

# Minimum income policies as a tool to tackle poverty

## Presentation of the European Minimum Income Network (EMIN)



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*EU Platform on Reference Budgets – 22 February 2018*

# *European Minimum Income Network - Presentation*

**1. General Presentation of EMIN**

**2. Context: state-of-play minimum income in Europe**

**3. Activities planned in the EMIN2 project**

**4. Stimulating cooperation between EMIN teams and Reference Budgets experts**

# *1. European Minimum Income Network General Presentation*

The European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) is an informal Network of organisations and individuals committed to achieve the progressive realisation of adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income Schemes

EMIN is organised at EU and national levels, in all the Member States of the European Union and also in Iceland, Norway, Macedonia and Serbia

EMIN is coordinated by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).

**[www.emin-eu.net](http://www.emin-eu.net)**

# *1. European Minimum Income Network General Presentation*

EMIN received funding from the European Commission in the period 2013-2014 to establish its activities. Outputs from this period are available at **emin-eu.net**

For the period 2017-2018 EMIN will receive financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) to develop its work in the EU Member States and at EU level. We call this the **EMIN2 project**. Additional funding is sought to engage the EMIN Networks not in EU Member States in this phase

**See EaSI programme <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>**

# 1. *European Minimum Income Network* *General Presentation*

The EMIN2 project aims at the **progressive realisation of adequate, accessible and enabling minimum income schemes**, through:

- **Strengthening the EMIN Networks** and Networking at EU and national levels
- **Building awareness** that adequate and accessible incomes are not only good for the people who directly benefit but also for the whole of society
- Ensuring progress through **engaging in relevant policy debates and initiatives** at EU and national levels

# ***1. European Minimum Income Network: General Presentation***

**Lead Partner: EAPN** (European Anti-Poverty Network)

## **Key partners**

- **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**
- **The Federal Public Service for Social Integration in Belgium**
- **The University of Antwerp**
- **Academic Experts and Experts by Experience**
  
- **The National EMIN Networks**
- **The EU Level Supporters Group** – Open to organisations and actors committed to ensuring adequate and accessible Minimum Income Schemes

## **Role of the European Parliament**

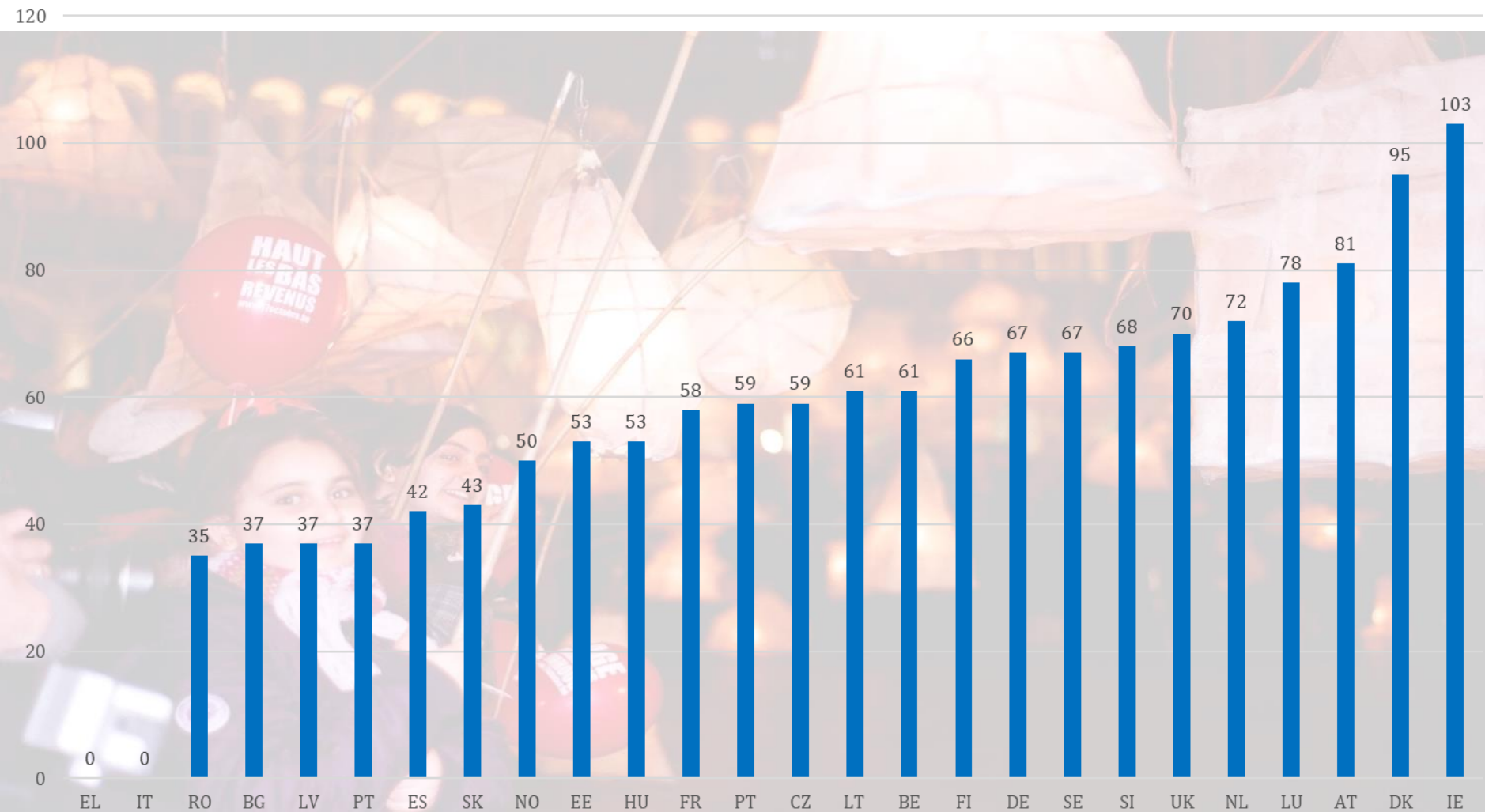
Since the beginning the European Parliament has supported the EMIN Network and regular advisory meetings are held to ensure continued engagement with the Parliament

## 2. Context: Minimum Income Schemes across Europe

- **All countries** have MIS in 2017. IT and EL recently introduced first national schemes
- Great **variety** in eligibility, governance, levels of payment, coverage, take-up
- **Adequate in fight poverty?** Only **DK, and IE** reach **AROP** for some family types
- In **BG, RO, LV and PL**, for most family types MI does **not even reach 40%** of AROP (absolute poverty line)
- Impact on **poverty reduction** increased since 2009 only in 5 countries (AT, EE, MT, PL, PT, RO, SK), got worse in 11 (BE, BG, CZ, DK, ES, HU, LT, NO, RO, SE, UK)
- **Coverage** partial in 9 countries and low in 8: restrictive eligibility criteria, income threshold, excessive means-testing
- **Non-take-up** serious problem: between 20 to 75% - unknown rights, unclaimed rights (costs, conditionality, controls...), un-obtained rights
- Link with **active inclusion**: increased emphasis on ALMP, increased conditionality, sanctions – more public work schemes – access to quality services only in 4 countries (DK, IS, NO, SI) – negative impact of financial consolidation measures

## 2. Context: Minimum Income Schemes across Europe

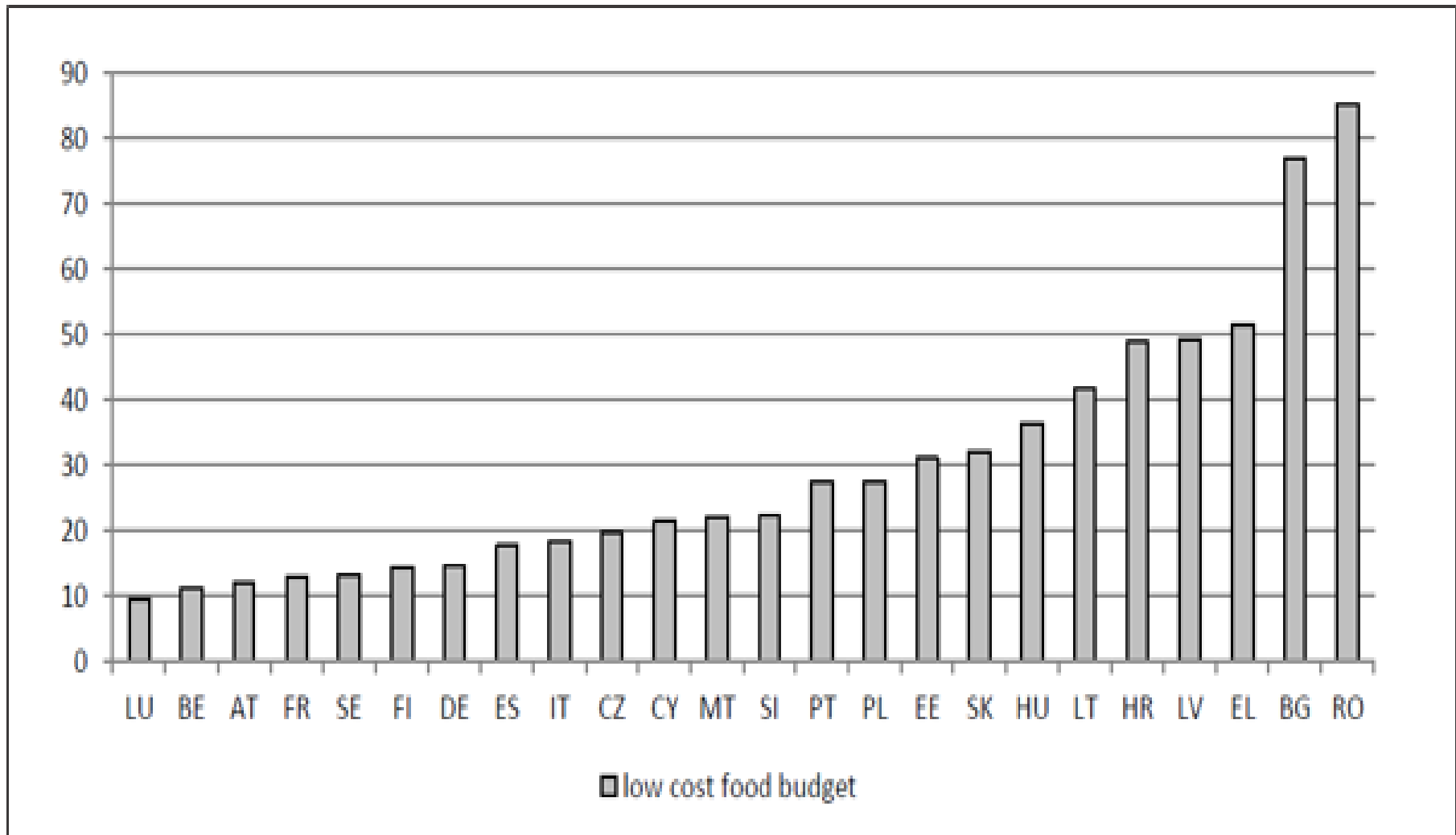
*Minimum income as % of AROP threshold – couple 2 children (2013)*





## 2. Context: Minimum Income Schemes across Europe

*Price of food basket as % of AROP threshold – single person (2013)*



## 2. Context: EU policy framework

### Key milestones

- 1992 Council recommendation on sufficient resources and social assistance
- 2008 Commission recommendation active inclusion - 2013 social investment package: guidance for upgrading strategies, including use of reference budgets
- 2010 Year against poverty + Launch of **Europe 2020 strategy**; target reduce AROPE by at least 20 million
- 2017 **European Pillar of Social Rights**, including right to adequate minimum income
- **European Parliament**: set EU target of at least 60% median income + timetable; EC to launch consultation on possibility of legislative initiative
- **Committee of Regions and European Economic and Social Committee**: EU framework directive on MI + examine EU funding
- **Social Platform**: call for an EU Directive on Minimum Income (2014)
- **ETUC resolution December 2016**: European Directive on **adequate minimum income schemes**, in combination with other income support schemes, access to quality services, and with active inclusion policies”.

## 2. Context:

# Minimum income in the European Pillar of Social Rights

“Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.”

- Use of CSR in **European Semester**, benchmarking + exchange of best practices, monitoring based on social scoreboard can contribute to assess efforts of Member States
- Support pillar of social rights through **European Funds** and post 2020 EU budget
- Concerned with **narrow definition** of incentives; should be in line with active inclusion link with inclusive labour markets and access to quality services to enable people to take up decent jobs
- Need for **enforceable legal right**: EU framework directive, with common methodology, including on adequacy, based on 60% median equivalised income, material deprivation – tested with reference budgets - positive hierarchy with minimum wages

## 2. Context:

# Minimum income in the European Semester

- Main tool at EU level on MIS: Country Specific Recommendations (CSR), country reports, National Reform Programmes (NRP)
- More emphasis on poverty and on MIS: 11 countries received CSR on poverty - **6 countries on MIS**: 5 on adequacy (BG, HU, EE, LV, LT) – 3 on coverage (BG, HU, ES) – ES address gaps and disparities – HR on underspending on social safety nets, including MI
- But **lack of coherence** with austerity oriented recommendations, focus on sustainability, rationalization, targeting of social protection
- Poverty target still not taken seriously in NRP – disappointing response on adequate income support
- **Improvements** on adequate MI in some countries (CY, EE, IE, LV, LT, ES) but insufficient for increases in cost of living
- main focus on sustainability of social systems, in practice cuts in benefits (HU), increasing non-take-up (LT), food banks, high level of indebtedness.

# EU roadmap: an EU framework directive on adequate MIS

- Soft law, including ‘socialized’ **Semester**, not enough – need **enforceable right** through EU framework directive to implement right to decent MI in EPSR
- Possible **Treaty base**: art 153, 1, h on integration of persons excluded from labour market
- Content to be developed by panel of experts: SPC, NGOs, PeP, social partners
- Definition **adequacy** based on 60% median income + material deprivation – **reference budgets** method further developed to gain more insight on living standard
- Member States evaluate **coverage and take up**, reduce conditionality, simplify procedures, increase transparency and information
- **Active inclusion approach** combining adequate income access to services and inclusive labour markets
- Positive hierarchy with **minimum wages**; combine with decent **pensions** and **child benefit schemes**

### *3. Activities planned in the EMIN 2 Project*

- **Strengthening the European and National level Minimum Income Networks**
- **Context Reports:** National reports outlining relevant developments and opportunities within the Member States and a European Context Report
- **Enhancing cooperation between Public Services** responsible for Minimum Income Schemes in the Member States
- Stimulating **cooperation** between EMIN teams and **Reference Budgets experts**
- **‘Everyone on the Bus’** a journey through Europe to promote awareness and understanding of the importance of MIS

### *3. Activities planned in the EMIN 2 Project*

- **Seminars and awareness arising events** in all EU Member States and at EU level
- **3 Peer Reviews:** on the topics of: 1. Take-Up, 2. Reference Budgets and 3. Active Inclusion
- **Closing European Conference:** to assess progress and identify future actions
- **Communication:** a communication strategy is being developed and delivered as a central element of the EMIN2 project

### 3. Bus Road Tour

**What?**

**A bus journey covering all EU countries, with several stops in each country, to share information and to encourage interaction on the importance of decent Minimum Income**





# 3. Bus Road Tour

## Why?

To generate knowledge and support for the progressive realisation of adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income Schemes

**Decent Minimum Income Schemes**  
**No one deserves less – good for everybody**

## Who

**On the Bus:** Social Policy Experts, Civil Society Representatives, PeP, Journalists/recorders, administrators ++

**At the stops:** Interaction with civil society, politicians, officials and administrations and members of the general public.

## When

➤ **End April to end June 2018**

## 4. Stimulating cooperation between EMIN teams and Reference Budgets experts

### Why?

Reference budgets have the potential to generate an **important added value to already existing social indicators** as a tool for **monitoring** the social situation and policy learning. They can help Member States to **design** effective and adequate measures of income support.

The Project will help to further **disseminate the results** of the **European Reference Budgets Network** in all Member States of the EU and to inform the Partners in the national EMIN networks of the common methodology and of the **possible use** of reference budgets in their efforts to improve national Minimum Income Schemes.

## 4. Stimulating cooperation between EMIN teams and Reference Budgets experts

### What?

- At **national conferences** and/or workshops, **experts** of the EU Reference Budgets Network will be **invited to present the common methodology and the results of their work with reference budgets** to all stakeholders in the national platforms and discuss with them about the possible use of these reference budgets for policy purposes and in advocacy. UAntwerp has prepared a power point presentation. The national results will also be published online.
- A set of **meetings** in selected countries shall be coordinated by the National Network Coordinators on the implementation of outcomes of the first Reference Budget Project in each country  
Input to the meeting shall be provided by an expert of the Reference Budget network.

## 4. Stimulating cooperation between EMIN teams and Reference Budgets experts

### What?

- With the objective of promoting **transnational cooperation** and supporting **policy debate** around MIS, the project will organise 3 **peer reviews**, one of them on reference budgets.
- The peer reviews are aimed at exchanging findings and identifying key learning points gathered in existing reports on the topics and shall provide mutual support for the work done by the different partners to the project.
- The results of the peer reviews will help to identify proposals for a **strengthened European framework for cooperation** on adequate Minimum Income Schemes and the use of reference budgets.
- The **Peer Review** will be coordinated centrally by the Policy Coordinator in the Management team; assisted by the Antwerp University. It will take place in **September 2018 in Antwerp**.
- EMIN team who will participate are: **AT, EE, LV, LU, MT and PL**

# Contacts

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To follow the project sign up at [emin-eu.net](http://emin-eu.net)