

Social Inclusion Forum 2017

**An EU perspective on developing
Ireland's next National Action Plan
for Social Inclusion**

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Why an EU perspective can be helpful

- Can help to identify areas needing more or continued effort
 - highlight some of the areas where Ireland is underperforming by EU standards
- Can make us more ambitious
 - compare Ireland as a rich EU country with not just EU average but with best performing
 - Ireland second highest GDP per capita in EU-28
- Can help us to find better solutions

Some areas of poor performance

Indicator		EU %	Ireland %	Best performing Member States %
At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)	all	23.7	26.0	14-19 (9 MS)
	children	27.8	34.4	14-18 (7 MS)
	Single person with children	47.9	61.7	35-39 (5 MS)
	18+ not in employment	34.2	43.4	21-28 (6 MS)
	People with some or severe disability	30.2	40.3	21-25 (9MS)
People living in jobless households	18-59	10.1	11.6	5-7 (5 MS)
	0-17	10.5	13.4	4-7 (7MS)
Population less than 60 living in households with very low work intensity		10.6	19.2	6-7 (7 MS)
Employment rate of people with disabilities		43.5	26.5	
Expenditure on Social Protection as % of GDP		28.7	20.6	30-34% (9 MS)
Total general government revenue % of GDP		44.9	27.5	

Some areas of poor performance

- Rapidly rising homelessness and housing exclusion (FEANTSA)
- Poor access to quality public services
 - Health services
 - Child care and child protection
- Low investment in community care for ageing population

Some priorities from EU perspective

- Maintain and intensify policies for inclusion of **children and lone parents**
 - Build on EU's *Investing in Children* 3 pillar approach: income services participation)
 - Further develop a comprehensive & integrated strategy
 - clear objectives & work programmes for each key policy area & for each group of children at high risk
 - Some key areas for action
 - continue investment in early childhood care and education; Increase **child care**
 - measures to support increased **parental employment**
 - continue improvements to **child income support**
- Increase policies supporting/ enabling access to good quality **employment**
 - more jobs: significant **public investment** programme
 - maintain and deepen integrated and enabling “**active inclusion**” approach
 - adequate income; quality services; inclusive labour markets
 - further develop policies to help **transitions** from welfare to work
 - maintain focus on employment of people with **disabilities**
 - increase focus on **up-skilling**
 - IE one of highest disparities between employment rates of low-, medium- and highly skilled workers
 - better **target** jobless and low work intensity households; long-term unemployed; lone parents; Travellers; people from a migrant/ethnic minority background
 - intensify further efforts to prevent **youth** unemployment

Some priorities from EU perspective

- Invest more in tackling **housing exclusion and homelessness**
 - significantly increase investment in social housing
 - improve support for Traveller families
- Improve access to **health services**
 - free GP care for all
 - universal health insurance
- Strengthen **community care** services
 - more support for carers and work-life balance
 - extend entitlement to home care package
 - more respite care and long-stay facilities

BUT real progress not possible without

- Commitment to significantly **increase expenditure** on social protection towards EU best performing
 - increase overall tax take & broaden tax base
 - closely link EU Funds spending to achievement of NAPSI priorities

Strengthen institutional arrangements (cont.)

- A good plan is not enough: successful Member States have effective national & local mechanisms to ensure its **effective delivery**
- Strong **political leadership** to ensure whole of government approach
 - Taoiseach and Programme for Government
 - Cabinet committee
- Cross departmental **policy coordination**
 - - senior officials group with high level leadership
- Complement overall targets with more **specific targets**
 - Targets for high risk groups: Travellers, People with disabilities; lone parents
 - Programme targets; e.g. childcare
- Rigorous **proofing**
 - Maintain & intensify budget proofing
 - Proof all proposals coming to cabinet

Strengthen institutional arrangements

- Regular **monitoring** and reporting
 - must be visible and debated regularly in Dail
- Enhanced **local coordination & participation**
 - strong link to Local Community Development Committees and Public Partnership Networks
 - increased investment in community development
- Ensure **participation** of all stakeholders
 - People experiencing poverty and social exclusion
- Public **awareness raising** programme
 - make the NAPSI known and discussed
 - counter myths/prejudices & blaming/scapegoating

Conclusions

- 20 years of NAPSI
 - good incremental initiatives but still very persistent and unacceptable levels of poverty and social exclusion: WHY?
 - has not sufficiently changed fundamental inequalities in access to resource and services
- **SO** a new NAPSI
 - must move social inclusion **from the periphery to the centre** of government economic, employment, environmental & social policy
 - must be backed with major **increase in social investment**
- Put **rights** more at heart of all aspects of NAPSI
 - European Pillar of Social Rights and SDGs are moving rights to the centre of policy making
 - a first step in rebalancing economic, employment, environmental and social policies & building more inclusive and fair society