

## November 2011 – Briefing Paper **Social Inclusion for migrants and ethnic minorities: Is the UK meeting its European obligations?**

### INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper discusses the UK's response to the social inclusion targets set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy, and its implications for ethnic minorities and migrants.

While predominantly an economic strategy, the Europe 2020 Strategy reflects the **social inclusion** objective of the EU, that all EU citizens participate in the benefits of economic growth. **Social exclusion** is used as a more encompassing term than 'poverty', capturing the multidimensional nature of the mechanisms through which groups are excluded, including income, life expectancy, material deprivation, early school leaving, unemployment and other factors.<sup>1</sup> Aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy recognise the need for policy to be targeted towards migrants and other minority groups, who are overrepresented in some indicators of social exclusion.

EU Member States are expected to set national targets for meeting the Europe 2020 goals, through annual 'National Reform Programmes' (NRPs). In an assessment by the European Anti-poverty Network, the UK's NRP was ranked last of all European countries (alongside Italy), when judged on its commitment to tackling poverty and promoting inclusive growth.<sup>2</sup> This paper assesses the UK NRP's strategy for meeting the Europe 2020 employment, education, and poverty goals, finding an almost complete absence of policy aimed at social inclusion for migrants and ethnic minorities.

### THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY<sup>3</sup>

The Europe 2020 Agenda, which replaced the Lisbon Strategy in June 2010, is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. With its emphasis on 'smart, sustainable, inclusive growth', the Europe 2020 Strategy is the **most important driver of EU socio-economic policy**.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ENAR National Round Tables on social inclusion Concept and Action programme 2011 – 2013, unpublished

<sup>2</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLETE%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> ENAR National Round Tables on social inclusion Concept and Action programme 2011 – 2013, unpublished

### The goals of Europe 2020 are centered on three main priorities:

- **Smart growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- **Sustainable growth:** promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy
- **Inclusive growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion

Within these three main priorities, the Commission has defined five headline targets that it will work to achieve by 2020. The Commission requires that these goals be translated into national targets, tailored to each Member State's particular situation.<sup>5</sup>

### EU Headline Targets:

1. **Employment:** 75% of people aged 20-64 should be employed by 2020
2. **Research and Development (R&D) / Innovation:** 3% of EU's GDP should be invested in R&D
3. **Climate change/ energy:** '20/20/20' climate/energy targets should be met
4. **Education:** Share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of younger generation should have a tertiary degree (provided by universities and other higher education institutions).
5. **Poverty/ social inclusion:** 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

In order to achieve these targets, the Commission has created **seven thematic flagship initiatives** that will utilise the single market, financial levers and external policy tools to ensure that Member States are fully mobilised. Member States will work together towards the common European goals using the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), through which they will jointly define objectives, and establish measuring instruments and benchmarks.<sup>6</sup> Below are the seven thematic flagship initiatives:<sup>7</sup>

1. **'Innovation Union'** to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation, so innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs.
2. **'Youth on the move'** to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market.
3. **'A digital agenda for Europe'** to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms.
4. **'Resource efficient Europe'** to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency.
5. **'An industrial policy for the globalisation era'** to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a globally competitive industrial base
6. **'An agenda for new skills and jobs'** to modernize labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle, with a view to increasing labour participation and better matching labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility
7. **'European platform against poverty'** to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p3

<sup>6</sup> ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p15

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLETE%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

## Race Equality and Migrant Rights in Europe 2020

Among the headline targets put forward by Europe 2020 are three that have implications with regards to race equality and migrant rights.<sup>8</sup>

- Increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 from the current 69% to at least 75%, including through the greater involvement of women, older workers and the **better integration of migrants in the workforce**
- Reducing the **school drop out rate** to 10% from the current 15%, whilst increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 who have **completed tertiary education** from 31% to at least 40%
- The number of Europeans living below the national poverty lines should be reduced by 25%, **lifting over 20 million people out of poverty**

It is important to highlight that these are no longer purely economic targets, as was the case with the Lisbon Strategy, but are instead social and socio-economic ones, which reflect the goals of achieving the ‘European model, a social market economy framework’<sup>9</sup> rather than global economic competitiveness. The emphasis on social inclusion, as well as economic concerns, is noteworthy, however, **no explicit target rates are set for migrants**.<sup>10</sup> Due to the varied national, economic and social situations of the EU’s 27 Member States, it is difficult to create a standardised European target for migrant rates of any kind, be it in employment, literacy or standard of living.<sup>11</sup>

However, the 4<sup>th</sup> Equality Summit in Brussels in November 2010 discussed a more pro-active approach towards reaching the goal of equality in employment.<sup>12</sup> Proposals for achieving this included adopting targets for diversity in employment, diversity charters/plans, implementing reasonable accommodation for all, creating policies and procedures to remedy harassment, and making the struggle against discrimination a focal point of Europe 2020’s flagship initiatives ‘New skills for new jobs’ and a **‘European platform against poverty and social exclusion,’** among others.<sup>13</sup> Launched in 2010, the European platform against poverty and social exclusion sets out actions to reach the Europe 2020 target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p15

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Spanish Presidency 2010, ‘EU agrees on five basic areas for its 2020 economic strategy, including battle against poverty’ 26 March 2010

[www.eu2010.es/en/documentosynoticias/noticias/mar25\\_consejoprimavera.html](http://www.eu2010.es/en/documentosynoticias/noticias/mar25_consejoprimavera.html)

<sup>10</sup> ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p16

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p16

<sup>12</sup> Council of the European Union- Equality Summit: The need for a strong European equality and diversity strategy for employment

<http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/equality-summit-need-strong-european-equality-and-diversity-strategy-employment>

<sup>13</sup> Council of the European Union- The EU 2020 Strategy and the European Union’s employment and growth policies

[http://www.eutrio.be/files/bveu/101116-CP-Sommet\\_Egalite-site\\_FR\\_PART2\\_ENOK.pdf](http://www.eutrio.be/files/bveu/101116-CP-Sommet_Egalite-site_FR_PART2_ENOK.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe, Monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities – Part 2, ENAR

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

### The Platform asks Members States to:

- Promote shared collective and individual responsibility in **combating poverty and social exclusion**.
- Define and implement measures addressing the specific circumstances of **groups at particular risk** (such as one parent families, elderly women, **minorities, Roma**, people with a disability and the homeless).
- Fully deploy their social security and pension systems to ensure adequate **income support** and **access to healthcare**.

In addition, migrants and other minorities are specifically mentioned in the **Integrated Guidelines**, which set out a framework for Europe 2020 Strategy implementation at the national level.<sup>15</sup> The guidelines highlight the need for targeted policy for the inclusion of legal migrants, minorities and other vulnerable groups. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) has criticised the guidelines for failing to mention the role of labour migration in economic growth, and excluding undocumented migrants. However, ENAR also argues that the guidelines' call for labour market integration for 'vulnerable groups' enables Member States to choose to include ethnic minorities that are excluded from the labour market.. In addition, where migrant and BME (black and minority ethnic) groups have lower skills and tertiary education participation rates than the national average, Member States can use the Guidelines to justify policies targeted at ethnic minority groups as necessary for meeting Europe 2020 targets.<sup>16</sup>

### The Integrated Guidelines and inclusion for BME groups:

- Member States should promote **labour market integration** for legal migrants and 'other vulnerable groups'
- Strategy to develop a skilled workforce must include **targeted migration and integration policies**. Member States should remove barriers to occupational mobility and support those with low skills
- Higher education should become more open to '**non-traditional**' learners
- Efforts should focus on **equal opportunities**, and access to service, especially healthcare.
- Member States should put in place **anti-discrimination measures**
- Lifelong learning and **active inclusion measures** should be enhanced
- Benefit systems should focus on income security during transitions and reducing poverty – particularly for those most at risk of social exclusion, including **legal migrants and minorities**

## EUROPE 2020 AND THE UK: SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE UK'S NRP

In order to account for disparities between Member States, the five Europe 2020 targets are translated into national targets, which are set annually by countries themselves through their National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

In October 2011, The European Anti-poverty Network (EAPN) published its analysis of the NRPs of 22 Member States, looking specifically at their policies for tackling poverty and social exclusion. The report argues that across Europe, Member States' NRP policies for inclusive

<sup>15</sup> Integrated Guidelines - European Commission

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/Brochure%20Integrated%20Guidelines.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe, Monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities – Part 2, ENAR

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

growth are 'at best inadequate, and at worst guilty of generating increasing poverty and social exclusion, and an attack on human rights'.<sup>17</sup>

### **'Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!'**

#### **EAPN's key messages:**

1. The NRPs' macro-economic approach **risks increasing poverty, exclusion and inequality**
2. The **poverty target has not been treated on an equal basis** with other targets by some Member States
3. **Policies for reducing poverty are 'skimpy'** and overly focussed on employment
4. Employment policies **focus on supply-side measures** (e.g. increasing sanctions for unemployed) and fail to prioritise inclusive labour markets
5. Targets for reducing school drop out rates fail to address causes, **linked to poverty and social exclusion**
6. Gender equality and the fight against discrimination are largely absent – despite explicit Europe 2020 **commitments to migrant and Roma inclusion**
7. Structural Funds are falling far short of their potential to deliver on **social inclusion**
8. Insufficient participation of **anti-poverty NGOs and people experiencing poverty**

The UK's first NRP under Europe 2020 was published in **April 2011**.<sup>18</sup> According to the Europe 2020 Strategy, the NRP should set specific targets enabling the UK to work towards Europe 2020's five goals, including on employment, education and social inclusion and poverty.

**The UK is the only Member State not to set numerical targets for all European goals** in its NRP, failing to set targets for reaching the employment, R&D and education goals. In addition, the NRP does not set new targets for achieving the poverty and social inclusion goal, using instead the pre-existing numerical targets of the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy.<sup>19</sup> The UK's lack of numerical targets make it impossible for the Europe Commission to measure its progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 goals, potentially hindering the success of the entire strategy.

EAPN conducted a numerical assessment of each NRP, using a checklist of criteria to determine how far the NRPs contribute to promoting inclusive growth, and the effectiveness of the policies proposed to achieving the poverty target.<sup>20</sup> While almost all Member States scored badly in this assessment, **the UK – along with Italy – scored lowest of all NRPs assessed**, receiving an average of 1/10 on the various criteria.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the consistently poorer education, employment and poverty outcomes experienced by some ethnic minorities, **ethnicity is barely mentioned in the UK NRP**.<sup>22</sup> The lack of focus on

<sup>17</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020, p4

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2011

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe\\_2020\\_uk\\_national\\_reform\\_prog\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe_2020_uk_national_reform_prog_2011.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Europe 2020 targets

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020, p4

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p73-4

<sup>22</sup> Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2011, p39 and p52

BME inclusion is at odds with the Europe 2020 integrated guidelines, which encourages Member States to promote inclusion of migrants and other minorities and vulnerable groups.<sup>23</sup>

The UK NRP focuses heavily on restoring economic growth, to the detriment of social inclusion, leading to the criticism from EAPN UK<sup>24</sup> that:

At no point does the NRP even suggest what balanced growth means. Balanced appears to mean only a reduced role for the public sector. The only place where there appears to be a discussion of the 'social' bottlenecks is in relation to skills and education, but even here not at [sic] the skills and qualifications of those furthest from the labour market.

The NRP's social inclusion policy can be analysed by looking at three key areas: employment, education and social inclusion. It should be noted that in some instances the Devolved Administrations (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) have different policy in these areas; regrettably due to space limitations they are not detailed here.

## Employment

**Europe 2020 Target: 75% of people aged 20-64 should be employed by 2020**

The UK NRP states the Government's aim to increase employment opportunities, especially for those furthest from the labour market, but **does not set any numerical targets for reducing unemployment.**

The NRP strategy for achieving its employment objectives includes the Work Programme, which aims to support individuals into employment.<sup>25</sup> The Work Programme is delivered in partnership with private, public and voluntary providers, whose pay is based largely on results. For this reason, the Work Programme has triggered concerns that contractors will target those most likely to get jobs, neglecting marginalised groups.<sup>26</sup> The NRP does not set out a strategy for offsetting the Work Programme's potential negative impact on inclusion for marginalised groups, including BME and other minorities.

Other strategic actions set out in the NRP include the introduction of Universal Credit to further incentivise work, which the Government has claimed will lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty.<sup>27</sup> However, EAPN criticizes European NRPs for focusing on punitive activation measures (such as increased benefit conditionality), rather than meaningfully supporting people to access quality jobs, as instructed by the European Platform Against

---

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe\\_2020\\_uk\\_national\\_reform\\_prog\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe_2020_uk_national_reform_prog_2011.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Integrated Guidelines - European Commission

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/Brochure%20Integrated%20Guidelines.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020, p16

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2011

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe\\_2020\\_uk\\_national\\_reform\\_prog\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe_2020_uk_national_reform_prog_2011.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> The Telegraph - Work Programme 'will fail in weak areas'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/8566749/Work-Programme-will-fail-in-weak-areas.html>

and New Statesman - How the 'Work Programme' could make the poor poorer

<http://www.newstatesman.com/economy/2011/06/work-jobs-labour-unemployed>

<sup>27</sup> Ian Duncan Smith: Universal Credit: welfare that works (speech delivered 11 November 2010)

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/ministers-speeches/2010/11-11-10.shtml>

Poverty. It also criticizes the UK NRP's lack of recognition of the role of the social economy in creating sustainable employment for excluded groups, arguing that the NRP reflects a belief that the private sector will create jobs, and that the Government's job is merely to set the conditions for this to happen.<sup>28</sup>

Under the heading of 'Raising Participation', the UK NRP acknowledges the need for targeted strategy to increase the inclusion of older workers, parents, young people and people with severe disabilities in the labour market. These include further 'activation measures', for example incentivising continued working for older workers.

However, the NRP **does not set out specific measures to increase participation of BME groups in the labour market**. The only mention of BME labour market participation is a reference to the European Social Fund, which specifically targets ethnic minorities in its access to employment projects, will invest around €4.5 billion in the UK over 2007-13.<sup>29</sup>

#### The European Social Fund: A key part of the Europe 2020 Strategy

The ESF Aims to give unemployed people training and support to enter jobs, particularly those most likely to face disadvantage and discrimination.

##### This includes:

- disabled people
- lone parents
- people aged over 50
- people from ethnic minorities
- people without good qualifications; and
- young people not in education, employment or training.

In the UK, some of this funding will be spent on the Work Programme for incapacity benefit and income support claimants, and on employment focused provision for 'families with multiple problems'<sup>30</sup>. Examples of projects that have specifically targeted BME groups include ESOL provision for those who face barriers to work or training because of language.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> European Social Fund in England

<http://dwp.gov.uk/esf/about-esf/>

<sup>30</sup> Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2011, p39

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe\\_2020\\_uk\\_national\\_reform\\_prog\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe_2020_uk_national_reform_prog_2011.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> European Social Fund in England: Participant stories – groups

<http://dwp.gov.uk/esf/esf-in-action/case-studies/groups.shtml#em>

## Education

**Europe 2020 Target:** Share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of younger generation should have a tertiary degree

As with employment, the NRP **does not set a numerical target for meeting the Europe 2020 education goal** of reducing school drop-out rates and increasing participation in tertiary education.

However, the UK was one of only two countries to recognise education as a ‘bottleneck to growth’ in its NRP, which emphasises the importance of a skilled workforce to building sustainable growth and stronger communities,<sup>32</sup> as well as stimulating private sector growth. Significantly, the NRP acknowledges that in England, ‘there remains an attainment gap between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. A strong and inclusive education and skills system is fundamental to narrowing this gap.’<sup>33</sup>

The NRP states the need to make the education and skills sector less bureaucratic, in order to remove this ‘social bottleneck’ to growth. This will raise standards and ensure that learners, especially those with the greatest need, gain the qualifications they need. To this end, it sets out three key strategies:

1. Giving teachers more control over how schools are run, including through **academies and free schools**
2. ‘Skills for Sustainable Growth’, the skills strategy published in November 2010. The strategy promises **state-funded training for all who leave school without basic skills**, an increase in **further education loans**, and a new National **Careers Service**
3. Improving **vocational training**

ENAR argue that given the high drop-out and low tertiary participation rates of many migrant and ethnic minority groups, policy interventions that specifically target migrants and ethnic minorities are necessary if the Europe 2020 education target is to be met.<sup>34</sup>

However, while the above reforms are framed in terms of narrowing the achievement gap and creating opportunities for all, there is **no mention of targeted measures for improving education outcomes for ethnic minorities**, or any assessment of the impact on race equality of educational reform. This is particularly pertinent given concerns raised by Race on the Agenda (ROTA) and others about the potential of academies and free schools to increase social inequality.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2011  
[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe\\_2020\\_uk\\_national\\_reform\\_prog\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/europe_2020_uk_national_reform_prog_2011.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p29

<sup>34</sup> Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe, Monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities – Part 2, ENAR  
[http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting\\_final%20lowres.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Coalition’s free schools project spells disaster for many already facing acute educational disadvantage: ROTA  
<http://www.rota.org.uk/pages/CurrentPress.aspx>

Although the NRP does not set numerical targets for meeting the Europe 2020 education goal, it sets out Government objectives to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and expand the apprenticeship programme.

In addition to points 1-3 above, three further strategies aim to achieve these objectives:

1. **Raising the participation age** in England to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015 for education and training, and increasing funding for 16-19 education and training places. In December 2010, the Government also set out measures to help support **'disadvantaged learners'** by increasing the funding to address deprivation
2. Funding additional **apprenticeship places** and creating **work experience placements** for young people
3. **Reforming higher education** to ensure standards and accessibility to 'anyone who has the talent to succeed'

The Government argues that although university tuition fees will rise to up to £9,000 a year from Autumn 2012, they will have to meet much tougher conditions on widening participation, set by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). It also states that a more progressive student maintenance package will be put in place, and repayment of student loans will not begin until graduates are earning at least £21,000.

Again, the NRP does not address the potential impact of these proposals on education outcomes for BME groups. This is despite concerns that the potential for higher status universities to demand higher fees may serve to price out those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, where BME students are over-represented, leading to a consolidation of BME students in the less prestigious universities. The Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) has also lobbied against charging of interest on students loans on the grounds that this will be a barrier to some Muslim students.<sup>36</sup> The Government's own Equality Impact Assessment acknowledges this latter issue, but claims that overall, the tuition fee reform will benefit ethnic minority students, who are more likely to qualify for higher maintenance grants and to repay less under the new system.<sup>37</sup>

The abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), previously offered to young people who faced barriers to educational participation, to enable them to complete further education (aged 16-19), is likely to have a disproportionate impact on BME students. Research has indicated that EMA provision significantly improved the educational outcomes of its recipients, including Black students in particular, and had high take-up rates among minority ethnic groups.<sup>38</sup> The impact of the abolition of the EMA is compounded by the removal of ring-fenced status for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), which means schools can

---

<sup>36</sup> New student loan scheme may unwittingly exacerbate education inequalities: FOSIS

<http://media.fosis.org.uk/press-releases/1412-new-student-loan-scheme-may-unwittingly-exacerbate-education-inequalities>

<sup>37</sup> Interim Equality Impact Assessment, Urgent reforms to higher education funding and student finance, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, November 2010

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/i/10-1310-interim-equality-impact-assessment-he-funding-and-student-finance.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Joint submission by UK NGOs Against Racism to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) with regard to the UK Government's 18th and 19th Periodic Reports, p.44

now reduce the level of specialist provision to minority ethnic children at their discretion.<sup>39</sup> The NRP makes no attempt to address the negative impact of these changes to financial support on social inclusion for BME students.

EAPN's report notes that the majority of Member States lack policies aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, including those experiencing social inclusion and poverty, to access lifelong learning. Referring to the UK's NRP, it observes that 'There is some discussion over skills policy but this makes almost no reference to excluded people (and even that is a generous assessment).'<sup>40</sup>

## Social Inclusion (Poverty)

**Europe 2020 Target: 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty**

The macroeconomic policies being implemented by the UK Government are not designed to reduce poverty or inequality. They are designed to reduce the deficit - a key way of doing this is reducing not only the amount of social spending but its nature.<sup>40</sup>

EAPN accuses the UK NRP of failing to mainstream social goals, or consider the impact on poverty and inequality of macroeconomic policies. According to EAPN's analysis, the NRP does not acknowledge the need for growth to be shared throughout society, or for the deficit reduction to be shared fairly through fairer taxation and distribution of income. The NRP does not construct a role for the state in generating **inclusive** growth through social investment in decent jobs, social protection and minimum income systems and public services. Instead, the main policy solution offered for reducing poverty is getting people back into employment through 'hardening activation' (i.e. through welfare reform), as discussed above.<sup>42</sup>

### Poverty targets

As with employment and education, the NRP **does not set out new numerical targets for social inclusion**, instead restating the targets of the Child Poverty Strategy 2010. The NRP claims that not setting targets for its poverty reduction objectives is consistent with the Government's approach to measurement, and explains its focus on child poverty by stating that other areas of social inclusion are dealt with by its welfare and education reform proposals. However, it is not clear how the child poverty targets fit with the Europe 2020 target for reducing poverty.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020, p44

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p12

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

### UK NRP's child poverty action points:

1. **Devolving policy** from central to local government, communities, voluntary groups and private investors (CPS<sup>50</sup>)
2. Creation of **Social Justice Cabinet Committee** to look at the cause of poverty, including worklessness, addiction, debt, family breakdown and educational failure (CPS)
3. Introduction of **Universal Credit**
4. Improving access to employment through the **Work Programme**
5. Delivering early intervention programmes through **Sure Start Centres**, and non ring-fenced **Early Intervention Grants** for local authorities in England
6. Providing **free nursery care** to most disadvantaged two year olds through the **Fairness Premium**, and granting a **Pupil Premium** to schools for taking children from lower income households
7. Improving **social mobility** through a £110 million Education Endowment Fund, which gives grants to projects to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children in challenging schools – 'whatever their gender or **ethnic group**'

The Government's 2011 *Child Poverty Strategy* fulfils the requirement of the *Child Poverty Act 2010* to set out measures for making progress on child poverty between 2011 and 2014.<sup>44</sup> The Strategy focuses on combating worklessness and educational failure and preventing family and relationship breakdown with the aim of supporting the most disadvantaged groups struggling at the bottom of society.<sup>45</sup>

The Government argues that devolving power to local government and other actors is necessary because 'posing solutions from above stifles innovation and detracts from local priorities'.<sup>46</sup> For example, the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) for local authorities is not ring-fenced, offering freedom and flexibility at a local level.

However, the NRP does not address concerns around the impact of this localist approach on equality and social inclusion. The Runnymede Trust and Race on the Agenda (ROTA) have warned that new mechanisms for holding them to account, **increased discretion for local authorities may impact detrimentally on race equality**.<sup>47</sup> While empowering local community decision-making may be welcome, removing ring-fencing from funding arguably means that the Government cannot guarantee the realization of its poverty and social inclusion goals. For example, in spite of the NRP's assurance of support for Sure Start centres, 124 have been closed or merged since the coalition came to power, and many have had their budgets cut dramatically by local authorities struggling with limited budgets and no longer obliged to fund Sure Start, because of the removal of ring-fencing from EIG funding. The reduction in Sure Start services has implications not only for reducing child poverty, but also potentially impacts upon

---

<sup>43</sup> Part of the Child Poverty Strategy

<sup>44</sup> A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives  
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM-8061.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p.51

<sup>47</sup> Joint Submission to House of Commons Committee Stage of the Localism Bill: The Runnymede Trust and ROTA, February 2011  
<http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/JointResponseToLocalismBill.pdf>

social cohesion and equality, as the service sought to offer universal provision and bring together people of different backgrounds.<sup>48</sup>

Those concerned about social inclusion will surely welcome the NRP's pledge to introduce free nursery care for the most disadvantaged two year olds, as well its proposals to give schools an extra £430 for each pupil that they take whose parents have an annual income of less than £16,000, through the Pupil Premium (the award has risen to £488 for 2011-12<sup>49</sup>). The Pupil Premium scheme has potential not only to provide extra resources to disadvantaged children, but also to promote social integration by encouraging all schools to take pupils from low-income backgrounds, of whom a disproportionate number are from BME backgrounds.

An analysis by ROTA welcomes the commitment to closing gaps in attainment represented by the Pupil Premium scheme. However, ROTA suggests that the modest value of the premium means it is unlikely to have a significant impact on attainment gaps between socioeconomic or ethnic groups. ROTA is concerned that as most of the Pupil Premium funding will not be ring-fenced, it risks not being spent on its intended beneficiaries. ROTA also argues for the need for a fund targeted specifically at BME pupils who face educational inequalities (it suggests the continuation of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which is at risk following the removal of its ring-fenced status).<sup>50</sup>

The NRP refers to the Government's Social Mobility strategy, which was published alongside the Child Poverty Strategy, and aims to tackle unfairness at every stage of life, from early years to adulthood.<sup>51</sup> The strategy was welcomed by the think tank Demos, which praised the range of indicators encompassed by the Government's 'life cycle' approach. However, Demos criticises what it sees as the Government's failure to join up social mobility with anti-poverty strategy<sup>52</sup>:

Poverty is the missing link in what otherwise is a very positive strategy. The Government had recognised the need to improve social mobility to tackle poverty, but seems less prepared to consider the opposite can also be true – that it should also fight poverty to improve social mobility. The two concepts interact and mutually reinforce one another – so if you are in poverty the less socially mobile you may be, and the less socially mobile you are the more likely you are to be trapped in poverty.

We have yet to see whether the forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy will tackle this complexity head on, but it is not encouraging that a strategy on social mobility has been drafted as a separate document. Two separate strategies risks incoherence for these two highly interrelated issues.

<sup>48</sup> 124 Sure Start centres have closed since coalition took power, The Guardian  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/nov/14/sure-start-centre-closures-coalition>

<sup>49</sup> Pupil Premium – what you need to know  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/a0076063/pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know>

<sup>50</sup> Response to the Department for Education's 'Consultation on school funding 2011 – 2012. Introducing a pupil premium, ROTA, October 2010  
<http://www.rota.org.uk/Downloads/Response%20to%20Pupil%20Premium%20F.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Government determined to open doors of opportunity  
<http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/government-determined-open-doors-opportunity>

<sup>52</sup> Demos welcomes social mobility strategy  
[http://www.demos.co.uk/press\\_releases/demoswelcomessocialmobilitystrategy](http://www.demos.co.uk/press_releases/demoswelcomessocialmobilitystrategy)

Finally, along with most Member States, the UK is criticised by EAPN for its **limited, low quality and low impact involvement of stakeholders** in the writing of the NRP. The UK was one of only four Member States not to engage the EAPN national anti-poverty network in any way.<sup>53</sup>

## THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S RESPONSE

In line with the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, on 7 June 2011 the European Commission published 27 country-specific recommendations to support each Member State in delivering 'smart, sustainable, inclusive growth.' These recommendations follow the publication of National Reform Programmes, and are part of a monitoring process which aims to ensure that Member State policy is in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.<sup>54</sup>

Several Member States received recommendations relating to the social inclusion of migrant and BME groups.<sup>55</sup> The European Council's recommendations to the UK, however, make **no mention of race**, despite the UK NRP's lack of policy on inclusion for BME groups.<sup>56</sup> This means that the UK will not be held to account for its failure to incorporate race into its NRP, and raises questions about the European Commission's commitment to the inclusion aspect of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

## CONCLUSION

It should be noted that the Europe 2020 Strategy is itself dominated by economic growth concerns, and the European Commission's failure to criticise the absence of new social inclusion targets in the UK's NRP suggests a lack of commitment to social inclusion within the Europe 2020 framework itself.

However, even on the basis of this limited framework, UK policy for social inclusion is one of the worst in Europe.<sup>57</sup> Despite stating a commitment to social inclusion, closing education attainment gaps and labour market inclusion, the NRP fails to set new numerical targets for reaching Europe 2020's employment, education and poverty goals. The NRP focuses predominantly on increasing economic growth and cutting fiscal spending, and fails to incorporate social inclusion concerns into its policies.

Although certain ethnic minorities consistently experience poorer education, employment and poverty outcomes, ethnicity is all but ignored in the UK's NRP. There are no examples of policies targeted at addressing the needs of specific ethnic groups, and the impact of policies on race equality is not assessed.

---

<sup>53</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Monitoring progress through the European Semester

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/index_en.htm)

<sup>55</sup> European Commission's Country-specific Recommendations 2011, ENAR, unpublished

<sup>56</sup> Country-specific Recommendations 2011

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/monitoring/recommendations\\_2011/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/monitoring/recommendations_2011/index_en.htm)

<sup>57</sup> Europe Anti-poverty Network - Deliver Inclusive Growth - Put the heart back in Europe!: EAPN analysis of the 2011 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) Europe 2020,

<http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-eapn-nrp-report.pdf>