

EPR E-bulletin

EU policy, projects and conferences updates

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Social Affairs

Commission publishes Annual Growth Survey

The [European Semester](#) is the main tool at European level to monitor national progress on economic and fiscal policies. We produced a short analysis of the Annual Growth Survey 2018 which starts the cycle of the semester. What priorities does the Commission highlight that impact rehabilitation services? For more information about the European Semester including the analysis please see the EPR website [European Semester page](#), and the following link to consult the [2018 Annual Growth Survey](#).

Updates on Socially Sustainable Public Procurement

In 2017 the European Commission published a paper entitled “*Making Public Procurement work in and for Europe*”. One conclusion was that public procurement was not used enough to support social policy objectives and tenders were too often chosen on lowest price. The Commission made a number of proposals and announced initiatives, including training events with a focus on social enterprise, and a revised guide on Socially Sustainable Public Procurement.

More information on this topic can be found on the EPR [website](#), including a presentation about the Commission paper, and on the website of the European Commission [here](#).

How do European countries support family carers?

Family carers is the principal subject of the recently published Observatory for Sociopolitical development in Europe newsletter. The newsletter looks at work-life balance policies in Germany, Austria and Belgium.

Traditionally, it is mostly women who have assumed the responsibility of caring for their relatives. In view of rising female employment rates, but also considering higher retirement ages in many European countries, the supply of care in the future will depend on how work and family responsibilities can be combined. Both the European Commission and the European Parliament have been discussing the reconciliation of work and care and the support of family carers within the context of a number of initiatives. The member states of the European Union put into practice a wide range of instruments intended to allow employed family carers to care and work. Important government measures include options to take time off from work for the purpose of caring – so called carers' leave – as well as financial benefits. The latest Observatory for Sociopolitical development in Europe newsletter shows how employed family carers in Germany, Austria and Belgium are supported by government measures. The country contributions focus on the range of carers' leave options and related financial benefits.

- [Read the article](#)

The European Pillar of Social Rights

The European Pillar of Social Rights is an initiative of the European Commission to improve the promotion and protection of social rights of EU residents. The so-called 'Social Pillar' was launched in April 2017 and jointly proclaimed by the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament later on in November. Now this initiative is on the road to its implementation. In the last months, the Commission made efforts to ensure it will be mainstreamed along other EU policy tools (for example, the [European Semester](#)) so as to ensure Member States will work upon the principles/rights it contains as early as possible. All current Member States of the European Union have committed to implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

An analytical paper from EPR can be found on our website [here](#).

Employment & Disability

OECD/EU report marks added value of entrepreneurship

Policy measures to facilitate entrepreneurship among disadvantaged groups can help create jobs and tackle social exclusion, according to The Missing Entrepreneurs 2017, a joint report by the OECD and European Commission.

The report shows that groups who are disadvantaged in the labour market are less involved in entrepreneurship than the population as a whole. Only 3.2% of the people who were unemployed in 2015 moved into self-employment in 2016. Only 9.9% of working women were self-employed, compared to 17.5% of working men. And even though they show a broad interest in self-employment, only 4.1% of working youth were self-employed in 2016.

Women, youth, migrants, formerly unemployed and seniors still face several barriers to starting their own business. Accessing finance, acquiring entrepreneurship skills and building entrepreneurial networks, are some of these. The Missing Entrepreneurs 2017-report shows that there is substantial potential to combat unemployment and increase labour market participation by facilitating business creation for this particular group of the population. However, the specific problems they face need to be recognised and addressed with effective and efficient policy measures.

The OECD and European Commission are also developing an online inclusive and social entrepreneurship tool to assist policy makers in the design and implementation of policies, strategies, initiatives and programmes.

- [Download a pdf of the report](#)

Education & Vocational Training

Fully inclusive educational system yet to be realised

A recently released EASNIE report, which provides data on developments in education and children services, highlights the need for a fully inclusive educational system.

Drawing on several educational data sources, the study reports on progress made across a range of indicators as well as current challenges facing educational systems in Europe. The study found that children with disabilities are much more likely to be disenfranchised from the mainstreamed educational system. EASNIE explains that the intention is to make educational systems more inclusive for children with disabilities and special needs for all European countries. However, none have implemented a fully inclusive system yet.

Compared to OECD countries, the E22 nations are behind in several areas connected to Early Childhood Education and Care, ECEC. The EU22 has an average of 11 children to each individual ECEC staff member, indicating a lower child-to-staff ratio than the OECD average of 13. The data also shows that the proportion of children enrolled in private ECEC institutions, is considerably larger than those in public education, suggesting that the quality of the ECEC public funded places are not meeting the demand of the parents. On the other hand, there appears to be an increase of special classes within mainstream schools. This demonstrates progress, but is not a fully inclusive system.

- [Download the EASNIE report.](#)

EU Funding

The future of the EU funding programmes – updates on discussions about the Multi-Annual Financial Framework



European Union
European
Social Fund

The MFF (multiannual financial framework) is the EU's long-term budget, usually covering a seven-year-period. The MFF will define which areas of work of the EU will have more or less investment during that period of time. It is therefore linked to budget but also to political priorities. Within the MFF, the criteria for allocation of funds for each EU programme is also defined. The current MFF runs until 2020 but due to the difficult nature of the discussions, the European Commission wants to start them in 2018. For more information please check our website.

Publications

>>> [European Quality of Life Survey 2016 - Eurofound](#) (2017)



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