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SOCIAL AGENDA

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EU BUDGET

2021-2027 proposal

The **2027** perspective

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Welcome to n°52

Joost Korte
Director General of the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate General

Just as we are celebrating thirty years of EU cohesion policy, the European Commission has put forward its proposals for the 2021-2027 budgetary period.

The need for more economic and social cohesion is increasingly gaining currency in the discussions on the future of Europe.

The Commission's proposal for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), as the EU budget is called officially, is remarkable in several ways from an employment and social affairs standpoint.

For the first time, it specifies how much money would actually go to a streamlined and integrated social fund, "ESF+": €101 billion. That represents a significantly higher share within the overall cohesion budget than is the case in the current MFF.

It also consecrates the role of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed by EU leaders in November 2017, as a compass for steering investment towards EU priorities, with a particular focus on education and training for young people and up-skilling for workers of all ages.

Thirdly, it aims at aligning the recommendations generated by the European Semester of economic policy coordination, with the use of the EU funds in the social and employment area, so that investments are tailored to the policy priorities for each country.

Upwards convergence

Beyond ESF+, the Commission also proposes to channel social investment through other programmes, such as InvestEU, a reinforced Erasmus, Digital Europe or Horizon Europe.

The achievements of cohesion policy are sometimes taken for granted and overlooked. Especially the fact that it has been instrumental in helping the countries that joined the European Community, and then the European Union, catch up with the older Member States, including in terms of employment, social affairs and inclusion.

Today more than ever, the proposal for an ESF+ aims to clearly assert the employment and social priorities, with a focus on social inclusion, youth employment and delivering on the priorities of the European Semester.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Equal pay for equal work at the same place: a revised posting directive.

Posting of Workers: Revised directive adopted

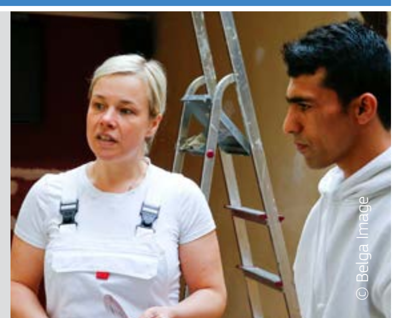
21 JUNE 2018

The European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers confirmed the political agreement reached on 1 March on the revision of the posting of workers directive. At the heart of it is the principle of equal pay for equal work in the same place. A revision of the directive was originally proposed by the European Commission in March 2016 (see page 6).

2021-2027 EU budget: ESF+ proposed

30 MAY 2018

The European Commission proposed to reinforce, pool and better target several existing Funds that already put people at the centre. In particular, it proposes to establish a renewed European Social Fund, the 'European Social Fund Plus' (ESF+), and a strengthened and more effective European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). The Commission also proposed to double the funding for Erasmus to €30 billion for 2021-2027 and to make it more inclusive (see page 14).



People-centred: the proposed EU budget for 2021-2027.

European Semester: Recommendations

23 MAY 2018

The European Commission presented the 2018 country-specific recommendations, setting out its economic policy guidance for each Member State for the next 12 to 18 months. The recommendations pay special attention to social challenges, guided by the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed in November 2017. There is a particular focus on ensuring the provision of adequate skills, the effectiveness and adequacy of social safety nets and improving social dialogue. Countries are also recommended to: carry out reforms that prepare their workforces for the future, including new forms of work and increasing digitalisation; reduce income inequalities; and create employment opportunities, for young people in particular (see page 24).

Improving social dialogue: A particular focus of the European Semester 2018.

Pension adequacy: More needs to be done

30 APRIL 2018

The 2018 Pensions Adequacy Report underlined that Member States pay more and more attention to sustainable and adequate pensions in their reforms. However, further measures will be required. Pension systems need to promote longer working lives by encouraging life-long learning, providing a safe and healthy work environment, adjusting pensionable ages, rewarding later retirement and discouraging early exit (see page 8).

Lifelong learning: Pension systems need to promote longer working lives by encouraging life-long learning.

Skills and qualifications: Europass revised

12 APRIL 2018

EU Member States adopted the Commission's proposal to revise the Europass framework, which aims at simplifying and modernising the Europass CV and other skills tools for the digital age. The new framework will offer an e-portfolio for storing and sharing information, tools for people to self-assess their skills and tools for describing formal and informal learning as well as qualifications. For the first time, Europass will also offer information to support career management, including information on trends and demands in the labour market and on guidance and learning opportunities across Europe.

A modernised Europass: with an e-portfolio for storing and sharing information and tools for people to self-assess their skills.

Health and safety: Limits to 5 more chemicals

5 APRIL 2018

The Commission proposed to limit workers' exposure to five more cancer-causing chemicals: Cadmium and its inorganic compounds; Beryllium and inorganic beryllium compounds; Arsenic acid and its salts, as well as inorganic arsenic compounds; Formaldehyde; 4,4'-Methylene-bis(2-chloroaniline) (MOCA). Estimates show that this proposal would improve working conditions for over 1 000 000 EU workers and prevent over 22 000 cases of work-related illness.

Life-saving measures: improving working conditions for over 1 000 000 EU workers and preventing over 22 000 cases of work-related illness.

Transnational companies: A boost to social dialogue

14 MAY 2018

The European Commission published an evaluation of the European Works Council directive, adopted in 2009, confirming its added value for workers and companies. The Commission proposes to create a practical handbook and provide €7 million funding to social partners to support the implementation of the directive and the effectiveness of European Works Councils. Information for workers has improved in terms of quality and scope. However, the effectiveness of the consultation procedure can still be improved.

Better dialogue: Information for workers has improved in terms of quality and scope.

LABOUR LAW

Posted workers directive revised

Same pay for the same work in the same place as local workers

Delay for road transport: Until a sector-specific directive is adopted, the non-revised 1996 directive will continue to apply to road transport.

In June 2018, the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament adopted a European Commission proposal reviewing the 1996 directive on the posting of workers: workers who are employed by a company established in one EU country and who are sent temporarily to carry out a service in another Member State.

The main transformation has to do with the rates of pay to which posted workers are entitled.

The 1996 directive only required that they be subject to the host country's minimum rates of pay. However, since then, the EU and its single market have grown considerably and wage differences have increased. Posted workers have been reported to earn up to 50% less than local workers in some sectors and some member States.

The revised directive ensures that posted workers enjoy not just the minimum wage but also all the other elements that make up remuneration in the host country. For example, allowances for bad weather, Christmas bonuses, pay increases according to seniority - so long as those elements are provided for by the law of the host country (or by collective agreements that apply universally, i.e. beyond the scope of a company).

From now on, the posted workers will enjoy the same pay for the same work in the same place as local workers. This meets a requirement expressed by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in 2014 when, in his speech as President-elect to the European Parliament, he declared his intention to fight against social dumping.

From optional to mandatory

Beyond the pay issue, the 2018 revised directive brings about other improvements, often turning optional elements into mandatory ones.

For example, all posted workers must enjoy the benefits of collective agreements. Up till now, this was only mandatory for workers posted in the construction sector.

Long-term posted workers (beyond twelve months, extendable to eighteen months) should be covered by all the terms and conditions of employment of the host country's labour law (but for some matters, such as protection against unfair dismissal, it is the labour law of the home Member State that applies).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Beyond the construction sector: all posted workers, not just those working in the construction sector, must now enjoy the benefits of collective agreements.

Moreover, the principle of equal treatment must also apply to workers posted by temporary work agencies. This was only optional under the 1996 directive.

The expenses incurred by the posting itself (travel and lodging) must be paid by the employer, in accordance with the laws or practice of the home country. And if a posted worker is made to move during his posting, the employer must grant an allowance or reimbursement, if this is provided for by law or practice of the host Member State.

For all sectors

Just like the 1996 directive, the 2018 revision applies to all sectors and branches of the economy except the merchant navy.

However, the revision will only apply to road transport once a Commission proposal for a sector-specific directive concerning a range of social measures, applying specifically to road transport, will be adopted by the European Parliament and EU Council of Ministers. Until then, the 1996 directive continues to apply to road transport, where enforcement has been the most difficult so far.

In fact, a posting of workers enforcement directive was adopted in 2014. It provides for better cooperation between national administrations (including deadlines for replying to the questions they ask each other, e.g. whether the employer of a posted worker is legally established in the home country), more efficient labour inspections, better protection for posted workers who are part of a subcontracting chain and better implementation of administrative sanctions.

The future European Labour Authority, proposed by the Commission on 13 March 2018 (see *Social Agenda* n°51), will help EU countries cooperate in making the posting of workers easier and fairer.

More information: http://europa.eu/!Nt47Hv

Over two million posted workers

In 2016, there were 2.3 million posted workers in the EU, a number that had increased by 58% between 2011 and 2016. However, the percentage of posted workers in the workforce remained low: On average 0.6% of total employment, 0.4% in full-time equivalents.

45% of total postings were concentrated in the construction sector. This concentration was particularly high in Luxembourg, Belgium and Austria from a receiving perspective (host countries), and in Luxembourg, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, Portugal and Poland from a sending perspective (home countries).

The number of portable A1 documents issued to posted workers in 2016, certifying that they are correctly affiliated to the social security system of their home country, indicate that some 38% of postings had occurred from one high wage Member State to another.

The flow from low-wage to high-wage Member States only represented a third of total postings in 2016.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Pensions – Towards more adequacy

2018 report captures the growing momentum in favour of pension adequacy

Pensions are the main source of old-age income. They are therefore key to preventing income poverty. So how do pensions help maintain the income of men and women for the duration of their retirement and prevent old-age poverty?

In other words, to what extent are they adequate? This is what the 2018 EU Pensions Adequacy Report analyses. Its aim is to support Member States in designing pensions systems that are (socially) “adequate” while remaining (financially) “sustainable”.

As this report is triennial, it was the first to come out since a major shift in the pension reform dynamic took place around 2015: soon after the previous report was adopted, more EU Member States started refocusing their reform efforts towards pension adequacy, as opposed to simply stabilising pension expenditure (see *Social Agenda* n°43).

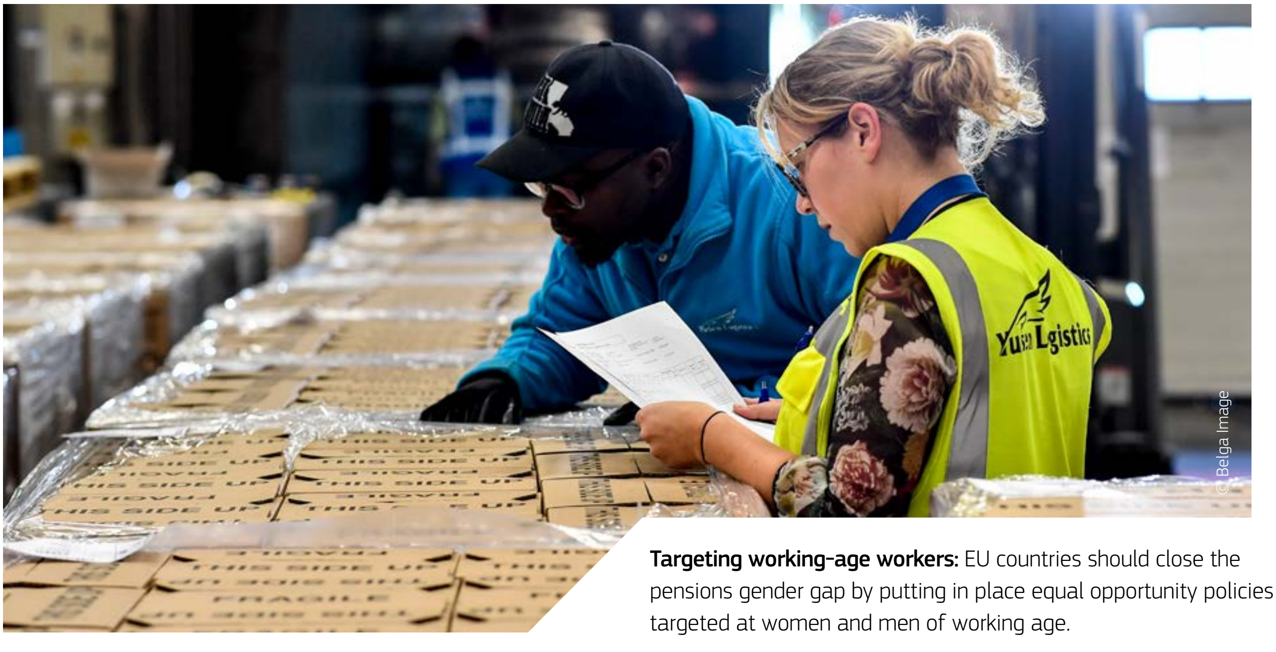
They did this for example through measures to safeguard the adequacy of the lower range of pension income, by introducing or raising minimum pensions and/or indexation.

Although the EU target for reducing the overall number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 is most likely to be missed for the population as a whole, the 2018 Pensions Adequacy report shows that the EU is on target as far as people aged 65 and more are concerned.

A right

The 2018 report was also the first one to come out since the adoption by the European Commission of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its proclamation by EU leaders in 2017. Principle 15 of the Pillar recognises the right of all workers, including the self-employed and those on non-standard job contracts, to a pension that ensures adequate income, and the right of women and men to equal opportunities to acquire pension rights.

The adequacy report is therefore closely related to two proposals that the Commission put forward at the beginning of 2018 and which are going through the EU decision-making process: For a Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and



Targeting working-age workers: EU countries should close the pensions gender gap by putting in place equal opportunity policies targeted at women and men of working age.

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Gender pension gap: women's pensions are still 37% lower than men's are and the gender pension gap is much higher than the gender pay gap.

the self-employed (see page 6); and for a directive on work-life balance for parents and carers (see *Social Agenda* n°48).

Gender gap

Theoretically, for an identical career, pension income for men and women should be identical in most EU countries. Yet in practice, women's pensions are still 37% lower than men's are. This is due to lower salaries, as well as shorter working lives and more part-time work, linked also to caring responsibilities. As a result, the gender pension gap is much higher than the gender pay gap.

The 2018 Pension Adequacy Report calls for EU countries to close the gender gap in pensions by putting in place equal opportunity policies targeted at working-age women and men.

They could do so by promoting work-life balance, equal distribution of caring responsibilities and labour market participation in general. Pension policies should adequately protect career breaks taken for social reasons, and care-related breaks in particular.

Non-standard work

Although more than 40% of jobs in the EU are already in a "non-standard" form (self-employment, part-time, temporary, agency work etc.), EU countries' pension systems are still geared to what was once the traditional form of employment: open-ended and full-time. The same can be said of Member State's social protection systems altogether.

Pensions also redistribute income

The monetary poverty rate was lower among older people in the EU (14.6%) than among working-age people (17%) in 2016, although older people earned about 7% less than working-age people.

This is because pensions, in addition to maintaining living standards after retirement, also redistribute income via:

- benefit rules which grant proportionally higher benefit to low-earners;
- taxes which are proportionally higher on higher pensions;
- and minimum income provisions which ensure minimum standard of living to those who have no or insufficient pension rights.

However, some 17.3 million or 18.2% of older people (65 years old and over) in the EU remain at risk of poverty or social exclusion (20% of older women and 15% of older men are facing such a risk), an amount that has remained nearly unchanged since 2013. More than half of them are aged 75 or over, as needs increase with age while the value of pensions gradually decreases.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Fragmented career: Accrual conditions must be adapted to people who have very fragmented careers.

The 2018 Pension Adequacy report therefore calls on EU countries to improve access and accrual conditions for non-standard and self-employment. They could do so, for instance, by adapting accrual conditions to diverse work patterns, so that people such as agency or temporary workers, who have very fragmented careers, may be able to claim pension rights at least for the periods during which they actually worked and paid contributions. Presently, some pension systems only take into account uninterrupted work periods of a certain duration.

The report also explores the potential of supplementary savings (i.e. occupational and personal pensions), taking into account the specificities of the pension system in each Member State as supplementary pensions inter-act with public ones. There is no one-size fits all but, in this area in particular, there is a major potential for improvement.

Country-specific

Volume II of the 2018 Pension Adequacy report contains country profiles, and points out the main opportunities for each Member State to address the challenges facing pension adequacy.

Together with the 2018 Ageing Report that was published on 25 May and addresses the financial sustainability issue, the Pension Adequacy Report will feed into the European Semester process of economic and social policy coordination (see page 24).

Every year, the European Semester process produces a series of country-specific recommendations. For the 2018 European Semester cycle, the Commission proposal includes four more recommendations on pensions adequacy than last year.

More information: http://europa.eu/!Hq76py and http://europa.eu/!PP49GT

Two working-age people for every older person by 2070

The total population in the EU is set to increase from 511 million in 2016 to 520 million in 2070. However, the working-age population (15 to 64 years old) will decrease significantly, from 333 million to 292 million.

The ratio of people aged 65 and above, relative to those aged 15 to 64, will increase by 21.6%, from 29.6% in 2016 to 51.2% in 2070. The EU would then go from having 3.3 working-age people for every person aged over 65 to only two.

While the total supply of labour in the EU among those aged 20-64 is expected to fall by 9.6% between 2016 and 2070, labour force participation rates will rise from 77.5% to 80.7%, with increases especially among women and older people.

Between 2013 and 2016, employment in the 55-64 age group grew by 5.1% (4.2 million workers), due to later retirement and new, better-educated age cohorts replacing previous ones.

EMPLOYMENT

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Insufficient protection: Combating cases of insufficient protection for workers in non-standard forms of employment.

Extending the **safety** net

Two proposals that could change the lives of millions of workers, self-employed or engaged in new forms of work

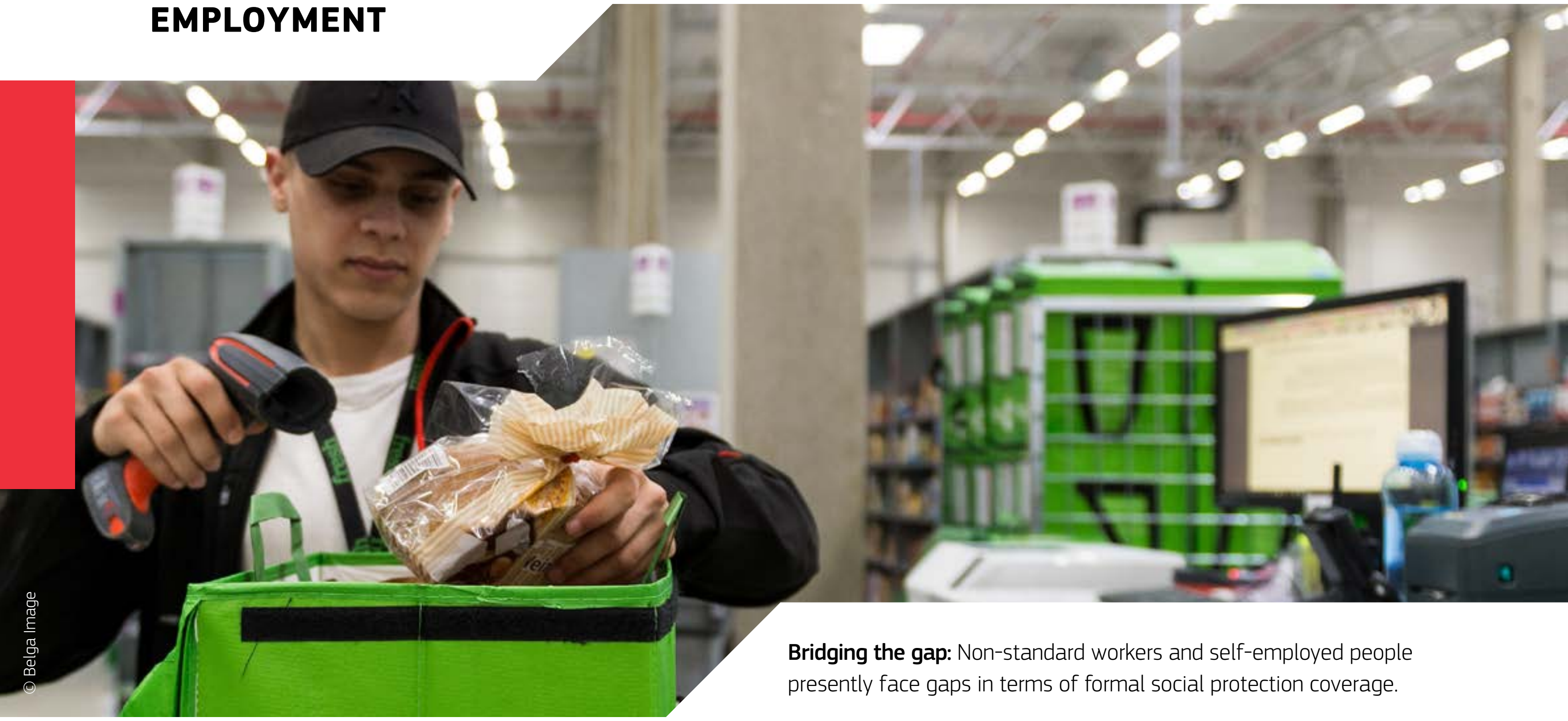
One in four employment contracts in the EU concerned atypical forms of employment and the self-employed in 2016, when 39% of employed people in the EU were in these forms of employment: 14% were self-employed, 8% were full-time temporary employees, 4% were part-time temporary employees and 13% were part-time permanent employees. Only 60% were employees with a full-time permanent contract.

Whether "atypical", "self-employed" or "standard", two European Commission proposals will have a great impact on all workers, once adopted by the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers: a proposal to increase the transparency and predictability of working conditions; and one on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.

The Pillar effect

Both proposals are emblematic of the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in April 2017 by the European Commission and proclaimed by EU leaders seven months later (see *Social Agenda* n°50).

EMPLOYMENT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Bridging the gap: Non-standard workers and self-employed people presently face gaps in terms of formal social protection coverage.

The first proposal is a revision of the 1991 Written Statement Directive on information to workers about their employment conditions, proposed on 21 December 2017 by the European Commission. It started as an assessment as to whether the directive was still fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

With the adoption of the Pillar, the proposal goes far beyond a sheer revision, and sets new rights for all workers. Indeed, the Pillar upholds the right to be informed in writing at the start of an employment relationship about the rights and obligations resulting from this relationship. It also sets out the right to secure and adaptable employment (principles 7 and 5 of the Pillar),

Positive and negative effects

Employee sharing, interim management and job sharing have positive effects on working conditions and the labour market, according to a research report on the new forms of employment that have emerged since 2000, produced in 2015 by Eurofound.

However, safety nets are needed for other new forms of employment, such as casual work, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based mobile work and crowd employment.

More information: http://europa.eu/!ph76HH

The proposal will serve in particular to combat cases of insufficient protection for workers in non-standard forms of employment, such as workers on zero-hour or on-demand contracts (e.g. fast food chain workers, workers in logistical centres, shelf stockers in supermarkets), domestic or voucher-based workers and platform workers (e.g. on-demand drivers or couriers).

The second proposal is a Recommendation put forward by the Commission on 13 March 2018. It is also a brainchild of the Pillar as it seeks to implement its 12th principle: "Regardless of the type and duration of their employment relationship, workers and, under comparable conditions, the self-employed have the right to adequate social protection". Not to mention the principles on secure and adaptable employment, unemployment benefits, access to healthcare and old age income and pensions…

Employment relationship

The proposal for a directive on transparent and predictable working conditions would allow 200 million workers to benefit from new and better rights. It actually defines what a worker is: "A person who for a certain period of time performs services for and under the direction of another person in return for remuneration", a definition that stems from European Court of Justice case law.

Whereas the 1991 directive makes it possible to exclude from the rules those workers who have contracts of less than 8 hours per week or shorter than one month or casual workers, the 2017 proposal only allows the exclusion of people working less than 8 hours per month.

The proposal also extends the type of information to be provided by an employer to information on probation, training and overtime arrangements. Workers with variable work schedules should have

Safety net: safety nets are needed for other new forms of employment, such as Information and Communication Technology-based mobile work and crowd employment.

more detailed information on working time and all workers should know to which social security institution contributions are paid. The written document may take an electronic form and Member States must provide employers with templates and accessible information.

Among the other novelties contained in this proposal is the right to work for other employers, with a ban on exclusivity clauses and restrictions on incompatibility conditions. In addition, workers with variable working schedules determined by the employer (unpredictable work) should know in advance when they can be requested to work. Moreover, all workers should have the right to cost-free mandatory training, and to a limit on the length of probation.

Basically, what this proposal does is create uniform and universal minimum standards for all the people that are in an employment relationship with another person, even when they are falsely hired under a self-employment contract.

Closing the gaps

The other proposal, on access to social protection, goes even further in as far as it also affects people who are genuinely self-employed.

Fundamentally, it aims to support access to social protection to all workers and people who are self-employed in comparable conditions, bridging the gaps that non-standard workers and self-employed people presently face in terms of formal social protection coverage.

They will be covered by a combination of public, occupational or private schemes as far as the following benefits are concerned: unemployment, sickness and health care, maternity, invalidity, old age and health and safety (accidents and work-related diseases).

In these areas, mandatory coverage is recommended (in the case of unemployment benefits, self-employed people will be able to adhere on a voluntary basis). Transferability of social security entitlements between schemes and employment statuses and transparency of information about their social security entitlements and obligations, will be encouraged.

More information:
Working conditions: http://europa.eu/!dB38ph
Social protection: http://europa.eu/!xX99Hw

What gaps mean in practice

Maria has a full-time open-ended contract and access to sickness benefits which compensate for the loss of income in case of a longer illness. Her neighbour Jana is self-employed and is not covered for sickness benefits because there is no public/occupational or private social insurance scheme for the self-employed in her country.

Both become ill and are not able to work for several weeks but their income situation develops differently: whereas Maria is protected and gets a replacement income, Jana gets nothing to support her and her family until she recovers.

Daniel, a 23-year old student, worked as a self-employed biker for a food delivery company. During one of his deliveries, a car hit him. This accident caused a permanent injury.

As Daniel was not covered for accidents at work, he had to rely on his savings to pay for his medical treatment and rehabilitation. As a result, he cannot use his savings to pay for his rent and further studies.

SPECIAL **FEATURE**

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Steering investment: The European Commission proposes that the European Pillar of Social Rights provide the steer for future investment.

2021-2027 A plus for the European Social Fund

Proposal for future EU budget highlights and strengthens social investment

On 2 May 2018, the European Commission proposed a long-term budget (Multiannual Financial Framework, MFF) of €1 135 billion in commitments (equivalent to 1.11% of the EU's gross national income, without the United Kingdom) and €1 105 billion in payments, in 2018 prices, over the period from 2021 to 2027. Taking into account inflation, this is comparable to the size of the current 2014-2020 budget.

One of the novelties of this proposal is to give more visibility to social investment. Under a "Cohesion and Values" heading, a cluster called "Investing in People, Social Cohesion and Values" includes a new, single and comprehensive instrument called European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

ESF+ brings together the ESF, the Youth Employment Initiative, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, the Employment and Social innovation programme and the Health programme.

101 billion euros

For the first time, the MMF proposal specifies an amount for ESF+: 101.2 billion in current prices (including €100 billion under shared management with the Member States), bringing the ESF+ share of the overall Cohesion Policy budget from 23% in the current period to 27% from 2021 to 2027.

The €1.2 billion under direct management by the Commission would go to the Employment and social innovation (€761 million) and Health (€413 million) strands.

At least 25% of the €100 billion under shared management would be allocated to fostering social inclusion and at least 4% to fighting material deprivation. EU countries with a rate of young people neither in employment nor in education or training above the EU average in 2019, would be required to dedicate at least 10% of their ESF+ allocations to supporting youth employment.

Overall, the proposed MFF more than doubles the funds dedicated to supporting young people: It doubles the size of the Erasmus budget to €30 billion; and provides the European Solidarity Corps with a budget of €1.26 billion.

Steering investment

Together with the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, all these funds and programmes would make the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality on the ground.

Adopted in 2017 (see *Social Agenda* n°50), the Pillar will be also be rolled out with the support of Horizon Europe (research), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Asylum and Migration Fund.

As a result, right across the Cohesion and Values cluster and beyond, the Pillar will provide the steer for future investment, in particular through the annual cycle of the European Semester economic policy coordination process (see pages 16 and 24).

A new Reform Support Programme would provide financial incentives for key reforms identified as part of the European Semester, including in the areas of education and training and labour market policies.

Beyond the "Cohesion and Values" heading, a new InvestEU Fund would take over from the Investment Plan for Europe (ex-Juncker Plan). It would have a €4 billion window on "Social investment and skills" which would focus on social enterprises and microenterprises.

The MFF proposal also includes a 9-fold increase in investments in digital transformation and networks, complemented by investments supported by the InvestEU Fund via loans, guarantees and other financial instruments.

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund would be revamped. Its scope would be widened and its ceiling increased to €225 million a year (€1.6 billion altogether in current prices), compared to €170 million per year in the current period.

Seamless transition

On 29 May, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation that establishes an action framework for all the funds that are part of the "Investing in People, Social Cohesion & Values" cluster. And on 30 May, the Commission put forward a proposal for a Regulation laying down the specificities of ESF+ (see page 16 onwards).

The Commission now calls upon the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers to agree on its budgetary proposals before the end of 2019. This would make for a seamless transition between the 2014-20 framework and the new one, so that the projects may start on time and a maximum number of people may benefit from them.

More information: http://europa.eu/!Uf99Dq

Thirty years of cohesion policy

In 1988, cohesion policy was launched after a first series of EU enlargements (to Greece, in 1981, and to Spain and Portugal in 1986). Its aim was to promote and support the "overall harmonious development" of the Member States and regions of the European Economic Community, now the EU.

A whole series of funds were integrated within the framework of this overarching cohesion policy:

- The European Social Fund, (created in 1957, see *Social Agenda* n°47);
- the European Regional Development Fund (created in 1975);
- the Cohesion Fund (created in 1993, funding transport and environment projects in countries where the gross national income per inhabitant is less than 90% of the EU average);
- the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development;
- and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

From then on, those funds were programmed on a multiannual basis and managed in partnership with national, regional and local actors, including the social partners and civil society organisations.

For the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission proposes to turn cohesion policy into the largest item in the EU budget.

Investing in people: One of the novelties of the proposed 2021-2027 EU Multiannual Financial Framework is to give more visibility to social investment.

SPECIAL **FEATURE**

Andriana Sukova: Under the “Cohesion and values” heading, there is a specific cluster called “Investing in People, Social Cohesion and Values”.

"We are investing **€140 billion** in people"

The technicalities of the new legislation put forward by the European Commission in May for the 2021-2027 EU budgetary framework, explained by Andriana Sukova, Deputy Director-General of the Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion department, in charge of the European Social Fund.

Are the most ambitious options of the 2017 White Paper on the future of Europe, and its annex on the future social dimension of the EU, reflected in the European Commission proposals for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and for the ESF+ Regulation?

The MFF proposal aligns the Union's budget to our political priorities and has to address two objectives: to be fair to the Member States by giving them equal access to the EU budget; and to clearly link funding priorities to policy needs. It also tries to simplify the budget: the number of financial programmes has been substantially reduced, from 58 to 37.

But is it more social?

Yes, as for the first time we have a visible European Social Fund (ESF) budget included in the very structure of the MFF: 100 billion euros for the 2021-27 period! Ever since cohesion policy was created thirty years ago (see page 14), there had never been a predefined share of the budget set aside for the European Social Fund in the MFF structure itself. There was just one figure for "structural funds" (the ESF and the European Regional Development Fund, ERDF). For the 2014-2020 period, we managed for the first time to get a pre-defined percentage inserted into the Common Provisions Regulation. And now we have an actual budget indicated in the MFF itself. All Member States and regions will still be eligible for support by the structural funds or cohesion policy funding. And there will be a joint allocation method for cohesion funding which will still be based on GDP per capita but also on additional adjustment indicators reflecting the more global EU policy priorities.

What does that say about the next MFF?

Its structure is evolving compared to the 2014-2020 MFF. Under the big heading "Cohesion and values", there is a specific cluster called "Investing in People, Social Cohesion and Values". This is a clear demonstration of the importance the next EU budget will give to investing in people and rightly so: We are facing a rapidly evolving demographic and technological change. There will be less working-age people and they will have to be skilled and regularly up-skilled. We need to address this investment in people as a main prerequisite for increasing the competitiveness of the European economy.

So the concept of social investment is now truly acknowledged?

Absolutely, it's visible and for the first time the European budget can say: We are investing €140 billion in people, if you add up Erasmus, the European Solidarity Corps, and ESF+ (123.46 billion in 2018 prices, which makes up 140 billion for the 2021-27 period). Even if we have the best state of the art technology and production lines, we are lost if we don't have the people who can operate them! We cannot talk about a new industrial strategy if we don't have a new approach to people and to the skills that they need. This also explains why we have a substantial increase in the investments allocated to the Digital Europe programme: €12.9 billion. The Erasmus programme is being doubled. The European Solidarity Corps programme is also being increased.

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Explaining a robot hand: The Digital Europe programme is about very advanced digital skills while ESF+ will be about fostering and enhancing the basic digital skills of people.

The digital component is very important in the new MFF?

Definitely. Digital Europe is about very advanced digital skills, knowledge and competence, while ESF+ will be about fostering and enhancing the basic digital skills of people. In the European Globalisation Fund Regulation proposal, we are introducing the obligation of profiling all the people that have lost their job in terms of their digital competences, with a view to providing them with additional training to make them ready for the digitalised era. Supporting the New Skills Agenda for Europe (see *Social Agenda* n°45) is a priority, as well as supporting the Recommendation on the long-term unemployed (*Social Agenda* n°42). They will be turned into specific ESF+ objectives.

There is now a very strong link between cohesion policy and the European Semester process of economic policy coordination?

Indeed. In particular there will be a new Reform Delivery Tool, that will support reforms which have a very important spill-over effect on the other Member States, especially on those that are part of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The Reform Delivery Tool will focus on the more horizontal reforms that are needed, while the structural funds will carry on supporting the reforms that help the bodies, institutions and administrations that are implementing our funds or our policies. Through the European Semester, we will identify the challenges that the Member States have to address. We will establish good internal coordination between what the Member States will propose to invest through their Programmes under the Funds and what they will propose to do through the Reform Delivery Tool. If they can evaluate what investments they need to implement a particular structural reform within our policy area, they can safely use the Funds. If they cannot measure exactly the investment effort required, they can go through the Reform Delivery Tool because in this case, there will be a broader assessment of the potential impact of this reform on the economy of the Member State and on the European economy at large. Bear in mind, though, that the proposed amount for the Reform Delivery Tool is €25 billion, while the global budget for cohesion policy amounts to €372 billion! Of course, the global cohesion policy funding is not spent only on structural reforms, it's a lot about achieving a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe.

Helping senior citizens gain autonomy: social infrastructure is also about providing social services to people who need part-time assistance.

What about what we call "social infrastructure"?

It refers to facilities that, in our area, provide long term care, child care, health care in general… InvestEU, the new financial programme which will take over from the Juncker Plan and the European Investment Fund, will now be further developed to combine all the guarantees that the European budget can provide for investments in big projects. One of its four compartments will deal with social infrastructure investments. The Regulation proposed for governing InvestEU allows that some of the European structural investment funds also contribute, within this compartment, to increasing the possibility of getting loans guaranteed by the European budget to make some social infrastructure investments. If you take the demographic challenge, people are living longer and therefore need additional care and services. Well, social infrastructure is also about providing social services to people who need part-time assistance. This would free the working-age population so that it may join the labour market. Part of the working-age population will be taking care of these people in a professional capacity, as healthcare assistants. So we are talking both about material infrastructure and social investment. The ESF will continue to provide a lot of training and requalification, so that people may use new forms of support and new means of reaching out quickly to old people living alone when they have a problem.

Is the European Semester becoming more social or is the ESF becoming more economic?

The European Semester has already become very social in the current programming period. After the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights last November and the new Annual Growth Survey, the new Employment Guidelines and the new Social Scoreboard, social policy is really becoming a substantial focus of European Semester attention. This coincides with the economic cycle: we are now in an upward growth path and the economy is stabilised; we have lower unemployment levels; we have evident growth in almost all Member States. So now it's time to think about what the other key problems are. With the ESF+ Regulation, we want first of all to see that, out of the global investment of the ESF, at least 25% goes to social inclusion measures in each country. This will also include material assistance (the ex-Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived), the support for the long-term integration of migrants, for poverty reduction and access to social services. If we look at the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy, the one on taking 20 million people out of poverty is really far from being achieved. The economic crisis has led to such inequality that the anti-poverty objective really needs urgent and focused attention.


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Gardening training: At least 25% of ESF+ should go to social inclusion, including support for the long-term integration of migrants.

Is youth employment a priority across the board of the MFF too?

We have a specific objective on that but we want to safeguard it for those Member States where youth unemployment (and specifically young people who are neither in employment, education nor training) is above the EU average, so that they may definitely allocate a certain percentage to addressing youth employment actions and measures. In the current period, we see that young people that are pro-active benefit very quickly from the Youth Employment Initiative, while those who are not are really difficult to reach.

We are moving from "investment priorities" in the current MFF to "specific objectives" in the future one. What does that change in terminology reflect?

There has been a big attempt to harmonise and synchronise the different elements of the MFF, including the terminology it uses. For 2021-2027, we have the Financial Regulation as the main rule book for directly and indirectly managed funds; and the Common Provisions Regulation which will now cover all the shared-management funds. So we end up with two rule books: one for the direct and indirect management (by the European Commission), and the other one for shared management (with the national authorities). This will make at least the basic rules very clear to everyone: If you know the rules for one fund, you know them for all. In the fund-specific rules, we only develop further the specificities of ESF+, for example: 25% earmarking for social inclusion; the requirement to have a certain percentage allocated to young people's needs; or to have the material assistance programmed in a specific priority which will be subject to the simpler rules of the current FEAD regulation.

How will ESF+ be structured?

It will be made up of three elements. The first strand is the ESF, the traditional support to people as we know it today, implemented under shared management. Then we have two other strands which are under direct and indirect management: One is the Employment and Social Innovation strand, which covers the PROGRESS axis and the EURES axis, and the other is the Health strand because the health programme joins ESF+ (it will be more about prevention, disease control in public health and cross-border actions). These three strands will have two types of implementation modes and they will remain open to third countries, international organisations etc., with their own objectives. The Employment and Social Innovation strand is more in the remit of our policy scope while the Health one will be delegated to the Commission's Directorate General in charge of health.

There will be an increase in the national co-financing rates by the Member States…

As the global EU budget will be 15% smaller, with the United Kingdom leaving the EU, we need Member States to invest a bit more to keep the same level of investment intensity. We also have new priorities, such as defence and security. There is also a proposal to increase the EU's own resources, phase out the rebates etc. The European budget being a seven-year investment budget, it must be stable and really secure.

Extending the scope: The European Globalisation Fund will also be for supporting people who lost their job due to digitalisation and robotisation.

What about multi-fund programmes?

We are not excluding multi-fund programmes in the future, nor the regional level of programming: for the ESF: It makes sense that the level of programming coincides with the level of policy responsibility. The point about multi-fund programmes is the capacity of the managing authorities to implement them. In the current period, we see that there are major delays in implementing some multi-fund operational programmes. So in the next period, we will add a requirement linking them to the implementation in the current period, proving that there is enough capacity.

From one MFF to another, we try to simplify more and more: The simplified cost options will become the rule?

Yes, in the Common Provisions Regulation, the objective is that the Simplified Cost Options (SCO, see *Social Agenda* n°42) become the rule. The new financial regulation has introduced the possibility of paying not according to the costs but upon achieving the results and the conditions. We already have in the current Common Provisions Regulation a number of SCO provisions that can be carried over for all the funds. And in the ESF Regulation, we have already worked with many Member States over their national programme-specific SCOs, which we want to carry forward for the next programming period. So those Member States that have made the effort to have SCOs for any of their investments can continue using them in the next programming period.

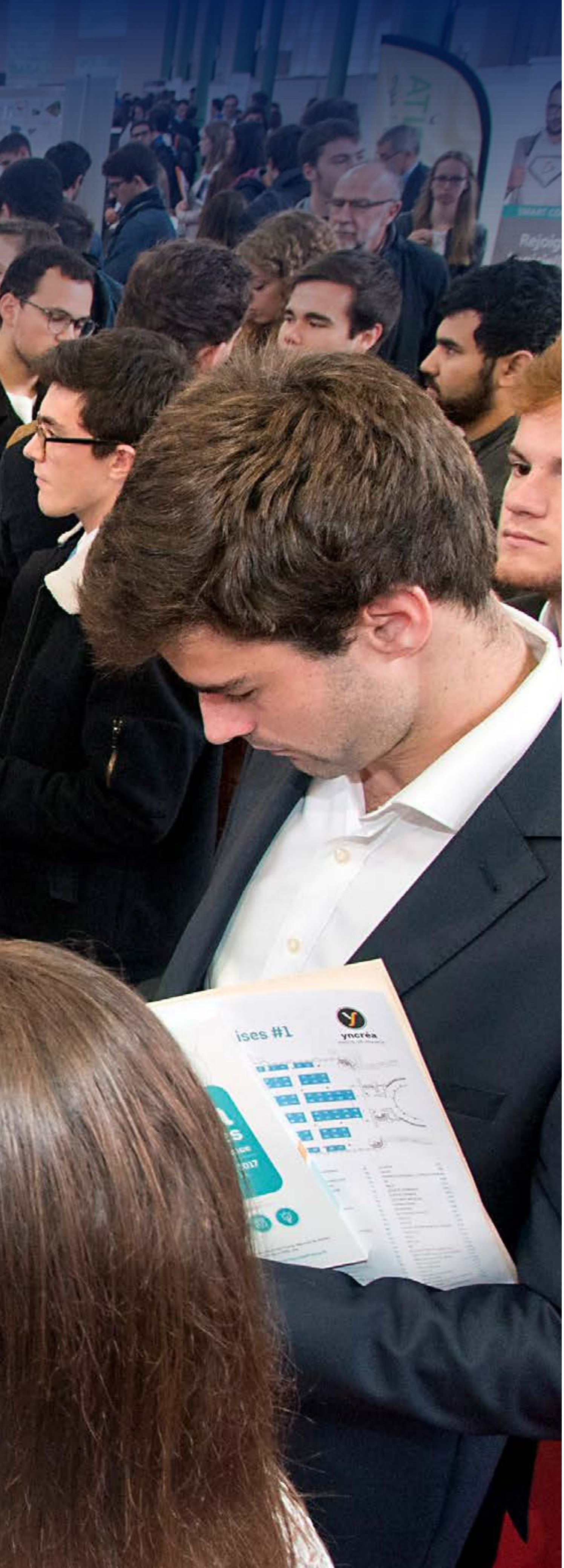
Flexibility is also the order of the day?

It has many dimensions. One very global flexibility element is the creation of an EU reserve of non-utilised commitments and payments. Another element is the possibility of funding projects that have already been checked and assessed by indirectly management instruments, with shared management funds. Yet another dimension is integrated operations, where you have funding from one fund following the rules of another one.

There is also some flexibility left for mid-term reviewing?

Yes, the budget is programmed until 2025, when there will be a mid-term review to reflect economic development. The European Semester process in 2024 will also be an opportunity to check if the priorities are still valid or whether new priorities need to be addressed during the last two years of the period. This will coincide with the political cycle: the end of the next Commission's mandate. And this is new. Several EU institutions called for the programming period to coincide with the political cycle, so that one Commission college and one European Parliament agree on certain priorities and certain actions and report on what was achieved at the end of their mandate.

A boost to Erasmus: Some countries have already decided that if some students want to go to Erasmus but cannot afford to do so, they can get financial support through the ESF.



The European Globalisation Fund (EGF) is part of the reserve?

Yes, as it is already but it will go beyond the current scope of globalisation or economic and financial crises: It will also be for supporting people who lost their job due to digitalisation and robotisation. Indeed, it is difficult to explain to a person in one company that he/she benefited from this very quick ad hoc personalised support because his/her job went to Vietnam, and to a person who lost his/her job in another company that he/she cannot get such support because his/her job went to a robot! It is necessary to extend the scope of EGF, reduce the number of redundancies needed to trigger it and to shorten the process and procedure for mobilising the funds. The EGF will remain ex-post support: While the ESF is about anticipating and helping companies and workers adapt to new challenges, the EGF is really a follow-up support to people after they have been hit by redundancies.

Erasmus is going to be considerably increased. Are we going to benefit from this?

Yes, Vocational Education and Training will benefit from it, as well as disadvantaged young people. Currently, this is already happening with the ESF. Some Member States have already decided that if young bright students want to go to Erasmus but can't afford to do so, they can get financial support through the ESF. It is a question of national priorities. Skills provision is the key element. We are establishing better cooperation at EU level between Erasmus and the ESF+ but also at national level, between the national education ministries and their Erasmus agencies, and the ESF managing authorities.

Has the European Pillar of Social Rights made a difference in designing the MFF and ESF+ proposals?

Its proclamation by EU leaders in November 2017 (see *Social Agenda* n°50) was really a major political push for drawing attention to social policy and acknowledging the priority to invest in people in the EU budget, in the wording and even in the narrative of the MFF. With the new Social Scoreboard annexed to the Joint Employment Report, we are in a position to guide the Member States' investments. The Pillar is a starting point. It is a general effort, not only on the part of the Commission but also of the Member States, as the funds under shared management are implemented by them. We are therefore supporting their effort to implement the principles of the Pillar and address their policy challenges. It was really important that the Member States recognise the Pillar as a global political priority.

More information: http://europa.eu/!tV86kd

ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION

Social **investment** breakthrough

The 2018 European Semester cycle intends to boost investment, including in people

Equality of opportunities is very much at the heart of the employment and social affairs-related country-specific recommendations put forward by the European Commission on 23 May, as part of the 2018 cycle of the European Semester process of EU-level economic and social policy coordination (see box).

Equal opportunities in education and training, to start with. In the words of European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, "the rapid pace of technological progress calls now more than ever for reforms to up-skill and re-skill European workers. Young people are entering an increasingly dynamic and flexible labour market, while older people have to work longer. This means we need to invest in people throughout their careers, so that everyone can choose their own desired career path".

Within this education priority, the quality issue is prominent: "Skills mismatches are still too high across Europe. Too many people face unequal access to quality education, due to their socio-economic status or migrant background. Also, other vulnerable groups face too many obstacles".

Recommendations in this area will be addressed to a majority of EU countries. More specifically, to Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania concerning the integration of disadvantaged groups (children, Roma people…) and to Austria, Belgium and France, to improve the employment prospects of people with a migrant background.

Glass ceiling

Equality of opportunity is also about equality between women and men. Care services and family benefits are essential for combining family life with career aspirations. Italy, Poland and Slovakia in particular will be called upon to break the "glass ceiling" in this respect and help get more women into work.

In the face of income inequality and persisting in-work poverty, the Baltic countries, Croatia and Spain in particular will have to focus more on social inclusion by improving the effectiveness of their social protection systems.

By and large, the EU countries have taken steps to reform their

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Drawing attention: Equality of opportunities is at the heart of the proposed employment and social affairs-related country-specific recommendations.


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Breaking the glass ceiling: Equality of opportunities is also about equality between women and men.

pension, healthcare and long-term care systems. Nevertheless, more efforts are still needed to make sure that people have adequate pensions, i.e. pensions that help maintain their income for the duration of their retirement and prevent old-age poverty (see page 8).

Throughout the EU, there needs to be more ownership by the national actors of the reforms called for by the European Semester process. Hungary and Romania in particular must involve more the social partner organisations in policy-making. Other Member States, such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, will need to pay attention to the capacity of social partners to play their full role in engaging in employment, social and other relevant policies.

Investing in reforms

In many ways, the 2018 European Semester cycle reflects a renewed emphasis on the necessity to invest, including in people. This emphasis on social investment is also apparent in the Commission proposals for the 2021-2027 budget EU (see page 14 onwards).

For the years 2021-2027, the European Commission wants to strengthen the link between the long-term EU budget and the medium-term European Semester: The Semester will help identify more clearly the EU's long-term investment priorities and steer EU funding towards them.

Alongside the country-specific recommendations, the Commission is therefore due to propose investment-related guidance. It will do so, both ahead of the EU Funds programming process (due to take place in the course of 2020) and half way through the next MFF (in 2024).

Beyond education and skills, many other employment and social issues may be singled out for priority investment, such as childcare provisions, improving the quality of public employment services and enhancing the efficiency of social protection in a broad sense, including access to healthcare and pension levels.

Fixing the roof

Since the creation of the European Semester in 2011, over two-third of the country-specific recommendations formulated every year through this EU economic coordination process have been substantially addressed or fully implemented.

To monitor the way EU countries implement the employment and social affairs-related recommendations, the European Commission now uses a new set of social performance indicators (the new "Social Scoreboard") that was introduced in 2017 as part of the European Pillar of Social Rights (see *Social Agenda* n°50).

In this policy area, some reforms have a high implementation rate, such as those that promote job creation on permanent contracts and address labour market segmentation between full-time open-ended contracts and other forms of employment.

On the other hand, recommendations concerning health and long-term care, as well as social inclusiveness and the quality of education, have not yet been sufficiently addressed.

Moreover, annual implementation rates are decreasing due to the present positive economic developments. This is an important concern for the Commission, which calls on the Member States to "fix the roof while the sun is shining".

More information: http://europa.eu/!WG77Rx

OTHER **VOICES**

What it means to be a **qualified** worker today

Erwan: He has been through it all, from being a temporary agency worker to having an open-ended contract.

A ship building supervisor, Erwan works in the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyards, in Saint-Nazaire, France. In March 2018, Chantiers de l'Atlantique delivered one of the biggest cruise ships in the world, Symphony of the Seas, to the American company Royal Carribean. Muriel Guin, head of a European Social Fund service in the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate General, had an interview with him last summer.

She thought Erwan's career was quite telling of what it means to be a qualified worker today: vocational education; temporary agency work as a stepping stone to a direct labour contract; restructuring; life-long learning and re-qualification; self-employment and entrepreneurship; sub-contracting, open-ended contracts and posting of workers... Erwan has seen it all!

You've been working since around 2000 in the Saint-Nazaire shipyards. Can you tell us how you got there and what did you do as your first job?
I got an Advanced Technician professional certificate in shipbuilding technics and I was contacted for a job by the Chantiers de l'Atlantique straight after I got my diploma.

Did you get a direct contract?
I worked a few months as a temporary agency worker and then I got a direct open-ended contract.

What were you doing?
I started in the customer and maintenance service. We dealt with the vessels' guarantees.

Then you worked on supervising the delivery of ships, right?
Yes and I spent five years on the shipbuilding site itself to deal with piping systems and fitting on board.

You stayed until 2010 and then that year, the situation of the shipyard was a bit difficult in terms of orders. What did you do?
Well I looked for another training, to try something else.

So you thought it was time to get out from the shipbuilding yards?
Yes indeed because there are always ups and downs in shipbuilding. So I took a training course to become a plumbing and heating specialist, for nine months, with a special training leave.

There was a redundancy plan, right?
Yes and there was some financial aid for reconversion. So I took advantage of it.

And after this re-training, what did you do?
I created my own plumbing and heating company. It lasted four years, until 2015. By then, shipbuilding was up again. So I thought it might be time to come back.

What steps did you take?
I checked whether companies that sub-contract with Chantiers de l'Atlantique were looking for supervisors, which is my profile. And indeed they were. So I started in a sub-contracting company in this area. They took me to supervise some technical areas.

And what did you supervise exactly?
I supervised pipefitters from foreign companies; they were posted workers.

What nationalities were they?
They were from Lithuania and Ukraine.

So you were an external provider until 2017 and in January 2017, you evolved again. What happened?
I was recruited again directly by the shipbuilding yards with an open-ended contract.

And what is your job now?
I continue supervising posted workers.

What nationalities are they this time?
They are from Romania and Bulgaria.

What is the name of the ship you are building now?
Symphony of the Seas.

And when will she be delivered?
In March 2018.

INTERVIEW

From Trade to Employment

Joost Korte is Director-General of the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG since 16 March 2018

Ambitious agenda: "We have a very ambitious agenda to push through before the 2019 European elections".

You moved into your new position soon after the EU leaders proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights and just before the European Commission put forward its 2021-2027 budgetary proposals…

Yes, I hit the ground running! Overall, the Commission has proposed a stable budget despite the fact the EU is losing one Member State. For the first time, there is a specific cluster on investing in people, under the Cohesion heading, and a precise amount of money for the European Social Fund (ESF+). In fact, the share of the ESF within the Cohesion package will increase.

What about the European Pillar of Social Rights?

It plays a steering role in the European Semester process of economic policy coordination, in the future ESF+ priorities and even in the skills and social investment window of InvestEU. We are also giving it teeth by legislating. We have a very ambitious agenda to push through the EU decision-making process before the 2019 European elections: on work-life balance; predictable working conditions; access to social protection for all; social security coordination; the Accessibility Act for people with disabilities, not to forget the future European Labour Authority…

Before, you were Deputy Director General of DG Trade. The latest generation of international trade agreements signed by the EU all have a chapter on sustainable development?

Yes, substantial ones and of which labour is a very important part. It is all about finding common ground and agreeing on minimum standards to which we must all abide, which is why the International Labour Organisation is so important. Trade liberalisation is a good thing and globalisation has a lot of advantages for many people. However, there are groups of people, regions and certain sectors of industry that lose out and this also must be addressed. We have our own values to defend, in which social rights and labour law play an important role.

Values is what the Pillar is all about?

Yes, this is why the European Pillar of Social Rights is so important: It expresses the type of society that we cherish. It therefore serves as a reference framework, showing the way we want to go, like a compass. It is a good narrative that calls for action. But signing up to the Pillar is one thing, putting it in action is another, as we can see with our legislative proposals that are going through the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers. We are determined to see those proposals through: They have the potential to improve the lives of millions of workers and their families, whether self-employed or engaged in new forms of work, and to facilitate people with disabilities' access to products and services within our internal market.

KE-AF-18-052-EN-N

Pension adequacy – A shift since 2015

Soon after the previous edition of this triennial report was adopted in 2015, more EU countries started refocusing their reform efforts towards pension adequacy: A shift from simply stabilising pension expenditure (see page 8).

The 2018 edition of the Adequacy Report analyses how current and future pensions help prevent old-age poverty and maintain the income of men and women for the duration of their retirement. In particular, it highlights the gender differences in pension entitlements, the pension adequacy of persons in non-standard or self-employment and the role of supplementary pensions.

It is also the first edition of this report to come out since the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017. Principle 15 of the Pillar recognises the right of all workers, including the self-employed and those on non-standard job contracts, to a pension that ensures adequate income, and the right of women and men to equal opportunities in acquiring pension rights.

Volume I is devoted to comparative analyses of pension adequacy in the EU. While Volume II provides a more detailed description of the pension system and pension adequacy in each of the 28 Member States.

Volume I catalogue n°: KE-01-18-457-EN-N Volume II catalogue n°: KE-01-18-458-EN-N

Link to the publication: http://europa.eu/!Hq76py

Robots at work: Employment shares in Europe

Want to know the share of non-automatable and automatable jobs in 24 European countries over the last three decades? This report reveals in which countries employment is the most at risk of disappearing because of automation, as well as those that have tended towards substituting labour with automation at a faster rate over the last two decades. It also reveals the jobs that are likely to stay with us in the future, to the extent that they are non-automatable.

Catalogue n°: KE-02-18-805-EN-N

Link to the publication: http://europa.eu/!bN68GU

The European Pillar of Social Rights: A pocket guide

Using everyday experiences from the job market, daily life and retirement, this pocket guide shows how citizens stand to benefit from the European Pillar of Social Rights. It also sets out the Pillar's 20 principles for a fairer and more inclusive EU, a pre-condition for achieving sustainable economic growth and addressing challenges such as the future of work, inequality and demographic change. #SocialRights

Catalogue n°: KE-01-18-212-EN-N

Link to the publication: http://europa.eu/!tk66Qx

Tackling child poverty: How EU funding can help

Child poverty remains a challenge across many EU countries. As of 2016, 26.4 % of children in the EU were at risk of, or experiencing, poverty or social exclusion. This paper, prepared for the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC), sets out the different EU programmes and funds available to fight poverty among children in the EU and promote their social inclusion and general well-being.

Catalogue n°: KE-04-18-430-EN-N

Link to the publication: http://europa.eu/!cH78nT

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https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/SocialAgenda2018