



EPR Public Affairs e-bulletin

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Social Affairs & Social Services p.2

First EU social finance deal in Europe, to support €33m for social enterprises in France

Working parents the best protection against child poverty

ESPN Thematic Report on minimum income schemes

Toolkit for better quality of jobs and services in the Personal Care and Household sectors published

Employment & Disability p.3

The changing meaning of 'working age'

Employment: Quarterly Review highlights steady improvement in activity rate in the EU

Autism and Employment Survey 2016

Creating Labour Market Conditions Favourable for Work-Life Balance

Mobile workers and migrants in the EU: huge untapped potentials

Education & Vocational Training p.5

Education as a tool for the economic integration of migrants

Other relevant EU Affairs p.5

New start for social dialogue – one year on

Commission presents options for reforming the Common European Asylum System and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe

EU funded programmes p.7

Funding

Calendar of events

Social Affairs & Social Services

First EU social finance deal in Europe, to support €33m for social enterprises in France

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Société financière de la NEF (la NEF) have signed the first Social Entrepreneurship guarantee agreement aimed at supporting more than 300 social enterprises in France under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). This new guarantee agreement allows La Nef to provide a total of €33 million to over 300 micro and social entrepreneurs, many of whom face difficulties in accessing credit from traditional banking sources. Social entrepreneurs including **fair** trade producers, organic farmers and micro-borrowers in the renewable energy sector will be able to benefit from loans at a reduced interest rate, without providing collateral under the EU supported programme.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2501&furtherNews=yes>

Working parents the best protection against child poverty

The Dutch government's declared aim is to move from a welfare state to a "participation Children are more likely to live in poverty than adults. Almost twenty million children in Europe, more than 1 child in 5, live below the poverty threshold (poverty rate of 21.1% compared to 16.3% among people over 18 years old). Since the economic crisis, child poverty has increased in most EU countries. This is a worrying trend as the living conditions and the environment in which children are brought up are highly important for their healthy development. Children are more vulnerable to the devastating effects of poverty and its long-term consequences than adults are. Hence, specific attention should be accorded to children living in low-income families to guarantee equal opportunities for all children and to break the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Living in poverty often means limited access to health care, higher risk of school drop-out and later unemployment and poverty, and not reaching one's full potential in general.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2505&furtherNews=yes>

ESPN Thematic Report on minimum income schemes

Minimum income (MI) schemes play a vital role in alleviating the worst impacts of poverty and social exclusion in many countries. However, in too many countries MI schemes still fall short of ensuring a decent life for the most vulnerable in society. Progress in improving them in recent years has been disappointing.

The most common weaknesses include

- inadequate levels of benefit;
- failure to cover all those in need;
- low levels of take-up;

- a limited impact in reducing poverty.

Despite some improvements, in many countries there is still not sufficient emphasis on developing an integrated and tailored approach to support those receiving benefits and to help them integrate into society and, as far as possible, into the labour market. The adequacy and effectiveness of MI schemes are fundamental building blocks if the objective of the current Commission to ensure a “triple-A” social rating for Europe is to be achieved. The [35 country reports](#) prepared by the independent experts of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) highlight and assess the contribution of minimum income schemes to both preventing and alleviating poverty and social exclusion, and fostering an active inclusion approach to promoting social investment.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2506&furtherNews=yes>

Toolkit for better quality of jobs and services in the Personal Care and Household sectors published

The For Quality! project has published a Toolkit with a selection of good practices among its partners, including projects developed within Social Services Europe membership. The toolkit aims to promote quality services and jobs in PHS sectors, as well as their transferability, among policy makers, PHS organisations and relevant stakeholders.

Read the toolkit: <https://forquality.eu/publications/>

Employment & Disability

The changing meaning of ‘working age’

Working age’ is usually defined as 15 to 64 years. This definition is for example used for the ‘old-age dependency ratio’, with people aged 65 and over being labelled ‘dependent’. However, almost five million people over 65 were in employment in 2014, a remarkable increase of 48% from 3.3 million in 2004 to 4.9 million in 2014. The employment rate of people aged 65-69 has reached 11.7%; for the entire population over the age of 65, the employment rate reaches 5.5%. Almost all these workers aged 65 and over are entitled to some pension, and recent reforms that raise pension ages above 65 did not yet apply to this age cohort. So, why do these people work beyond age 65? Is it because they cannot make ends meet with their pensions?

Eurofound, the EU agency for the improvement of living and working conditions, found that earnings from work make up about 7% of the individual income of all people aged 65+, but for about two-fifths, it represents over 80% of their income. The fact that during the crisis the number of people aged 65+ in employment has risen sharply suggests that many need to work to make ends meet. However, this increase was not a disruption, but rather a continuation of a long-term trend.

Eurofound has estimated that roughly one fifth of people 65+ who are in employment work purely because of financial need. This estimate was based on the European Social Survey (ESS) 2010 which asked whether people ‘would work if they would not need the money’, and the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) 2011 results on work satisfaction. It was argued that for the other four-fifths, income may be an important factor contributing

to their quality of life, but other factors also play a role; seeing work as a way to maintain social contacts, to continue self-actualisation, to remain active and healthy, and to contribute to society.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2500&furtherNews=yes>

Employment: Quarterly Review highlights steady improvement in activity rate in the EU

The slow but consistent recovery of the EU's economy continues, accompanied by a gradual increase in the employment rate and a gradual decline in the unemployment rate.

Such developments reflect the economic and employment growth in most Member States, although for a few Member States the economic and labour market recovery has not been as strong. To better understand the gradual labour market recovery, the new edition of the EU Employment and Social Situation – Spring 2016 Quarterly Review published today looks at the evolution of activity rates (or labour market participation) of different age groups.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&langId=en&pubId=7884&visible=0&>

Autism and Employment Survey 2016

Many autistic people who want to work face huge barriers to working because of a lack of support and the attitudes of employers. Later this year, we will be campaigning to change this. You can help us by filling in our survey so we have the most up-to-date information on the experiences of autistic people and employment. It does not matter if you do not work now or have never worked, as we want to know about your experiences.

Fill the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JJH9STF?utm_source=The%20National%20Autistic%20Society&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=6944837_April%20E-newsletter&utm_content=Employment%20survey%20image&dm_i=YA3,44UO5,A3PA9P,F2VU7,1

Creating Labour Market Conditions Favourable for Work-Life Balance

Following the announcement by the European Commission of a new initiative called “New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families”, the European Parliament Committees EMPL and FEMM, decided to draft jointly, an own initiative report on “Creating Labour Market conditions Favourable for Work-Life Balance”. The report is to serve as an input into the Commission’s Roadmap and provide the position of the Parliament on the work-life balance policies. The co-rapporteurs are: Tatjana Zdanoka (Greens/EFA) for EMPL and Vilija Blinkeviciute (S&D) for FEMM. In order to start this process and receive inputs, the Committees organized a public hearing on 22 March 2016, giving the floor to a pool of experts.

Read COFACE response to the public consultation: <http://www.coface-eu.org/en/upload/ERP/WLB%20consultation%20-%20COFACE%20response.pdf>

Mobile workers and migrants in the EU: huge untapped potentials

There is no doubt that immigration will stay high on the political agenda in the coming years – and it is important that the issue is debated on the basis of solid evidence. A chapter in the recently published Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015 review tries to provide some much-needed facts and figures. It looks at opportunities and challenges of mobility and migration in the EU from the angle of economic growth: To what extent do intra-EU mobility and third-country migration contribute to growth today and what contribution could we hope for in the future? The main determinant for this is naturally their labour market performance. One can conclude that certain groups have problems to capitalise on their individual human capital on their host country's labour market. Member States fail to tap all available sources of growth – a great loss for individuals and society alike.

Read more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2464&furtherNews=yes>

Education & Vocational Training

Education as a tool for the economic integration of migrants

A new report commissioned by the European Commission has been recently published on the role of education in the economic integration of migrants. Integration of migrants is at the top of the EU political agenda. The refugee crisis has put education systems under extreme pressure. Member States have identified the most burning issues, where peer counselling and other forms of collaboration are being deployed in order to find appropriate responses at EU level. Many of these challenges are discussed in the EENEE report, such as the need to organise efficient language teaching for migrants, how to adapt teacher education and enhance intercultural awareness, how to assess skills and qualifications of migrants and segregation versus de-segregation in schools. The EENEE report confirms the persisting inequalities and differences between Member States in terms of educational achievement and subsequent economic and social integration. In the concluding part of the report some potentially successful strategies are identified, which might feed into the ongoing debate.

Read more: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2016/0331-economic-integration-migrants_en.htm

Other relevant EU Affairs

New start for social dialogue – one year on

Spring Tripartite Social Summit focuses on "A strong partnership for job creation and inclusive growth – taking stock of the new start for social dialogue". In March 2015, 30 years after the beginning of the so-called "[Val Duchesse](#)" process, involving European social partners in building the internal market, the European Commission together with the social partners organised a [high-level conference to kick off a "new start for social](#)

[dialogue](#)". The meeting launched a renewed partnership between social partners and the EU institutions to focus on a number of priorities to promote growth and create jobs. Over the last twelve months, the Commission, the Council and the social partners have delivered on this new start through a number of concrete actions.

What was agreed upon last year?

The high level conference gathered the leaders of the EU institutions and the European and national social partners at cross-industry and sectoral levels. President Juncker highlighted that the new start for social dialogue should take place at both EU and national level, and in the context of both tri-partite and bi-partite social dialogue. Social partners and the Commission agreed that the new start for social dialogue should aim for (1) more substantial involvement of the social partners in the European Semester, (2) a stronger emphasis on capacity building of national social partners, (3) a strengthened involvement of social partners in EU policy- and law-making and (4) a clearer relation between social partners' agreements and the Better Regulation agenda.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-823_en.htm

Commission presents options for reforming the Common European Asylum System and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe

On 6th of April, the European Commission is launching the process for a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), presenting: options for a fair and sustainable system for allocating asylum applicants among Member States; a further harmonisation of asylum procedures and standards to create a level playing field across Europe and thereby reduce pull factors inducing measures to reduce irregular secondary movements; and a strengthening of the mandate of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). At the same time, the Commission is setting out measures to ensure safe and well-managed pathways for legal migration to Europe.

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "The refugee crisis has shown the weaknesses in our Common European Asylum System. Let there be no doubt: those who need protection must continue to receive it, and they should not have to put their lives in the hands of people smugglers. But the current system is not sustainable. Different national approaches have fuelled asylum shopping and irregular migration, while we have seen in the ongoing crisis that the Dublin rules have placed too much responsibility on just a few Member States. In the immediate term we have to apply the existing law to stabilise the situation. Beyond that, we need a sustainable system for the future, based on common rules, a fairer sharing of responsibility, and safe legal channels for those who need protection to get it in the EU." uncker Commission's top priority is to get Europe growing again and to increase the number of jobs without creating new debt.

As part of the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration, this Communication sets out the different paths to move towards a more humane and efficient European asylum policy, as well as a better managed legal migration policy. Based on the feedback it receives to this Communication, the Commission will then come forward with appropriate proposals.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1246_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
13/04/2016	Guiding the implementation of Personal and Household Service policies	Brussels	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1092&furtherEvents=yes
19-20/2016	Workshop: Open-Source Software in Robotics and Automation	Stuttgart (Germany)	https://eu-robotics.net/cms/index.php?idcat=170&idart=4363
19-20/04/2016	Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality: the role of family policies and exchange of good practices	Amsterdam (The Netherlands)	http://www.teamaroundthechild.com/allnews/events/2262-sustainable-development-goals-and-gender-equality-the-role-of-family-policies-and-exchange-of-good-practices-april-2016-amsterdam-netherlands.html
20-21/05/2016	European Youth Event - 2016	Strasbourg (France)	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1075&furtherEvents=yes
26-28/05/2016	Europe in Action conference on Inclusive Education	Lisbon (Portugal)	http://www.e-include.info/news/372-register-europe-in-action-2016-lisbon
26/05/2016	FreSsco seminar: Impact of recent developments at EU level on entitlements under EU law on freedom of movement and social security	Dublin (Ireland)	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1094&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&eventId=1103&furtherEvents=yes
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