

# Nordic Platform

## **Cooperation is needed, in order to defend the welfare systems!**

Nordic Platform has together with representatives for EAPN networks in Estonia and Lithuania arranged a meeting in Stockholm October 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, in order to discuss welfare political cooperation.

The background to the meeting is the common fear and experience how the growing poverty and inequality affects our countries. The affects of the financial crisis has been most severe on poor people. Especially affected groups are single parents, children and youths, immigrants and older people. The number of people who, though they work, still are poor is also increasing.

Today 85 million, which is 12 percent, of European citizens lives in relative poverty. Relative poverty means that the person has an income below 60 percent of the median income. For those people who are affected, this is not just numbers, but a merciless reality that produces consequences in every-day-life, childrens conditions when they grow up, living situation, health status, education level and empowerment over their own life. The European Union declared once the ambition to decrease poverty and exclusion, during the last period of ten years, but reality is now the opposite. The poverty has been increased, also in the Nordic countries. The new ambition is to limit the number of poor people with 20 million. That means that European membership countries accepts that at least 60 million is supposed to continue living in poverty.

We declare that this is wrong. The basic foundation for the Nordic countries has been positive. The Nordic model has, above all, ensured relatively equal societies, with a low degree of poverty, but also ensured other factors that contributes to a good life and high degree of welfare, such as good health, high level of education, low unemployment rate etc. The Nordic model is often seen in Europe as a role model for the work that is now conducted, to develop an European social model.

Unfortunately, the development is now going in a negative direction. Unemployment rate and poverty is increasing. This is just not a result from the financial crisis, but above all because we have abandoned the basic foundation in the Nordic model, that is, to protect an equal society where all people has the possibility to live a good life and have a basic income. The inequalities in income and living conditions are now rapidly increasing in our countries, even though research shows us that it is in fact equality that is the single most important factor, when it comes to how a society achieves its welfare goals, such as education, life span, criminality, health, security, poverty etc.

The Nordic countries has a great responsibility towards its citizens, but also towards the rest of the world, when it comes to use its advantageous conditions to continue to be role models in how an equal society with a low degree of poverty can be developed.

In order to do that, it is important to protect the basic components in the Nordic welfare policy, but also to strongly manifest, in different ways, that we do not accept poverty and that there is both a will and an ability to fight poverty. Poverty is a complex problem, that has its origin in many factors, which often cooperates. The struggle against poverty must therefore be

conducted on many different platforms at the same time. A social and total perspective and adequate systems for levels of minimum income is important factors in this struggle. A seriously meant will to stop poverty also demands efforts during a long time.

Each country should establish national programs in order to fight poverty and exclusion, that reaches over several years. The national programs should also continuous be a possibility for NGO:s and other important participants to achieve support for activities, which purpose is to make visible these questions, give the affected groups a voice and initialize pioneer organizations and research.

In order to fight the growing poverty, a first step is that we all confess that poverty is an existing problem in our countries. It is also important to carefully monitor the development and warn when there occurs a deterioration in our common welfare system. This requires a functioning system of welfare watches.

Nordic Platform has therefore, together with the EAPN networks in Estonia and Lithuania, decided to cooperate in order to monitor and supervise the development of the welfare policy.

Show the will, show the ability and stop poverty!

The European network against poverty and exclusion –

## Nordic Platform

EAPN Denmark

EAPN Finland

EAPN Norway

EAPN Sweden

EAPN Iceland

EAPN Estonia

EAPN Lithuania

*Med vänlig hälsning, Sophia*  
*Kindest regards, Sophia*

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Generalsekreterare & fil dr Sophia Lövgren  
General secretary & Ph D Sophia Lövgren

**Sveriges Makalösa Föräldrar**

**Remarkable Parents in Sweden, Single Parents NGO**

**Från:** Gunvi Haggren [mailto:gunvi.haggren@verdandi.se]

**Skickat:** den 28 oktober 2011 13:03

**Till:** Sophia Lövgren

**Kopia:** laila@velferdsalliansen.no; sonja.wallbom@rfhl.se; Inge Fäldt;  
gigi.isacsson@comhem.se; Sophia Lövgren; ragnheidur.sverrisdottir@kirkjan.is;  
karl@samhjalp.is; Unto.Ahvensalmi@espool.fi; sipoontyottomat@kolumbus.fi;

anders@guldborgsundskolen.dk; peth@bbbo.dk; mere@online.ee;  
mongirdiene.grazina@yahoo.com; post@velferdsalliansen.no; vilborg@help.is;  
ole@kofoedsskole.dk; juha.mikkonen@elamantapaliitto.fi; philip.lonegren@comhem.se  
**Ämne:** Re: SV: NORDIC WELFARE PLATFORM MEETING, AGENDA/INFORMATION

HI

here is the swedish version of article

Gunvi Haggren

Verdandi

Slakthusgatan 9

121 62 Johanneshov

Tel. +46(0)8 642 28 80 växel

+46(0)8 649 12 35 direkt