



Dear Reader,

The official presentation of our book “Facts and Figures on Long-term Care – Europe and North America” took place in Budapest this month. Conference details can be found on page 4 of this Newsletter.

Sincerely yours,

Annette Hexelschneider

Head of Knowledge and Information Management Support Unit

Policy Brief

Looking into the Future: Challenges for Balancing Public Finances and Pension Incomes in EU Countries

The challenges of fiscal sustainability that EU Member States face are well documented, and the focus is justifiably on addressing them. But, the impact of policy reforms now on the future for pension systems and incomes of future retirees is less clearly articulated: this Policy Brief has explored this issue of pension sustainability in EU countries. Equally, the need for sustained policy remedies to the current economic crises is widely recognised. Yet, this acceptance has masked the relationship between the action taken now and the extent and nature of fiscal and social challenges arising in the future: this Brief raises the awareness for policy-makers of impacts of decisions on policy issues upon the pension structures and income arrangements for future pensioners.

As an essential context, this Brief examines the financial sustainability of public finances in EU states. This is followed by a forward glimpse at the likely evolution of pension incomes in these countries, using projections made available by the European Commission during 2009. It also examines how the pension reform responses to financial sustainability challenges have influenced the reshaping of pension systems into a variety of systems that are less redistributive in some cases and more socially protective in others. These impact-of-pension-reforms results are derived from the OECD simulations of pension income entitlements for future retirees. This briefing follows on from an earlier Policy Brief on “Poverty Risks for Older People in EU Countries – An Update”, which stratified EU countries according to the poverty risks faced by its older populations (aged 65 or more) in 2008.



The next few years will undoubtedly be a crucial time as EU national governments look for the ‘magic formula’ in the shape of proactive economic and social policies which not only strengthen their recovery from the crisis, but also help them stay clear of dangers of national insolvency and avoid the damage to future generations that would be a failure to attend to issues of pension sustainability. Achieving this delicate balance requires not only the political will to make tough policy decisions, but also the ability to persuade the public that its own interest requires it to make some current sacrifice to ensure sustainability of pension systems. What has become clear is the need for a continued high-quality and independent evidence base to address both current and future fiscal and social issues: the better the evidence, the easier it becomes to formulate policy responses and persuade the public about the need for, and the consequences of change.

Read more about: [Policy Brief](#)

For further information please contact: [Asghar Zaidi](#)

Projects

European Observatory on the Social Situation

The Social Situation Report by the European Commission takes a closer look at long-term social trends in the EU in order to provide up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive information on the social situation. In 2009, it focused on housing, and possible effects of the recession.

The housing part is based on research of the European Observatory project. In the framework of the project, Orsolya Lelkes and Eszter Zólyomi wrote a research note on “Quality of Housing and the Link to Income”.

Read more about: [report “The Social Situation in the European Union 2009”](#), [project, research note “Quality of housing and the link to income”](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#), [Eszter Zólyomi](#)



Events

Upcoming Events

15-16 April, Vienna (Austria): EuroREACH

The EuroREACH project – a DG7 Framework Project involving eight partner institutions/organisations – is a coordinated action aiming to overcome the compartmentalization of data collection and analysis of chronic diseases in a patient-oriented, disease-based perspective both on a national and European level.

The kick-off meeting takes place in Vienna 15-16 April. During this meeting, first steps will be taken towards developing a tool for access to health data across Europe

Read more about: [project](#)

For further information please contact: [Catharina Hjortsberg](#)

Past Events

3 February, Minsk (Belarus): Population Ageing and Pension Reform: Global Experience

In this workshop for the Members of Parliament of the Republic of Belarus, organized by the World Bank and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Alexandre Sidorenko gave a presentation on “Responding to Challenges of Population Ageing: The Social Security Dimension”.

Read more about: [event](#)

For further information please contact: [Alexandre Sidorenko](#)

16 February, Vienna (Austria): Poverty and Social Exclusion in the European Union

Orsolya Lelkes spoke about “Poverty and Social Exclusion in the European Union” at the invitation of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – a body of the European Union (EU) based in Vienna.

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

**17 February, Linz (Austria):****Pensionisten: “Graue Gefahr” oder Wegbereiter für Nachkommen
(Pensioners: “Grey Danger” or Pioneers Helping the Next Generation)**

Bernd Marin delivered a speech in the framework of the Aschermittwochsgespräche “Wirtschaft & Ethik” (Ash Wednesday Talks on “Economy & Ethics”) of the Savings Bank Organisation Upper Austria, the Federation of Austrian Industries in Upper Austria and the Johannes Kepler University Linz.

Read more about: [event](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)

19 February, Brussels (Belgium): INTERLINKS – Health Systems for Long-Term Care for Older People in Europe. Modelling the Interfaces and Links between Prevention, Rehabilitation, Quality of Services and Informal Care. First Sounding Board Conference

The first Sounding Board Conference of the project with 20 selected “change agents” who are influential in policy development and putting evidence into practice on long-term care in Europe, took place in Brussels. The experts, representing provider and user organisations such as the Social Platform, Eurocarers or Alzheimer Europe, as well as research and policy on a European level (DG Employment, DG SANCO, WHO Europe, OECD) commented on first overview papers that were realized during the first project phase. The presentations and discussions focused on prevention and rehabilitation, informal care and quality development in long-term care.

The Sounding Board will gather twice during the project and its members will also be invited to the final conference of the project. These occasions of interactive exchange will serve to share the (interim) results with these “change agents” on a European level and to take their views and experiences on board.

Read more about: [project](#)

For further information please contact: [Kai Leichsenring](#)

22-23 February 2010, Budapest (Hungary):**Workshop “Long-Term Care in Europe – Discussing Trends and Relevant Issues”**

The Szociálpolitikai és Munkaügyi Intézet (SZMI) of Hungary and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV) co-organised the workshop entitled “Long-term Care in Europe – Discussing Trends and Relevant Issues”, in Budapest.

This workshop brought together several experts to debate issues that are high on the policy agenda of long-term care for dependent older people, while also providing the opportunity to publicly present the European Centre Vienna publication “Facts and Figures on Long-term Care – Europe and North America”.



The contents of the book set the scene for a lively discussion during the two days of the workshop, around themes such as: coordination of health and social services, user choice in accessing long-term care, financing of long-term care and carers (workforce, migrant carers, etc.). The discussion also provided useful information to be taken on board of the next edition of Facts and Figures, scheduled for 2011.

The presentations will soon be made available on our website. Newsletter subscribers will receive an alert.

Read more about: [agenda](#)

For further information please contact: [Frédérique Hoffmann](#), [Ricardo Rodrigues](#)

23 February, Vienna (Austria): Economic Implications of Population Ageing: Austria in a Comparative Context

At a colloquium of the Vienna Institute of Demography, Asghar Zaidi highlighted the position of Austria in comparison to other EU countries with respect to the financial sustainability of public finances as well as the potential impact of the crisis.

The key findings are that Austria is a medium-risk country with regard to the long-term sustainability of public finances, but its sustainability gap position has worsened in recent times – from 0.3% to 4.7% of the GDP. Austria's current debt GDP ratio at ~70% is close to the EU average but above the 60% ceiling – posing risks for the future.

Austria will be observing a strong fall in the benefit ratio (from 55% in 2007 to 39% in 2060), which raises greater risks for social and political sustainability in the future. Reforms are required, to progressively reduce the gap, but such reforms should not risk amplifying the impact of the crisis.

Read more about: [event](#)

For further information please contact: [Asghar Zaidi](#)



Publications

EC Book Review

Lelkes, O. / Sutherland, H. (Eds.) (2009) Tax and Benefit Policies in the Enlarged Europe: Assessing the Impact with Microsimulation Models. Public Policy and Social Welfare Vol. 35. Farnham (UK): Ashgate / European Centre Vienna.

Review by Attila Szabo (ATIA International, Inc.) in the *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* (2010) Volume 13, Issue 1, January.

Read more about: [review](#), [book details including sample chapter](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

Website

The first update of the re-organized MonitoringRIS website has been published. Among other items, it contains new key documents (e.g. ageing-related documents of the 48th Session of the Commission for Social Development), country reports (from the UK, the US) and research papers (e.g. age discrimination reviews) that look into ageing-related policies and strategies in the UNECE countries.

Read more about: [website](#), [update overview](#)

For further information please contact: [Annette Hexelschneider](#)

TV

Spain and its Retirement Age

The Spanish government has proposed to raise the country's official retirement age, from 65 to 67. This move is considered by many as an essential pension policy change in coping with rapidly ageing populations. However, many (including workers' unions in Spain) are opposing this forced delay in retirement.

Asghar Zaidi participated as an expert on European pension systems in the debate on the International News Channel France 24, arguing that the proposal is a step in the right direction.

Other European countries should also consider raising their retirement age (or linking contribution requirements for pensions with changes in life expectancy).

Read more about: [full interview](#)

For further information please contact: [Asghar Zaidi](#)



Non-Take-Up in Austria

On 6 February, in its main news feature “Zeit im Bild”, the ORF (Austrian broadcasting corporation) broadcasted a report on the number of beneficiaries as well as the misuse and non-take-up of social assistance in Austria. The report included interview passages with Michael Fuchs on the causes of non-take-up.

For further information please contact: [Michael Fuchs](#)

Newspaper Articles

[Marin, Bernd \(2005-2009\) Various articles in Der Standard, in Die Presse, in Format, in Kleine Zeitung, in Salzburger Nachrichten, Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, 2010](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)

News from our National Liaison Officials

Publication of the Slovak National Liaison Official Institute

The Institute for Labour and Family Research of our Slovak National Liaison Official Kvetoslava Repková has published a new issue of its Bulletin “Family and Work”.

6/2009: in English

Bittner, Marc – Hudler-Seitzberger, Michaela – Tschipan, Claudia

“From LAMO to FAMO. Investigations on the Regional Labour Market at the Border Zone of Austria and the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic”

The presented issue of the Bulletin is dedicated to the research reflections about basic migration flows of skilled labour force with a special emphasis on the specificity of labour markets in the cross-border regions of Slovakia (region of Bratislava and region of Trnava) and the eastern part of Austria.

Based on knowledge from extensive representative empirical surveys of households and enterprises realized simultaneously in both countries during the same period of 2008-2009, the authors emphasize some important aspects of work-related migration after the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and clarify the research methods of the realized projects of LAMO and FAMO. Special attention is given to the results of supply and demand of qualified labour force in the region of Vienna–Bratislava–Trnava.



7/2009: in Slovak

Porubánová, Sylvia

”Aktuálne výzvy a očakávania európskej agendy rodovej rovnosti”

(Actual Challenges and Expectations of the European Gender Equality Agenda)

The purpose of this study is to identify the main issues to be addressed to eliminate gender inequalities, to define the main objectives at European Union level and to indicate the key agenda for the future policy framework. The year 2010 represents an important step for the future of gender policies because it marks the end of the actions promoted by the Roadmap for Equality between women and men 2006-2010. The timing for the preparation of the future strategy is set in a period of global financial and economic crisis.

1/2010: in Slovak

Bellan, Pavol

“Prechodný trh práce ako nástroj tranzície dlhodobo nezamestnaných na otvorený trh práce” (The Transitional Labour Market as a Tool for Transition of Long-Term Unemployed Persons to the Open Labour Market)

The study provides basic characteristics of active labour market measures concentrating on the long-term unemployed; these measures are realized as temporary employment in combination with training, with the overall aim of supporting the transition of long-term unemployed persons to the open labour market.

Attention is paid to those measures that take the form of programmes of temporary employment with working positions mainly in the area of the social economy and third sector, which are initiated, established, managed and developed as autonomous measures by local actors and to a certain extent are capable to combine ‘mixed up’ national financial sources assigned to active labour market measures and local development.

The desired result of these measures is the synergetic effect of transition of long-term unemployed persons to positions in the open labour market and the local development of regions where traditionally high rates of long-term unemployment are connected to under-developed infrastructure, public facilities and public and social services.

Read more about: issue [6/2009](#), [7/2009](#), [1/2010](#)

For further information please contact: [Kvetoslava Repková](#)



Support

Le Grand Bal de Diversité

For our Austrian readers we would like to point out the upcoming “Diversity Ball” in Vienna, 24 April 2010. The Ball connects people of diverse origin and religion, people with and without disabilities, women and men, heterosexual and homosexual, old and young. It is a truly “equal opportunity”.

Read more about: [event](#)

Contact for general newsletter/web site comments, suggestions or questions:

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