

# 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 %
<b>At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)</b>	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)
<b>People living in jobless households</b>	18-59	10.1	11.6	5-7 (5 MS)
	0-17	10.5	13.4	4-7 (7MS)
<b>Population less than 60 living in households with very low work intensity</b>		10.6	19.2	6-7 (7 MS)
<b>Employment rate of people with disabilities</b>		43.5	26.5	
<b>Expenditure on Social Protection as % of GDP</b>		28.7	20.6	30-34% (9 MS)
<b>Total general government revenue % of GDP</b>		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