

Cost Saving and Effective: CPA should merge with NESDO

At its most recent board meeting (11 September) EAPN Ireland has called for the government to amalgamate the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) with the National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO). EAPN Ireland believes that in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness the Agency should be brought under the NESDO umbrella.

EAPN Ireland understands that the review of the CPA which is nearing completion is considering a number of options for the future of the Agency, including amalgamation with NESDO and other options such as bringing the Agency under the auspices of the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

EAPN Ireland has welcomed the review which it believes offers an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness and policy impact of this critical body.

With unemployment levels at their highest in ten years, the CPA's mission to present creative policy solutions, stimulate innovative projects, promote research and raise public awareness, remains as critical today as when the Agency was established in 1986. In the context of the challenges facing Irish society and the economy, these roles must be protected and enhanced. The independent nature of this work is critical and it is impossible to envisage how this remit could be sustained if the Agency is absorbed into the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

'This is a time when new energy and focus needs to be given to the fight against poverty, this will not be achieved by burying the CPA within the civil service', said **Anna Visser, Director of EAPN Ireland** she continued 'the remit of the CPA fits logically with that of NESDO, which already has cost saving structures in place bringing together its constituent organisations to share resources, promote joint work, and present policy analysis to government'.

In an economic downturn it is people experiencing poverty who are most affected. People with disabilities, children, older people, single parents, members of ethnic minorities and migrants are amongst those who are experiencing the hard end of this recession. Without a dedicated resource that can generate independent thinking and practical solutions to the problem of poverty in Ireland it is the most vulnerable who will suffer.

EAPN Ireland welcomes efforts to enhance efficiency and get the maximum value from tax payers money and believes that an amalgamation with NESDO would offer the opportunity both to make cost savings and to enhance the effectiveness of the Agency in the current difficult circumstances.

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European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland
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EAPN Ireland is a network of anti-poverty groups working to put the eradication of poverty at the top of the EU and Irish agenda through information, training, advocacy and networking. For further information see: www.eapn.ie.