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Social Affairs & Social Services

Poverty risks since the crisis: are older people winning at the expense of the young?

One of the legacies of the crisis is an increased number of people at risk of poverty. These are people with household incomes below 60% of the median income in their country. The share of people at risk of poverty (or the 'at-risk-of-poverty rate', AROP) increased from 13.5 per cent in 2007 to 15.9 per cent in 2014 among the working-age population (20-64 years old) – a rise of almost 20% (EU average excluding Croatia and Malta).

The other age group that stands out are people over 65 years of age who saw their AROP rate decline from 20.3 per cent to 14.6 per cent, to a level below that of the working-age population. Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and, to a much lesser extent, Germany are the only exceptions and recorded increasing AROP rates for older people. There can be little doubt that young adults suffered badly from the crisis. A further increase in the AROP rate may well have been prevented by more young adults living with their parents rather than in their own households. The situation of the so-called Generation Y, or the millennials, i.e. those born between 1980s and 2000, has clearly become an issue of concern.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2559&furtherNews=yes>

Council Conclusions on 'Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: an Integrated Approach'

The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop an integrated approach to combat poverty and social exclusion by combining adequate income support, access to quality services and inclusive labour markets, while ensuring equal opportunities for women and men. This is stated in the **Conclusions** on 'Combating poverty and social exclusion: an integrated approach' that the **Council adopted on 16 June**.

The integrated approach is characterised by comprehensive, continuous and coordinated interventions throughout the life cycle and requires **cooperation among all stakeholders**:

- social partners,
- private partners,
- non-governmental organisations,
- civil society
- the target groups.

The Council conclusions invite the **Commission** to keep **prevention and fight against poverty high on the political agenda** and to support Member States in delivering on their national [EU2020 targets](#). By adopting these conclusions, all Member States have shown a renewed commitment to increasing their efforts to reduce the number of people living in poverty or social exclusion. Moreover, the Council invites the Commission to **monitor the situation in the field of poverty and social exclusion** in close cooperation with the Member States, while giving special consideration to innovative integrated approaches.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2564&furtherNews=yes>

Employment & Disability

Young people and the labour market: a tale of two NEETs

Those suffering the most from the great recession of 2009 were arguably young people. Many of those leaving school to enter the world of work saw their chances on the labour market dramatically reduced. From 2008 to 2013, the employment rate for the 15-24 age group dropped from 37.3% to 32.1%. Over the same period, the unemployment rate increased from 15.9% to reach the historical peak of 23.7% in 2013.

However, neither the unemployment, nor the employment rate is a good reflection of the labour market problems that young people face. Indeed, many of them are not available for the labour market because they are in education or training. The attention of policy makers therefore shifted to the new concept of NEETs. NEET is an acronym that emerged from the UK in 1999 and was adopted worldwide to refer to young people 'Not in education, employment or training'. NEETs can be subdivided into those who are looking for a job (unemployed) and those who are not looking for a job (inactive). Young NEETS are seen as a particularly important group to focus on in a timely manner as there fears that this status could scar them for their entire working life with serious implications not only for the individuals concerned, but also for the future of our economy and society. In the EU as a whole, NEET rates soared to 13.2 % in 2012.

Encouragingly, in 2015 the youth unemployment rate in the EU has come down to 20.3%, the employment rate increased to 33.1% and the NEET rate also has fallen to 12%. Those 'in education and training' have been on a steady increase, reaching 65.8% in 2015. These are promising developments.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2551&furtherNews=yes>

Employment and Social Situation Quarterly indicates less long-term unemployed, more convergence between Member States

On 28th of June, the Commission published its summer edition of the Employment and Social Situation Quarterly review (ESSQR).

The [review](#) confirmed an **increase of the overall employment rate**, for both the EU and the euro area – an increase representing 3 million more employed people in the EU than one year before. The overall **long-term unemployment** rate, at the other hand, **decreased** by 0.6 pp compared to a year before and stands now at 4.3% of the labour force. This is the largest reduction since the first decline in long-term unemployment observed in 2014.

In addition, for the first time since the start of the economic recovery, the number of long-term unemployed dropped more strongly than the number of people unemployed for less than two years. Finally, this season's edition also shows a continuous improvement and convergence among Member States regarding **youth unemployment**, which has decreased more strongly in countries most affected by the crisis.

Commenting on the review, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, said: "These positive data show that efforts to create jobs and fight unemployment at EU and national level are starting to pay off.

However, the review also indicates that, despite the improved long-term unemployment rate, it remains a challenge to reach those furthest away from the labour market. For inactive NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training and not actively looking for a job), for example, there has been little change both at EU and Member State level. I therefore hope that, together with the Member States, we can make work as quickly as possible of initiatives such as the [Recommendation on Long-Term Unemployment](#) and the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#)."

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2566&furtherNews=yes>

Key EU contribution to decent work at the 105th International Labour Conference

Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker was the guest of honour of this year's International Labour Conference, the supreme body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), that took place in Geneva over May-June 2016. He made a vibrant [pledge](#) to social Europe, youth employment and social dialogue at the World of Work Summit. Together with Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility [Marianne Thyssen](#), he praised the good EU-ILO cooperation, promoted [labour rights](#) worldwide, stressed the importance of ILO standards and highlighted the need to reflect on the future of work, as do the ILO in view of its Centenary in 2019 and the Commission through the consultation launched on a [European pillar of social rights](#).

Supported by the work of Commission services, the EU Delegation in Geneva and the Council Presidency, the EU and its Member States made a key contribution to the work and outcomes of the Conference. Comprehensive guidance on [decent work in global supply chains](#) could be adopted, which address due diligence, cross border [social dialogue](#), trade, transparency, public procurement and international initiatives and provide an ambitious role for the ILO in this field. An informal Ministerial Meeting to which Commissioner Thyssen contributed, explored in addition how Occupational Safety can be promoted in global supply chains.

Further conclusions were drawn on the [application of international labour standards](#) for migrant workers and in 24 country cases which were considered as requiring specific attention.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2563&furtherNews=yes>

Education & Vocational Training

Ten actions to help equip people in Europe with better skills

The Commission has adopted a new and comprehensive Skills Agenda for Europe. The aim is to ensure that people develop a broad set of skills from early on in life and to make the most of Europe's human capital, which will ultimately boost employability, competitiveness and growth in Europe. New Skills Agenda for Europe calls on Member States and stakeholders to improve the quality of skills and their relevance for the labour market.

According to studies, 70 million Europeans lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills. This puts them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. On the other hand, a large number of Europeans, particularly high-qualified young people, work in jobs that do not match their talents and aspirations. At the same time, 40% of European employers report that they cannot find people with the right skills to grow and innovate. Finally, too few people have the entrepreneurial mindset and competences to start their own business and keep adapting to evolving requirements of the labour market.

Increasing skills levels, promoting transversal skills and finding ways to better anticipate the labour market's needs, including based on dialogue with the industry, are therefore essential to improve people's chances in life, and support fair, inclusive and sustainable growth as well as cohesive societies.

To help tackle skills challenges, the Commission will launch 10 actions which will address these issues and make skills more visible and improve their recognition at local, national and EU levels, from schools and universities to the labour market.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2039_en.htm

Health & Medical Rehabilitation

State of Health in the EU: Commission pools expertise to support health policies in EU countries

On 17th of June at the EPSCO Health Council in Luxembourg, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, announced the **State of Health in the EU** initiative for 2016-17. With this initiative, the Commission will bring together internationally recognised expertise to provide Member States with evidence on health that is relevant to their specific country context and that can help maximise the effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of their health systems.

The *State of Health in the EU* comprises four components with the following timeline:

1. November 2016: publication of the "Health at a Glance: Europe 2016" report prepared by the OECD in cooperation with the Commission. The structure of this report will be aligned to the objectives of the [2014 Communication on effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of health systems](#).
2. November 2017: a set of 28 individual country health profiles developed by the OECD and the Observatory in cooperation with the Commission. These expert-driven, analytical documents will provide complementary data and indicators, and emphasise the particular characteristics and challenges of each Member State.
3. November 2017: a Commission analysis accompanying the 28 country health profiles, giving Member States a succinct overview of the information provided in the first two products, linking them to the broader EU agenda and emphasising cross-cutting policy implications.
4. From December 2017: exchanges between individual EU countries and the Commission, the OECD and the Observatory, to discuss concrete implications of country findings, and help Member States make the best use of gathered evidence.

Read more:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_food-safety/dyna/eneu/eneu.cfm?al_id=1696

Research & Development

3D printing for personalised medical devices

The EU is investing in research to help European manufacturers remain competitive in a growing market for personalised medical products. Two projects are developing ways to use 3D printing to make tailor-made components for the benefit of patients. Advances in Additive Manufacturing (AM), often referred to as 3D-Printing, provide a resource- and cost-efficient way to produce highly complex and customised components, single parts or small batches of products. There is great potential for medical applications, including prostheses and implants that are highly customised for a perfect fit.

However, manufacturing such complex parts requires the development of new manufacturing processes and machines that integrate design and appropriate controls to ensure products meet strict safety and health specifications.

Symbionica's approach is to focus on the development of a 3D-Printer that can make customised prostheses on demand. The printer will be able to make complex products in one processing step, incorporating different types of materials – a real novelty in the AM field. The researchers plan to integrate the printer in a platform on which designers, engineers and other stakeholders can collaborate to customise prostheses. Symbionica is also creating what the project describes as a 'bionic through-life sensing system'. This would provide ongoing support to patients fitted with prostheses. The assistance would include personalised exercise plans and sensors to monitor patients' health conditions.

Read more:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?&artid=39876&caller=AllHeadlines

Other relevant EU Affairs

Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Thyssen sign joint statement 'new start for social dialogue'

On 27 June, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue Valdis Dombrovskis together with Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, signed on behalf of the Commission a statement on a 'new start for social dialogue'. The statement was co-signed by the European cross-industry social partners (ETUC, Businesseurope, UEPME, CEEP) and by the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The statement is part of the '[New Start for Social Dialogue](#)' initiated by President Juncker at a [high level conference on 5 March 2015](#) together with European, national and sectorial social partners and with the other EU institutions.

At that conference, social partners and the Commission agreed on

- the need for a **more substantial involvement of the social partners** in the European Semester,
- a **stronger emphasis on capacity building** of national social partners,

- a **strengthened involvement of social partners** in EU policy and law-making
- a **clearer relation between social partners' agreements and the better regulation agenda**.

The statement underlines the **fundamental role of the European social dialogue** as a significant component of EU employment and social policy making. It identifies actions to be undertaken by the signatories with the aim of further strengthening social dialogue at EU and national level.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2562&furtherNews=yes>

Stronger EU action to better tackle violent radicalisation leading to terrorism

Delivering on its European Agenda on Security, the European Commission is today presenting further steps to support Member States in preventing and countering violent radicalisation leading to terrorism. Responsibility for addressing violent radicalisation leading to terrorism lies primarily with Member States and actors at local, regional and national level. However radicalisation, like terrorism, knows no borders. This was evident in the events leading up to the attacks in Paris and Brussels. That is why the European Commission is setting out a number of initiatives to support Member States in their efforts across several policy areas, from promoting inclusive education and common values, to tackling extremist propaganda online and radicalisation in prisons..

The Commission outlined actions in seven specific areas where cooperation at EU level can bring added value.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2177_en.htm

Investment Plan for Europe: European Fund for Strategic Investments to be extended following successful first year

One year after the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) came into force, the Commission looks at what has worked well in the Investment Plan, what can be improved, and how to advance. Eighteen months after President Jean-Claude Juncker launched the Investment Plan for Europe, and a year after the start of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the Commission takes stock of achievements to date. Today the Commission shares the lessons learned and makes clear proposals for an ambitious future of the EFSI.

The **European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)** is at the heart of this Commission's Investment Plan. Managed by the EIB Group, it is firmly on track to deliver on mobilising at least EUR 315 billion in additional investments in the real economy by mid-2018. The EFSI provides a first loss guarantee, so that the EIB has been able to invest in more projects, sometimes riskier projects, and to invest sooner than without the EFSI. Overall, the EFSI is already active in 26 Member States and is expected to trigger EUR 100 billion in investment with the approvals given so far. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have benefited particularly from the EFSI so far. To encourage more EFSI activity in the Member States lagging behind so far, the EIB and the Commission will increase their local outreach.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1933_en.htm

EU funded programmes

- Erasmus+ [new calls 2016](#) and [Programme Guide](#)
- DG EMPL – PROGRESS / EaSI [calls](#)
- Horizon 2020 – various [new calls](#)

Calendar of upcoming events

Date	Title	Venue	Contact
10/06/2016	2016 Work Forum on the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities	Brussels	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1112&furtherEvents=yes
20/06/2016	New Skills Agenda for Europe - Launch event	Brussels	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1115&furtherEvents=yes
24/06/2016	FreSsco seminar: Problems and obstacles in free movement of workers and coordination of social security schemes	Warsaw (Poland)	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1095&furtherEvents=yes
05/07/2016	FreSsco seminar: Cross-border migration of workers from Bulgaria	Sofia (Bulgaria)	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1096&furtherEvents=yes
09/09/2016	FreSsco seminar: EU non-discrimination law and intra-EU mobility	Paris (France)	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1097&furtherEvents=yes
13/09/2016	FreSsco seminar: Coordination of type-A invalidity benefits	Hungary	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1098&furtherEvents=yes
23/09/2016	FreSsco seminar: Selected topics related to intra-EU mobility	Estonia	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1099&furtherEvents=yes
26/09/2016	FreSsco seminar: Solidarity and migration	Austria	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1100&furtherEvents=yes
13/10/2016	FreSsco seminar: Key issues relating to social security coordination and free movement of workers in Romania	Romania	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1101&furtherEvents=yes
28/10/2016	FreSsco seminar: Social tourism within the EU; legal and practical reflections on a political debate	The Netherlands	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1102&furtherEvents=yes
04/11/2016	FreSsco seminar: Recent developments in the coordination of family benefits, unemployment benefits and student aid	Luxembourg	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1103&furtherEvents=yes