The culture of bottom-up and top-down policies must be checked carefully: does the model clearly balance the two approaches?
- In general, the background document, which is quite detailed on the policy challenges that the tools address, on the other hand does not seem to provide a very detailed insight into how the DPT is actually implemented in practice. This could imply less possibility of practical reviewing of the practice in other countries.

**3) Note of any important questions about the policy/measure that are being raised and debated in the stakeholders' organisation**

- On the issue of levels of government, the discussion paper could be clearer in what the challenges are in terms of coordinating the different levels when developing social inclusion policies, and how the DPT addresses this complexity (national level/local/regional priorities).
- It would be useful that the background documents provided gave a clearer picture of the programmes which are being 'proofed' through this document.
- Much was expected in the framework of the revised Lisbon strategy on Growth and Jobs in terms of feeding-in and feeding out with the OMC on social protection and social inclusion. In practice at national level, this mutual reinforcement should be reflected in the NAPs and the National Reform Programmes. In reality, an assessment by EAPN national networks has shown that this has not really been the case to date. Can an instrument such as the DPT become the national mechanisms to ensure feeding in/out?

#### 4) The potential contribution of such a policy/measure to the content of NAPs/Inclusion

The policy measure under review has the potential to make the NAP/incl “come to life”, setting its objectives at the heart of the overall policy and budgetary setting. Nonetheless, more information about the policy link is needed to assess to what extent this potential can actually become real practice.

It is extremely encouraging to see the three objectives of the Comité Interministériel including the encompassing ‘commitment to reducing poverty’, the need for more knowledge and evaluation and the involvement of people and stakeholders concerned. These three objectives represent a strong message when developing a NAP/incl. The structures in place appear to reflect quite clearly how these objectives are implemented in practice. Nonetheless, it is unclear whether these objectives and actions are revised regularly or whether they are supposed to be all-encompassing. In the latter case it would be worth highlighting the need to maintain a focus on access to rights but also access to resources.

#### 5) Key issues and main questions proposed for debate at the review.

- Can a concrete example be given of how these instruments are made use of in the definition of France’s National Reform Programmes?
- How do the structures and documents in place address mainstreaming of social inclusion in priority setting and delivery of EU structural funds?
- How does the DPT address policies that are of the competence of the sub-national level?
- Does the DPT tackle the ‘streamlined’ approach to social cohesion (social protection, social inclusion, health, pensions, long-term care)?
- It is unclear whether the DPT document is used as a screening document to assess to what extent policies and budgetary commitments in place are ‘proofed’ for their impact on social exclusion, or whether it is also used ex-ante in defining the policies and budgets.
- how has the federal structure developed: who has founded or co-opted the regionalised structures (conférences locales, chartes territoriales, plateformes régionales...)
- how often does the Conseil national meet and who has the power to call a session?
- who creates and discusses the indicators?
- Can the links to the national Assembly/Parliament and the MPs be clarified?