

## The importance of **Reference Budgets** in the fight against poverty and social exclusion

- Reference budgets have been developed in Member States for various purposes, making use of different methods and theoretical starting points.
- To ensure that reference budgets reflect acceptable standards of living that are comparable across Member States and take proper account of the social needs and the institutional context at local, regional and national level, the development of a common theoretical and methodological framework is needed.
- Reference budgets that are constructed according to an approved common methodology can be a helpful tool for the implementation and monitoring of the 2008 Active Inclusion Strategy and the 2013 Social Investment Package.
- Reference budgets will help Member States to design effective and adequate measures of income support and can facilitate the Commission's task of monitoring and assessing the adequacy of income support in Europe.
- Reference budgets facilitate mutual learning and identification of best practices in the fight against poverty.

### The National Lead Experts of the EU Reference Budgets Network

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## Outputs during the 15-month life cycle of the project

- Provide an overview of the current state of play as regards reference budgets and an analysis of political, methodological and analytical features
- Build a solid EU Reference Budgets Network, that consists of key experts and representative stakeholders, at EU and national level, to support the development, implementation and use of reference budgets in all Member States
- Build a consensus on a common theoretical framework and methodology to develop cross-nationally comparable reference budgets
- Develop full, cross-nationally comparable reference budgets in selected countries and a food basket for all countries for 3 types of households in the capital regions of Member States
- Analyse the robustness of the approach and formulate recommendations for developing complete reference budgets in all EU Member States
- Disseminate results: publish an online database and organise a final conference to discuss the results of the project and to consider future possibilities



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### CONSORTIUM WEBSITES:

- [Applica](http://www.aplica.be): [www.aplica.be](http://www.aplica.be)
- [Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy](http://www.centrumvoorsociaalbeleid.be) (University of Antwerp):  
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## THE EU REFERENCE BUDGETS NETWORK:

### Core Team & EU Expert team

- **Johnathan Bradshaw** - University of York
- **Donald Hirsch** - Center for Research in Social Policy
- **Bernadette Mac Mahon** - Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice
- **Eric Marlier** - CEPS/INSTEAD
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# Pilot project for the development of a common methodology on reference budgets in Europe

The **European Reference Budgets Network** is a pilot project, funded by the European Commission, aimed at the development of a common and widely accepted methodology to construct high-quality comparable reference budgets in all EU Member States. Reference Budgets are baskets of goods and services that are considered necessary to reach an acceptable standard of living for an individual household within a given country, region or city.

The project is also aimed at establishing a network that will provide intellectual and practical support to the design and development of complete reference budgets in all EU Member States, in line with this common methodology. The approach adopted will be a consensual one and will incorporate both expert knowledge and experience expressed by people in focus groups about the essential needs that have to be fulfilled in order for people to participate fully in society.

