






# Annual Report of Activities 2023



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

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## Dear colleagues, friends, supporters and followers of the European Centre!

Building bridges has become a general allegory and buzzword in international politics and policies that try to take action beyond national and professional boundaries. The European Centre has always been a part and promoter of this approach, be it geographically within the UNECE region, be it with a view to spanning the cleavages between policy and practice, between research specialisations, and between the excluded and the included.

By doing so, we have learned to acknowledge that joining countries with different legacies in social policies need time and space to understand each other and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to specific social problems such as the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, the eradication of child poverty or the regulation of platform work. Imposing on one partner to cross the bridge and pull down one pillar on which the bridge had been built will let it collapse. Only small adaptations and learning based on mutual understanding will be able to keep the bridge walkable for and on both sides.

Building bridges is thus to develop trust between stakeholders involved, to exchange knowledge and information in a transparent manner, and to remain open to change. We can apply this allegory to our own 'Bridge Building' mission and activities that are connecting countries and groups of countries within the UNECE region. Our efforts in promoting generational solidarity, in learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, and in looking for synergies between combating poverty and promoting action against climate change must also be based on (re)establishing trust among and

between individuals and social groups that have stopped talking to each other, for instance regarding scientific findings on COVID-19 or general climate change.

Combatting inequalities and creating equal chances so that citizens feel recognised and supported can contribute to re-establishing trust within and across national and cultural boundaries. This rationale of social welfare policies is driving our work in research projects, publications, webinars, peer review meetings and trainings.

This annual report provides an overview of our activities that were very much driven by attempts to promote dialogue, mutual learning and working in partnership. Our flagship project to organise mutual learning activities with the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkan countries has resulted in a series of peer reviews and trainings with colleagues and policymakers from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia and Ukraine is only the most prominent example for this type of activities. While funding and support for this initiative has been generously provided by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, also the European Commission is promoting mutual learning and working in partnership. Based on a framework contract with ICF, the European Centre is part of a consortium that provides analytical support and organises peer reviews at the EU level in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion. Moreover, the Centre is providing expertise and technical assistance to the European Community of Prac-



tice on Partnership (ECoPP) and supported the Peer Learning Dialogue (PLD) on preventing and detecting undeclared work in the context of platform work. Last but not least, the European Centre's initiative to expand its activities in capacity building has further evolved, in particular with new opportunities for online trainings.

To keep and further raise this level of expertise and technical assistance, the thrust of our activities is certainly on applied comparative research, modelling, and evaluation of social policies:

- What is necessary to eradicate child poverty?
- How can transnational posting of workers be organised better and in a more equitable way?
- What is needed to improve the coordination of health and care services in rural areas and for persons with dementia?
- How can we learn from pilot projects and create mainstream emergency services for people in need of long-term care in middle-income countries?
- How can workers' rights and social dialogue be enhanced in the context of platform work?
- What are appropriate measures to cope with the cost-of-living crisis, in particular for persons with disabilities?
- What alternative purchasing arrangements may enhance the quality of services for people with chronic disease?
- What are skills and training needs in the social services sector? How can we better capture, analyse and counter gender gaps in unpaid care and social activities?
- How can diversity-sensitive care approaches be embedded in social and health care workers' training and practice?
- What kind of support do young adult carers need to not compromise their education and transition to the labour market?

These and other relevant research questions have been at the centre of our research over the past twelve months. The results are briefly outlined in this report, while details can be found on our website, in our reports and other publications as well as by consulting our research teams. As you certainly subscribed to our monthly newsletter and social media channels, you will also have been informed about our findings and activities in real time.

To keep us going and to facilitate further research, we are constantly on the lookout for new research questions to be addressed, new methodological developments and innovative approaches in the field of social policies that should find their way into mainstream policymaking. The investment in project design, writing bids and monitoring the research market – with related cheers (if a bid has been successful) and frustrations (if funding agencies could not be convinced) – often remains invisible. I would like to take this opportunity to throw light on our acquisition processes, thank all colleagues and networking partners for their sustained endeavours and congratulate all those involved for a continuously high success rate of proposals.

In our role as representatives of the research community at the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing we shall contribute to updating the Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and further promote the Mainstreaming Ageing strategy. Moreover, we have developed and edited a research agenda on ageing and social policy. This will be published in a forthcoming book to guide further research on ageing at the European Centre and beyond.



From a management perspective, we found that our new structure with agile teams focusing on 'Employment & Labour Mobility', 'Health & Care' and 'Social Protection & Inclusion' has proven to be a valuable framework for cooperation within and across teams. Over the past year we managed to keep our finances balanced and were able to reduce staff turnover. We are looking forward to employing additional staff over the coming year, also depending on successful project acquisition. Together with the staff council, we found common ground in a new company agreement on teleworking, still hoping for improvements towards a European solution on this issue.

European solutions will also be needed in many other areas in the context of major transformations and a world of polycrisis. Again, building bridges without solid pillars and balanced statics remains a difficult mission. I would like to thank all colleagues, networking partners and supporters of the European Centre for your sustained endeavours in working towards equal chances, social inclusion, an end to poverty – and peace!

Yours sincerely,

*Kai Leichsenring*  
Executive Director



# Employment & Labour Mobility

## Highlights

The Employment & Labour Mobility (ELM) research team was created in March 2022 during the organisational restructuring of the former Work and Welfare Unit. Within the European Centre's Employment & Labour Mobility team we design, coordinate, and implement projects in the fields of employment and labour market policies; labour mobility and labour migration; labour standards and working conditions; and the relationship between workers, employers, and social partners. The team conducts comparative research that contributes to the UN Agenda 2030 and the European Union's priorities, especially the European Pillar of Social Rights. We employ researchers and policy advisers experienced in various social scientific methods with the core research team expertise in the following areas:

*Research:* qualitative and quantitative research methods, especially comparative research, and case studies. We have specific expertise in labour market and employment trends, innovative active labour market policy measures, labour mobility policy and patterns, labour migration, non-standard forms of employment, precarious work, digitalisation of work (platform work and other new forms of work), working conditions, labour and social rights, employers' attitudes and practices, and workers' unionisation.

*Policy consultation:* planning, monitoring and evaluation of employment and labour mobility programmes, policies, and enforcement. We have specific expertise in the exchange of best practices, mutual learning, networking of different stakeholders, social dialogue, and other consultation processes by using various formats such as focus groups, peer reviews, participatory designs of workshops and training methods.

The Employment & Labour Mobility team employs five researchers who have been involved in seven projects, in Bridge Building, contracted trainings, as well as in other networking and dissemination activities.

**The ELM team works towards policies that aim at improving working lives**

## Strategic aim

The strategic aim of the ELM team is to conduct high-quality research and contribute to improved labour market, labour mobility and migration

policies through comparative analysis and policy consultancy. The team's knowledge base is constantly updated and expanded based on project acquisition and implementation. We currently organise our work primarily within the following interconnected themes:

- *Employment and labour market policies*
- *Labour mobility and labour migration*
- *Labour standards and working conditions*
- *The relationship between workers, employers, and social partners*

Within these themes, the team implements various flagship, medium-sized and small-sized projects that aim at improving working lives:

- *Employment and labour market policies:* In the past year our team members have provided expertise in various aspects of employment and labour market policies such as active labour market measures and undeclared work through projects focusing on cooperation, mutual learning, and capacity building. Our 'European Undeclared Work Platform–Peer Learning Dialogue' project focused on the challenges and solutions in preventing, detecting, and proving undeclared work in new forms of work, whereas the ongoing 'European Community of Practice on Partnership' project involves several DGs of the European Commission, managing authorities as well as other representatives of regional/local and other public authorities, economic, social and civil society partners, including NGOs and research institutes to share knowledge and build capacities on partnerships. Meanwhile, the 'Thematic Review on Incentivising Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Open Labour Market' has looked at employment policies for this specific group in Austria.
- *Labour mobility:* Our well-trained and highly experienced researchers study the nexus between various forms of employment and mobility and the related labour and social rights. During the past year, we focused on the labour market access of both companies and workers with a special emphasis on the construction sector. We provided external expertise on third-country companies and workers in the EU construction sector for the project 'Better Functioning of the European Construction Labour Market' (FELM) implemented by the European-level social partners in the construction sector i.e. the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) producing a comprehensive legal, quantitative and qualitative analysis of third-country companies and workers' access, trends

**We analyse the nexus between employment, mobility and the related labour and social rights**



and characteristics in the European construction market. We continued our research on our niche topic of posting with the project ‘INFO-POW–Assessment of the Channels of Information and their Use in the Posting of Workers,’ where we mapped the channels of information, conducted qualitative interviews with information providers, and conducted a survey with posting companies on their access to information related to their rights and obligations in the posting of workers.

- *Labour standards and working conditions:* Labour standards and working conditions is a fundamental theme of our research team that has been the focus of different projects. In the past year, four projects studied labour standards and working conditions for various sectors, such as the app-mediated ride-hailing sector and construction, or categories of workers, such as posted workers, third-country nationals, and platform workers. The projects with a focus on labour standards and conditions include the ‘Driver Survey’, ‘External Expertise on Third-Country Companies and Workers in the EU Construction Sector’ for the project ‘Better Functioning of the European Construction Labour Market’ (FELM); ‘Assessment of the Channels of Information and their Use in the Posting of Workers’ (INFO-POW), and the ‘European Undeclared Work Platform – Peer Learning Dialogue: Challenges and Solutions in Preventing, Detecting and Proving Undeclared Work in New Forms of Work’.
- *The relationship between workers, employers, and social partners:* Another aspect of our research is studying the relationship between workers and their employers and workers and work organisations. In the last year, the ‘Driver Survey’ project has built on the data collection methodologies of the ‘Rider Survey’ project to now survey ride-hailing drivers’ working conditions, knowledge and perceptions of trade unions as well as their expectations regarding the work of social partners. Whereas the FELM project case studies looked into the role the social partners have played regarding labour standards in the case of third-country nationals’ participation in the European construction market, the employers’ perspective has been studied both in the FELM project as well as in the project ‘Assessment of the Channels of Information and their Use in the Posting of Workers’ (INFO-POW).

The ELM team has recently acquired funding for two new projects ‘Sustainable and Socially Just Transnational Sectoral Labour Markets: Industrial Relations and Labour Market Adjustment to the Rise in Temporary Labour Migration’ (JUSTMIG) and ‘Recovering Workers’ Data to Negotiate and Monitor Collective Agreements in the Platform Economy’ (GDPowerR), where



three of the core themes of the research team will be engaged, namely labour mobility, labour standards and working conditions, and the relationship between workers, employers, and social partners.

## Our team in a nutshell

Our core areas of expertise encompass comparative and case study analyses of the employment and mobility policies and practices and their interplay with other policy areas such as migration, social welfare, and industrial relations. We provide analytical and methodological support and offer policy advice based on evidence-based research.

## The team and our clients

**Our projects are based on international cooperation and networks with EU and BB partners**

The five members of the Employment & Labour Mobility research team complement each other regarding their academic background, their research areas as well as their methodological skills (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method analysis as well as policy consultancy, evaluation, and training).

The research team's projects are based on international cooperation and networks with partners from the EU and the Bridge Building countries. The team's main calls addressed over the past year encompass those of:

- EU bodies, in particular the European Commission, e.g. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL, EaSI and ESF+), DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), the European Labour Authority (ELA), and
- Other territorial or sectoral donors, e.g. Chamber of Labour, Austria.

Research and applied science partners include entities in the EU and the BB countries, such as EU bodies (e.g. DG EMPL, DG REGIO, ELA), national ministries and other public authorities, universities & research institutes (e.g. HIVA-KU Leuven, Belgium; University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy; Slovak Academy of Science; Central European Labour Studies Institute, Slovakia; Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences; University of Belgrade, Serbia), the EU- and national-level social partners (e.g. EFBWW, ETUI, FIEC, EBC, the Austrian Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Federation, Riders Collective, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia), civil society organisations (e.g. Centre for Development Evalua-



tion and Social Science Research, Bosnia and Herzegovina), country experts and consultancy agencies (e.g. ICF International, Belgium & United Kingdom and Milieu, Belgium).

## Reflection & brief outlook

The Employment & Labour Mobility team continues its work in the niche thematic areas of labour market policies, labour mobility and working conditions. Last year we aimed to expand our project portfolio in different directions, particularly in terms of target groups (e.g. refugees, persons with disabilities, irregularly employed workers, youth, posting employers, companies), sectors of activity (e.g. services), aspects of work transformation (e.g. digitalisation, greening), industrial relations, and workers' welfare. We accomplished several objectives such as conducting research on employment policies for persons with disabilities, on posting and user companies, digitalisation, and industrial relations. Particularly, GDPower and JUST-MIG as large transnational projects constitute a significant stepping stone in consolidating our industrial relations expertise and intertwining it with our other areas of long-standing expertise, such as employment policy and labour mobility. Each team member works in more than one thematic area and together we design and implement projects where the above-mentioned and other relevant thematic areas often overlap. This past year, we also continued our successful cross-team collaboration in thematic areas of mutual interest.

Since its formation, the ELM team members have been constantly pursuing opportunities in collaboration with new and existing partners. Out of the seven projects implemented in the last year, four started in the previous period and three were new projects. Financing has already been confirmed for two new projects, while several other proposals are underway. Our goal is to continue to pursue doing research on various target groups (e.g. refugees, persons with disabilities, irregularly employed workers, youth, posted workers, and migrant workers), expand into other sectors (e.g. care, manufacturing, services), specific aspects of work transformation (digitalisation, greening), and workers' mobilisation and organisation. The team aims at acquiring projects under various national and EU funding streams within our core thematic areas and the expansion areas, which is reflected in the new acquisitions we have been preparing and will continue to shape all acquisitions for 2024.

## Health & Care

### Highlights

The Health & Care team continues to focus on burning issues in health and social care services such as innovations in integrating long-term care, the rather neglected challenges of young (adult) carers, and future-oriented funding mechanisms in health and long-term care. Notwithstanding some important changes in structure and staffing, the team managed to accomplish set objectives, to publish relevant articles and reports, and to submit important proposals for future research.

#### The team managed projects, publications and proposals

*Research:* The final conference of the InCARE project marked an important footprint of the Health & Care team on the road towards European long-term care policy development. With important experiences and insights of pilot projects in Austria, Spain and North Macedonia, and accompanying research and evaluation, InCARE contributed to the growing knowledge base on how to enhance long-term care systems and how to achieve improvements in person-centred care. On a similar note, the scoping review commissioned by the WHO Centre for Health Development (Kobe) provided insights on innovative purchasing arrangements for chronic care service delivery. Another review commissioned by WHO Europe synthesised knowledge on quality management in long-term care. Also the ongoing project on person-centred and diversity-sensitive care for older migrants will produce tangible outputs to raise awareness and strengthen coping strategies of the long-term care workforce. Capacity building in a mid- and long-term perspective is also the aim of the COORDINATE project, in which the Health & Care team is mentoring researchers in using data from the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and tries to raise interest to participate in the envisaged EU-wide implementation of the survey Growing Up in Digital Europe (GUIDE), a research infrastructure set to be Europe's first comparative birth cohort survey.

*Policy consultancy:* We compiled and synthesised background information on quality management in long-term care to WHO Europe resulting in a publication that will be widely distributed. The team also contributed to several trainings with representatives of relevant ministries on the topic of quality assurance in long-term care, e.g. in Armenia. Moreover, the team participated in a number of peer review meetings, conferences and webinars providing input from results of past and ongoing research.



## Strategic aim

The strategic aim of the Health & Care team is to contribute to a life-course approach of ageing well, in particular by research to underpin improvements and reforms in care systems and related policies. We continue to propose respective research proposals and to acquire relevant projects with a focus on governance, financing and quality assurance of long-term care, integrated care, informal care and the care workforce. The team also contributes to comparative research on social services in close cooperation with the Social Protection & Inclusion team. Based on a long-standing track record, and apart from international research projects, the team will continue to provide policy consultancy and training to disseminate the accumulated knowledge, e.g. with publications on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the long-term care workforce, on informal carers' needs and expectations, attitudes towards long-term care, and research needs regarding social policies and ageing. Further networking and dissemination activities entail the participation in the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, the Eurocarers' research network and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Joint Programming Initiative 'More Years, Better Lives'.

**Tackling demographic transitions in health and social care**

## The team in a nutshell

The Health & Care team consists of four researchers with multi-disciplinary backgrounds covering both qualitative and quantitative research methods. With ample experience in designing projects and developing innovative approaches, the team continues to focus on comparative research and policy consultancy at the interface between health and social care, and between formal and informal care, thus offering ample opportunities for transversal collaboration across research teams at the European Centre.

**Focusing on innovative approaches in health and social care delivery**

## The team and our clients

While we reduced our travels to the necessary minimum, we have expanded our networking activities via online meetings, trainings and teleconferencing. Our main clients continue to be the European Commission, in particular DG EMPL, and international organisations (UNECE, WHO Europe and the WHO Centre for Health Development), but also national organisations such as the Chamber of Labour for Upper Austria. Our partners in research are both academic research and third sector organisations as well as national ministries including the Centre for Socio-Economic Research



on Ageing at INRCA (Italy), Linnaeus University (Sweden), Hogeschool Gent (Belgium), Linköping University (Sweden), Lund University (Sweden), University of Manchester (UK), Vilans (The Netherlands), the Institute for Health and Welfare–THL (Finland), the University of Vienna (Austria), the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health (Republic of North Macedonia), IMSERSO–Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales (Spain), the Fundación Instituto Gerontológico Matía Ingema (Spain), Chance B Group (Austria), the Red Cross (Austria and North Macedonia), the London School of Economics & Political Science (United Kingdom), AGE Platform Europe (Brussels), the Social Cooperative ‘Anziani e non solo’ (Italy) and many others.

### Reflection & brief outlook

#### **Delivering excellent research and striving towards policy impact**

The endeavours of the Health & Care team are taking place in an increasingly competitive environment for research and development projects. Its competitive advantage lies in long-standing experience and an important track record of research and analysis in an international policy context. Building on past achievements, a sound network of international partners and most motivated staff, the team is well-prepared to face the challenges ahead – delivering excellent research and striving towards policy impact in partnership with colleagues in science and policymaking.



# Social Protection & Inclusion

## Highlights

The Social Protection & Inclusion team (SPI) designs, coordinates, and implements projects in the fields of:

- *Social inclusion and social protection policies*
- *Poverty, income inequality and non-monetary aspects of well-being*
- *Social services and support measures for marginalised groups*
- *Population ageing*

The team conducts comparative research that specifically contributes to the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and European Union policy frameworks relevant for social protection and inclusion, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights. The team comprises experienced researchers and policy advisers with the following expertise:

*Research:* Qualitative and quantitative research methods such as micro-simulation and modelling, comparative research, interviews and case-studies. We have specific expertise in minimum income schemes, income distribution, poverty and material deprivation, social inclusion of marginalised groups, development and financing of person-centred social support services, social innovation, and transition processes.

*Policy consultation:* Planning, monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies as well as support services and measures for marginalised groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, children, people experiencing poverty). We have specific expertise in analysing the take-up of social assistance and minimum income support schemes. We regularly facilitate processes of social policy dialogue and mutual learning among different stakeholders, provide tailor-made training modules and carry out other consultation services by using various formats such as focus groups, and participatory methods.

The Social Protection & Inclusion team employs five researchers. In 2022/2023, the team implemented 13 projects. Individual team members were also involved in additional projects across teams (e.g. on the posting of workers, diversity sensitive care for older migrants). SPI team members

also actively participated in Bridge Building activities (e.g. implementing peer and policy reviews in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries, organising BBinars), as well as in other networking and dissemination activities (e.g. conference presentations, media appearances).

## Strategic aim

The strategic aim of the SPI team is to conduct high-quality comparative research and policy consultancy and contribute to improved social protection and inclusion policies in the UNECE region. The team utilises a broad range of thematic expertise and skill sets when implementing scientific and applied research projects, and during the acquisition of new projects within the EU and beyond. Our ongoing projects fall largely under the following thematic clusters:

- *Social security*
- *Social inclusion and poverty reduction*
- *Social support services for different groups*

Within these clusters, the team implements various projects which aim at reducing poverty and social exclusion, as well as assessing the impact of recent trends and crises on the welfare system:

- *Social security* : With the tax-benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD we carry out tailor-made fiscal and distributive simulation analysis for various actual or hypothetical policy changes using the latest EU-SILC micro data. The basic scope of the model includes social (insurance) contributions, income taxes and monetary benefits. Based on EUROMOD, our team has also implemented SORESI, an online tax-benefit microsimulation calculator for Austria, which has already been in use for many years. In 2022/2023, the Austria-related activities of EUROMOD and SORESI were updated to 2023 policy rules using the latest input data (SILC 2021 with incomes for 2020). In 2023, the team applied EUROMOD for simulating the fiscal and distributional effects of two hypothetical policy reforms. Volkshilfe Austria commissioned the simulation of a structural change of family policies in Austria through a basic security for children. The analysis has been focused on the impact on poverty rates of children and the net budgetary costs. For Caritas Austria, the team simulated an increase in minimum pension level up to the at-risk-of-poverty line and the interlinked changes in other social benefits.

**The team works towards policies aiming at improving social protection systems and fostering the full participation of marginalised groups in European societies**





- *Social inclusion of marginalised groups:* We have long-standing experience in providing policy-relevant research on poverty and income inequality contributing to the monitoring of living standards across Europe and the evaluation of policies on the life chances and well-being of different groups in society (e.g. persons with disabilities, children). Our recent study, requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions brings together available knowledge on how recent crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing energy crisis due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, together with rising inflation affect persons with disabilities and their families who are facing poverty more likely than persons without disabilities. We continued our work on assessing how EU funds contribute to better social inclusion of persons with disabilities, children and other target groups in EU Member States (e.g. a policy brief on the role of national human rights bodies in monitoring fundamental rights in EU-funded programmes). Currently, different deprivation indices applied on EU-SILC data as well as the model EUROMOD (see above) are used for an analysis of the effect of COVID-19 on poverty of children in Austria funded by the *Jubiläumsfonds* of the Austrian National Bank. Among other research questions, we investigate how the prevalence of monetary poverty and material deprivation of children developed during the time of crisis, and how effective COVID-19-induced policies and automatic stabilisers were in counteracting an increase in child poverty. The SPI team also contributed to high-level academic and policy conferences, e.g. at the 16<sup>th</sup> Nordic Network on Disability Research Conference, the European Youth Event of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the Swedish EU Presidency Conference on social inclusion and adequate housing. Our research results have been disseminated to the wider public, e.g. via press conferences with high media coverage on the basic security for children as well as on the increased minimum pension, to address key social challenges and offer policy recommendations at the EU and national levels.
- *Social support services for different groups:* Our team provides expertise to central governments, social partners and international organisations on the development, implementation and monitoring of social services for persons with disabilities, children, pensioners, beneficiaries of social assistance and older people. For example, we supported the ongoing efforts of the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to reform their quality assurance system through a tailor-made training to civil servants of the Ministry within the 'Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings' project. A recent project commissioned by European social partners (EPSU, European Federation of Social Employers) gath-

**We analyse how the ongoing crises impact social welfare systems**



**We propose  
evidence-based  
recommendations on  
how to make social  
welfare systems more  
resilient and  
sustainable**

ered evidence and highlighted the needs of the social services sector in terms of skills and training, linked to evolving needs of service users and new, community-based models of care. We analysed national policy frames for quality assurance of social services and their disability relevance, as part of the ad hoc synthesis report prepared for the European Commission under the European Disability Expertise (EDE) which will feed into the development of the upcoming European framework for social services of excellence for persons with disabilities, a flagship initiative under the current European Disability Strategy.

## **Our team in a nutshell**

The SPI team has extensive expertise on comparative analysis of the risk of poverty, income distribution, social services and inclusion of marginalised groups. We provide analytical and methodological support (e.g. conceptualisation and development of indicators) and offer policy advice based on evidence-based research to a wide range of international clients.

## **The team and our clients**

The five members of the SPI team complement each other regarding their academic background, research interest, policy expertise as well as their methodological skills (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method analysis, evaluation, participatory methods and training). The team's projects are based on international cooperation and networks with partners particularly from the EU and beyond. Our clients include, among others:

- The European Commission (e.g. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion),
- The European Parliament
- EU agencies (e.g. the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Eurostat),
- International organisations (e.g. the Asian Development Bank),
- National ministries (e.g. the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs),
- Social partners (e.g. the European Federation of Public Service Unions)
- Other territorial and sectoral donors (e.g. the Austrian National Bank), and
- NGOs (e.g. Volkshilfe Austria, Caritas Austria).



## Reflection & brief outlook

The Social Protection & Inclusion team will continue building on its members' strengths to acquire and implement projects in the areas of social security, poverty reduction, social assistance and support services for marginalised groups. Well-established cooperation and tool such as the EUROMOD project will be maintained and further expanded (e.g. inclusion of budget survey data for the simulation of indirect taxes) to provide better research results addressing current societal challenges. In 2022/2023, the rising inflation and the energy crisis put additional strains on the already fragile European welfare states that were shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine in recent years. While the social sector is underfunded and struggles with the shortage of workforce in many countries, ensuring that social services are provided in line with human rights standards, tailored to the needs of users and foster social inclusion should remain a priority to "leave no one behind". Within the European Centre's Bridging Function, the SPI research team will continue collaborating with countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership and support ongoing social reforms with our comprehensive knowledge and policy expertise. This often means responding to short-term requests or invitations to participate in tenders, driven by region-specific demands.

Our existing core thematic areas (social security, tax-benefit microsimulation, tackling child poverty, transition from institutional to community-based social services, quality assurance of social services) will remain in focus for our future proposals. The SPI team also identified new thematic niches where team members share interest and expertise in pursuing new projects. These include but are not limited to comparative family and child policies, gender inequalities in intra-household distribution of resources, comparison of minimum income systems in Europe, the impact of deinstitutionalisation projects on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. During autumn 2023, the team aims at acquiring some longer-term projects under various national and EU funding streams within our thematic core areas. Nevertheless, we will continue to take up shorter, but strategic policy consultancy opportunities with international organisations and key partners. We collaborate with an extensive network of partners, but also constantly seek new partnerships with academic institutions, think tanks, international and regional organisations, as well as umbrella NGOs and service providers.

**The team responds to demands of international organisations and national governments in the UNECE region**

**The team supports social reforms with knowledge and expertise**

# Bridging Function of the European Centre

## Highlights

In 2022/2023 the European Centre further invested in its strategic goal of bridging knowledge and policy evidence in social policy research between Western and Eastern countries of the UN-European region. The Bridge Building (BB) countries targeted during the past year included Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

The Bridging Function is based on the premise of close collaboration and participation with national governments of European countries, the European Union and other relevant stakeholders at the international, European, and national levels. We cooperate with actors of different institutional backgrounds such as academics, research institutions, civil servants of respective ministries, civil society organisations and social partners.

We believe that fostering cooperation between partners in the Western Balkan region, the Eastern Partnership countries and EU countries is key for facilitating democracy and European integration. Our activities focus on evidence-based policy making in social welfare. We ensure exchange at the same eye level and build on shared needs across the group of countries such as, for instance, the joint need for social policy reforms with the aim to assist especially those left behind and hit most, for instance by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis because of high inflation.

During the past year we further strengthened the collaboration with BB partners mainly via research activities, trainings and peer reviews, for instance within the 'Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings' project funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (see below). Next to our intense work within projects, we intensified collaboration with our National Liaison Officials (NLOs) which have been nominated as contact persons to facilitate a constant exchange with the European Centre. The cooperation is based on Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. Efforts also have been taken to establish new MoUs with respective ministries in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina during the past year.



Our work in the BB region was also characterised by increased dissemination activities of findings from our research projects. The website of our Eastern European Policy Network (EESPN) has been restructured and received a new layout in spring 2023. BBinars, our online webinars in the BB region, were conducted on topics of specific interest to BB partners (see below). BBinars are regarded as our main policy-learning tool between all interested BB partners.

## Projects in the Bridge Building region

During the past 12 months, the European Centre implemented three projects funded by third parties in or with countries of the BB region. Partners in the BB region have been involved in several project proposals to third parties, some of which have already been approved and will start in autumn 2023, while others are still pending. The projects that newly started or continued to be carried out with respective partners in the region during 2022/2023 include InCARE, our EaSI project on long-term care, trainings on integrated policy approaches ('Follow-up Training ILO Armenia and Tajikistan') and the exchange of good practices in policymaking ('BB Peer Reviews and Trainings'):

**During the past year we intensified collaboration and exchange at the same eye level between Bridge Building stakeholders**

- **Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings** is our current flagship project in the BB region as it combines the essence of our strengths and the aims of our Bridging Function. Funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection we implement mutual learning activities in and with the BB countries and thereby respond to the regional health and social challenges in the context of COVID-19. During the past year we have implemented four BB Peer or Policy Reviews in social welfare, which were attended by a broad range of civil servants representing different ministerial departments, but also of national-, regional- and local-level stakeholders from the private, public and civil society as well as from international organisations and academia:
  - *The design of the social assistance benefit in Moldova: Improving targeting and supporting employment (6-7 September 2022; online)*
  - *Monitoring and evaluation for social protection programmes (12-13 December 2022; online)*
  - *Deinstitutionalisation of children and persons with disabilities in North Macedonia (8-9 February 2023; online)*
  - *Gender equality and care for relatives (5-6 June 2023; online).*

Moreover, we have conducted a training for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia on *Quality assurance in delivering social services – From commissioning to monitoring performance* (20-21 June 2023; online).

- **Supporting INclusive Development of Community-Based Long-Term CARE Services through Multi-Stakeholder Participatory Approach (InCARE)** is an ongoing project involving, among other countries, partners from North Macedonia. The project is funded by the EaSI Programme (European Commission, DG EMPL) and runs until autumn 2023. InCARE includes two main types of activities, built around the structure of a Theory of Change process: 1) Formative research tasks in support of policy processes (creation of knowledge base; policy toolkit; participatory decision-making); and 2) The design, implementation and evaluation of socially innovative long-term care service pilots in three European countries: Austria, North Macedonia and Spain.
- A follow-up training was requested on the topic '**Improving Coordination of Social Protection and Employment Service Delivery in Armenia and Tajikistan**' (ILO-ARM & TJK) in December 2022. The ILO-funded training built on the former project that focused on supporting the line ministries in the two countries to design and implement new employment services, extend social protection coverage with selected programmes, strengthen employment and social protection services, and promote social dialogue.

### Eastern European Social Policy Network & BBinars

Peer learning activities in the BB region have clearly shown the joint need for social welfare reforms in all countries

Along with the implementation of these externally funded projects, we invested in a range of meetings, regular dissemination activities and capacity building events to strengthen our network and visibility in the BB region. We are constantly expanding the Eastern European Social Policy Network (EESPN), a unique network of researchers, policy advisers and representatives of public authorities working in the field of social welfare policy. The European Centre's website of the EESPN (see: <https://eespn.euro.centre.org/>), which was set up in 2017, was restructured and finally relaunched with a new layout in spring 2023. We also intensified cooperation with the Central European University (CEU) within our BB activities: In the framework of the institutional collaboration between the European Centre and the CEU, four students from the Policy Lab prepared country profiles for Albania, Georgia, Moldova and Montenegro for the EESPN website in 2023.



## BBinars (online webinars)

We harness the potential of the EESPN for our internal BB projects and for raising awareness of our BBinars. BBinars are online webinars, dedicated to specific areas of social welfare progress in the BB region. The aim of this series of webinars is to offer members of the EESPN and a wider audience, especially those interested in social welfare in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership region, a possibility to exchange and learn about topics of key interest to partners. In 2022/2023, we have brought together researchers, policy makers and NGOs in the region to discuss two key issues:

- **Informal Care and Gender Equality in the Western Balkans (16/03/2023):** The 4<sup>th</sup> BBinar discussed progress and challenges of developing accessible, affordable, and high-quality care for older adults as one way to improve gender equality in the Western Balkans. Informal care remains an important component of long-term care systems for older adults across most Western Balkan countries. The lack of alternative care services has meant that the responsibility for providing care for older adults falls on the family, and more often, women. In turn, this has led to women remaining out of the labour market to provide care for their older family members, leading to a larger gender gap in employment. This BBinar presented a snapshot of the care situation as well as of the associated gender inequality in some Western Balkan countries and discussed solutions and challenges.
- **The Social Investment Approach in Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries (13/06/2023):** The 5<sup>th</sup> BBinar discussed what role the social investment approach to social welfare policies can and should play in supporting sustainable development in the Western Balkan and the Eastern Partnership countries. The invited experts discussed the costs and the potential of social investment policies, the pre-conditions and pitfalls for social investment contributing to inclusive growth and how the 'return on social investment' can be quantified. There was agreement among the invited experts that inclusive growth requires both well-designed and targeted social investment policies as well as social protection systems. The BBinar further provided an opportunity for exchanges between representatives of organisations in the region with the panel and the Austrian social attaché in Skopje, Harald Fugger.

The European Centre has continued implementing BBinars, a series of webinars, on social policies in Eastern Europe

## Future developments and prospects

With these various activities the European Centre brings together researchers and policymakers throughout the UN-European region to better understand and advance social welfare policies in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and EU (potential) candidate countries of the Western Balkans. In the upcoming year, we will continue our work in the BB region by implementing BBinars, conducting research and policy advising within our BB projects and disseminating the activities via the EESPN. Further trainings, a peer review and a so-called hands-on-pilot are already scheduled for autumn/winter 2023/2024. We, again, aim at including BB partners in upcoming calls for proposals to continue the well-established cooperation with our partners with funding being provided by third parties.

# Projects

## Providing Technical Assistance to National Bodies with a Human Rights Remit Involved in Assessing EU Charter & CRPD Compliance of EU Funds (FRA\_EUfunds)

<b>Duration</b>	02/2022 - 09/2022
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Magdi BIRTHA, Veronica SANDU
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Jos Kösters, Human European Consultancy
<b>Project Partner</b>	Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights (Austria)
<b>Funded by</b>	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

European Union funds contribute with significant resources to issues such as cohesion, social inclusion, and regional development. The Common Provisions Regulation for the EU budget 2021-2027 requires Member States to ensure the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are respected throughout the programming period. These provisions allow for the opportunity for national bodies with a human rights remit (national human rights institutions, equality bodies, ombuds institutions) to be involved at all stages of the EU funding cycle. The European Centre provided consultancy services to FRA to gather and identify existing approaches, practices and to provide guidance on how these bodies can play a role in the monitoring of EU funds.

The outcomes of this project, based on desk research and semi-structured interviews, aimed to assist national bodies with a human rights remit in understanding their potential role in the successful implementation of Charter and CRPD conditionality in the 2021-2027 EU funding period.



## Social Services for Children, Persons with Disabilities and Older People – Training for Staff Members of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (online)

Duration	10/2022 - 12/2022
Status	Completed
Project Team	Magdi BIRTHA, Kai Leichsenring, Sabina Gjylsheni
Funded by	Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) aims to fund new projects to increase access to services to low-middle income families. In this context, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research offered a training to ADB staff presenting and discussing key elements of social services planning and delivery when targeting children, persons with disabilities and older people (long-term care).

The online training fostered peer learning to 15 participants in an interactive way. It consisted of four meetings throughout November and December 2022 (each around three hours), and follow-up in-depth sessions with participants upon request. Sessions included input, presentations of good practice (target-group-specific cases), break-out groups and transfer of knowledge. Participants were invited to smaller exercises between sessions.

At the end of this training, participants:

- had a good understanding of the principles of social service provision in the context of up-to-date social policies ensuring human rights, person-centredness, equal access and sustainability (with a special focus on childcare services, services for persons with disabilities as well as services and facilities for older people in need of long-term care).
- had an overview of potential solutions and models regarding the delivery of social services in terms of design, governance and funding as well as on monitoring and quality assurance.
- were aware of examples of good practice and their potential transfer to low- and middle-income countries, in particular with a view to the role and the involvement of relevant stakeholders.
- were enabled to plan further steps in developing tangible projects to improve social service delivery.

## Survey of Gender Gaps in Unpaid Care, Individual and Social Activities (EIGE\_Index\_Unpaid\_Work)

<b>Duration</b>	12/2021 - 12/2022
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Cassandra Simmons, Eszter Zólyomi, Ricardo Rodrigues
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Eurocarers
<b>Project Partners</b>	Eurocarers (Belgium), INRCA - National Institute for the Care of the Elderly (Italy), IPSOS
<b>Funded by</b>	European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

The European Institute for Gender Equality has set up the Gender Equality Index to monitor gender equality across countries in the EU and across time. The Index has a number of domains, including time, which focuses on unpaid work, social and individual activities. It is based on regularly collected secondary data sources and covers the whole of the European Union.

The aims of the project were (1) to improve the capacity of the Gender Equality Index to capture changes in the domain of time in a more conceptually sound, coherent and regular way (2) to support the monitoring of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, in particular in its priority area on closing the gender care gap.

These objectives were realised by a rapid review of gender equality frameworks and datasets covering unpaid work, social and individual activities as well as by a stakeholder consultation and an online panel survey collection with ensuing quantitative analysis. The data collection on the issues of unpaid care, individual and social activities covered the 16-75 population in all EU Member States (N= approx. 60,000) and was carried out by IPSOS. The European Centre contributed to the survey design, data analysis and the final publication of research findings.



## European Undeclared Work Platform – Peer Learning Dialogue

<b>Duration</b>	07/2022 - 12/2022
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Anette Scoppetta, Nicolas Prinz
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Karolina Jakubowska, ICF (Belgium)
<b>Project Partners</b>	ELA/European Labour Authority, European Commission
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)

The Peer Learning Dialogue (PLD) aimed to allow representatives from the European Undeclared Work Platform to explore issues in greater depth with a small group of peers and to test new approaches for tackling undeclared work. This PLD focused on challenges and solutions in preventing, detecting and proving undeclared work in new forms of work such as platform work. Based on a background paper and peer learning, it scrutinised the nature of undeclared work in the collaborative economy and discussed approaches and tools applied by enforcement authorities in tackling undeclared work including across borders. The PLD consisted of three one-day meetings for up to six Platform representatives. Anette Scoppetta acted as thematic expert and facilitated the process.

## Social Reform Microsimulation Austria (SORESI)

<b>Duration</b>	09/2012 - 03/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed (for 2023)
<b>Project Team</b>	Felix Wohlgemuth, Michael Fuchs, Leonard Geyer
<b>Project Partners</b>	BRZ (Austria)
<b>Funded by</b>	Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

SORESI is a web application for Austria, based on the microsimulation model EUROMOD. A web-based tool for policymakers and the broader public was developed in order to simulate policy reforms and to analyse their social impact, namely the effects on the national poverty rate, income inequality indicators and different income groups.

SORESI offers the opportunity to explore the potential impact of policy options such as introducing a flat-tax model, increasing family benefits or changing employers' social insurance contributions. The online tool calculates the effects of such measures on the national poverty rate, income inequality indicators and different income groups. For an example, please view the policy brief "Social Reform Microsimulation (SORESI)".

SORESI has now been updated to 2023 policy rules (incl. adaptation for bracket creep, indexation of benefits, etc.) using the latest input data (SILC 2021 with incomes for 2020). The tool will continue to be updated in the future.

## Simulation of an Introduction of a Basic Security for Children in Austria 2022

<b>Duration</b>	08/2022 - 04/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Michael Fuchs, Felix Wohlgemuth
<b>Funded by</b>	Volkshilfe Österreich

Children who grow up in poverty begin their lives with numerous disadvantages that may negatively affect their entire life course. To improve the current situation, this project analysed the effects of an introduction of a basic security for children in Austria. The rationale behind the basic security for children is that monetary benefits for children should be stronger related to the material situation of the household and the (lacking) financial resources for children.

The design of the presumed basic security would entitle all children below 18 years residing in Austria. It is based on reference budgets, the total benefit would amount to up to € 872 per child and month paid twelve times a year. There is a universal component of € 285 and a means-tested component of up to € 587 depending on taxable family income.

For the analysis, the tax-/benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD with 2022 policies was used based on EU-SILC 2021 data provided by Statistics Austria.

Findings showed that the net cost of the basic security for children (offsetting family allowance, child tax credit and supplements for children within social assistance) would amount to around € 4.6 billion. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of the total population would decrease by about 5 percentage points, and that of persons under 18 by as much as about 14 percentage points. Looking at the change in household income, the introduction would favour households in the lower income deciles, especially in the lowest three deciles.

## External Expertise for the Project ‘Better Functioning of the European Construction Labour Market’ (FELM)

<b>Duration</b>	09/2021 - 05/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Sonila Danaj, Eszter Zólyomi, Elif Naz Kayran, Leonard Geyer, Anette Scoppetta
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Jonathan Cornah, EFBWW
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), the European social partners of the construction industry in their European Social Dialogue Committee have prepared a multi-annual work programme, in which they have strongly emphasised the European labour market challenges linked to the increased number of third-country national companies and workers. In recent years, a rising presence of non-EU companies and non-EU workers has been observed in the European construction sector. Most of these companies and workers seem to be working in Central and Eastern European countries, where skilled, qualified construction workers are currently in very short supply, but cases have also been observed in Western EU countries.

This new trend has created some significant new challenges for the European and national social partners of the construction sector. To understand these new developments and collect the evidence basis for joint social partner recommendations, EFBWW and FIEC implemented the project Better Functioning of the European Construction Labour Market (FELM) with the financial support of the European Commission. The European Centre was contracted to conduct the research for the FELM project by assessing specific case studies compiled in an intermediary report, and to assist with the elaboration of the possible recommendations during seminars with the social partners. A final report was produced to present the study results and joint social partner recommendations.

## Simulation of an Increase of the Minimum Pension Top-up in Austria

<b>Duration</b>	12/2022 - 05/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Michael Fuchs, Felix Wohlgemuth
<b>Funded by</b>	Caritas Austria

The project analysed the fiscal and distributive outcomes of an increase of the minimum pension top-up beyond the poverty line. The minimum pension top-up plays a central role in the Austrian social security system. Its level is not only relevant for pensioners in the statutory pension insurance and in the civil servants' pension system, but also, for example, for recipients of social assistance or recipients of unemployment benefits.

For the analysis of the effects on pensioners and receivers of social assistance, the tax-/benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD for the policy system 2023 was used based on EU-SILC 2021 data provided by Statistics Austria.

The microsimulation showed that an increase would cause additional costs of about € 2.3 billion (about € 1.7 billion would be accounted for by pension insurance, about € 0.5 billion by social assistance). About 600,000 households with more than 1.1 million persons would benefit.

The at-risk-of-poverty rate for the total population would be reduced by around 4 percentage points, and that for persons over 60 by as much as more than 10 percentage points. By household type, the risk of poverty would decrease most for single women and men over 65 and for single parents. Looking at the change in household disposable income, the increase would particularly benefit households or individuals in the lowest three income deciles.

## Research on Evolving Jobs, Skills, and Training Needs in the Social Services Sector and the Role of Social Partners in Managing Changes

<b>Duration</b>	11/2022 - 05/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Magdi BIRTHA, Sabina GJYLSHENI, Selma KADI
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Tuscany Bell, EPSU
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

In the FORTE project, the Social Employers and the European Public Service Union (EPSU) aim to gather evidence and highlight the needs of the social services sector in terms of skills and training, linked to evolving needs of service users and new models of care. In recent years, there has been a shift towards more person-centred social services, in the community and at home. Homecare is care and support provided by a care worker for the overall well-being (hygiene, safety, social) of a person in need, in their own home. Community-based care includes home care but also entails residential care or day care if the latter are designed to stress the inclusion element as opposed to the segregating approach of institutional care. Delivering these alternative care models requires new skills and training needs to those in residential care, and also poses different risks. One big factor is how technology and digital solutions can impact the work and workload in these new models of care and the skills needed to manage these digital solutions.

Our research also addressed the need to ensure decent, safe, and healthy working conditions in the sector, to be able to attract and retain the workforce needed to respond to the growing care and support needs of changing societies.

The project paid special attention to the role of social partners and collective bargaining in managing changing job profiles, skills, and training needs, and ensuring good working conditions. Based on interviews with relevant stakeholders (social partners in social service delivery), the European Centre compiled a report with findings that help Social Employers and EPSU to embark into an effective and recognised social dialogue to jointly work for the future of the social services sector.



## Scoping Review of Purchasing Arrangements for Quality Chronic Care (WKC\_Purchasing)

<b>Duration</b>	11/2022 - 05/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Kai Leichsenring, Cassandra Simmons, Mirjam Pot, Klara Lorenz-Dant
<b>Funded by</b>	WHO Kobe Centre

As the result of population aging and rising prevalence of chronic diseases, governments have been facing pressure to reform the delivery and financing of services for treatment of chronic diseases to be more efficient, sustainable and value-driven. The development of organisational structures and financial mechanisms that incentivise stakeholders to positively act have been recognised as key levers for enabling and improving quality of care. So far, however, evidence on innovative purchasing arrangements and their impact on quality of chronic care services is missing. This project aimed to map evidence of innovative purchasing arrangements beyond pay-for-performance measures that have been used to strengthen service delivery models for people living with chronic diseases in a scoping review and to identify the mechanisms through which these arrangements have impacted the quality of care. It aimed to inform a WHO technical paper that provides guidance to countries on designing and implementing purchasing arrangements for quality chronic care.

Results showed that population-based purchasing arrangements, even in absence of explicit performance incentives, may incentivise providers to think more carefully through their decisions, to collaborate across settings, to take on a gate-keeping role and to improve continuity of care to reduce future costs. The review compiled an evidence base of purchasing reforms and service delivery models at the disposal of policymakers for incentivising improvements in quality of care. The review included 51 relevant articles hailing from mostly high income countries that analysed five distinct types of purchasing arrangements and their impact on quality of chronic care: capitation/global budget models, bundled payments, shared savings/shared risk, pay-for-coordination and blended capitation. All clusters identified found a primarily positive impact on quality of care, although the certainty of evidence was generally low due to selection bias of provider and patient participation. The highest certainty of evidence of a positive impact was found for capitation/global budget arrangements, shared savings and shared risk, and P4C models, which were often implemented as part of an Accountable Care Organizations (ACO), Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH), integrated care models, as well as comprehensive care provided by general practitioners (GPs). A need to better evaluate how alternative purchasing and service delivery interacts with and, in combination, affects quality of chronic care was also highlighted.

## European Disability Expertise (EDE)

<b>Duration</b>	12/2021 - 06/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Magdi Birtha
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Andrea Schouw-Naphegyi, Human European Consultancy
<b>Project Partners</b>	Human European Consultancy
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

The European Disability Expertise (EDE) started in July 2020 as the successor to the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED, December 2007 – May 2019). It is managed by the Human European Consultancy and is now in its second contract period (December 2021 – June 2023). Under this contract, as with the European network of academic experts in the field of disability (ANED), data on disability across the EU will be assessed. Magdi Birtha is one of the senior experts in the EDE network.

The general purpose of the European Disability Expertise (EDE) project is to collect, analyse and provide independent and scientific data and information relating to national disability policies and legislation and their relationship to policy and legislation at EU level, as well as on the situation of persons with disabilities. The information and data collected is intended to support the European Commission by:

- providing information relevant to EU-level disability policies and activities (e.g. for the European Semester Cycle);
- feeding policy and legal information useful for the preparation of future disability policies and for mainstreaming disability in forthcoming initiatives under the Commission;
- raising awareness of disability issues;
- contributing to an informed dialogue with organisations of persons with disabilities and with EU Member States; and
- contributing to the legal reporting obligations arising from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The European Centre also contributed with a synthesis report on the disability-relevance of quality assurance systems in social services (in cooperation with Darja Zaviršek).

## Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in Upper Austria

<b>Duration</b>	01/2023 - 06/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Selma Kadi, Kai Leichsenring, Mirjam Pot, Cassandra Simmons
<b>Funded by</b>	Chamber of Labour Upper Austria (Arbeiterkammer Oberösterreich)

Young carers and young adult carers are children, adolescents and young adults providing informal care for a family member with a disability, chronic disease or other long-term care needs. They are faced with particular challenges at school, in their personal development and in terms of the transition into professional training and employment. Due to scarce research and limited public awareness it is, however, important to gain better insights into the specific needs and preferences of young (adult) carers. The project addressed the issues at stake through empirical research on the needs and preferences regarding education and the transition into professional training and employment as well as by identifying best practices for supporting those who provide informal care early in life. Moreover, an estimation of the prevalence of young (adult) carers in the age group from 16 to 29 years was carried out, showing that there are between 20,000 and 40,000 young (adult) carers in Upper Austria, depending on the definition and transferability of international data and projections that calculate with a share between 9 and 18.6 percent.

Based on a literature analysis, desk research and a small qualitative study including former and current young carers and young adult carers as well as experts (n=16), particular challenges and possible policy interventions were identified. Young carers and young adult carers interviewed felt that they were left alone in several regards: with emotional challenges, care tasks, through a lack of recognition and understanding as well as in relation to their own needs beyond the caring role. Being a young carer or young adult carer can impact educational outcomes, career paths and financial resources. The study identified a range of support measures for young carers and young adult carers which target the group in general (e.g. raising awareness) and in terms of individual support (e.g. coaching psychotherapy, relief measures). Good practice examples from the United Kingdom, Australia or Norway to support young carers in the education system, in apprenticeships, and in the health system were presented to recommend similar initiatives in Austria and Upper Austria.

Further research will be needed to specify the extent of the phenomenon, determined support measures and policies that offer better choices for children and young adults, rather than compromising their future life chances regarding health, education and employment.

## Scoping Review on Long-Term Care Quality (WHO Quality)

<b>Duration</b>	05/2023 - 07/2023
<b>Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Team</b>	Kai Leichsenring, Cassandra Simmons
<b>Funded by</b>	WHO Europe

The WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO EURO) is working with national authorities and care providers to review and strengthen quality management tools and processes in Moldova, as part of a broader effort to improve care planning, resource allocation and quality of long-term care provision across care settings. This includes a set of activities to review, systematise and synthesise the international evidence base on quality management in long-term care provision, to inform the development of customised policies and processes for long-term care facilities as well as community-based care providers in Moldova.

The general aim of this project was to support WHO EURO in developing principles for quality management in long-term care and recommendations for strengthening mechanisms for promoting higher quality and performance in long-term care delivery. Based on the WHO framework for countries to achieve an integrated continuum of long-term care, the WHO country assessment framework for the integrated delivery of long-term care and the WHO framework for action strengthening health systems to improve health outcomes, the project reviewed the international evidence-base on quality management in LTC in Europe and synthesised key principles and main dimensions of quality management in LTC.

The scoping review found that while quality assurance mechanisms are well established in many care systems, less attention has been paid to strengthening quality management and continuous improvement processes, which are crucial for ensuring high quality in care services. The final report therefore highlights considerations for setting up quality management systems from the perspective of policymakers and national authorities. It emphasises values that should underpin quality management systems, necessary components for establishing quality management processes as well as the role of the state and other stakeholders in achieving this. The report addresses changes needed to shift and strengthen systems to take a quality management and a continuous improvement approach. This includes increasing user engagement in quality processes, strengthening needs assessments processes, incentivising providers to participate in quality improvement initiatives, investing in strengthening data collection systems and ICT capabilities, among others.

## Thematic Review on Incentivising Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Open Labour Market (Austria)

Duration	07/2023 - 07/2023
Status	Completed
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta
External Coordinator	Ellen Murray, ICF
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

As part of the European Centre of Expertise (ECE) in the field of employment and labour market policy, a country report on Austria was drafted regarding national policies, strategies and measures for persons with disabilities when entering the open labour market.

The paper presents the state of play on incentivising employment and retention in employment of persons with disabilities and informs on policies supporting the employment of persons with disabilities for both persons with disabilities and enterprises. Relevant practices implemented in Austria such as the *Koordinationsstelle Jugend-Schule-Beschäftigung* (Coordination Office Youth-Education-Employment) in Vienna are described. The report concludes that Austria can build on existing networks and cooperation structures between the institutions engaged in the occupational and social participation of persons with disabilities. The Austrian policy system, however, is complex and responsibilities are split between institutions. The division of competences between the *Bund* and the *Länder* can hinder the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market.

The challenges faced in improving the employment situation of persons with disabilities in Austria are manifold and include ensuring inclusive education, enhancing the accessibility to work and overcoming stigma as well as the frequent resistance of enterprises in employing persons with disabilities. Because disability mainstreaming is a policy aim of Austria, co-creating measures together with persons with disabilities, especially at policy interfaces such as between education and employment, is key. To completely embed Austrian disability policies in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adequate resources, especially for inclusive education, must be made available and measures set to minimise institutionalisation of persons with disabilities. Hence, steps urgently need to be taken to guarantee professional participation of persons with disabilities in Austria.

## Targeted Measures for Persons with Disabilities to Cope with the Cost-of-Living Crisis – Study for the European Parliament’s Committee on Petitions (PETI)

<b>Duration</b>	06/2023 - 09/2023
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Magdi BIRTHA, Eszter Zólyomi, Sabina Gjylsheni, Felix Wohlgemuth
<b>Funded by</b>	European Parliament

There are currently 100 million persons with disabilities in the European Union, representing 15% of the total population. In 2021, 29.7% of the EU population aged 16 or more with a disability (activity limitation) was at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 18.8% of those with no disability. Approximately 24% are at risk of energy poverty. The most recent crises (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, energy crisis) had a disproportionate effect on the lives of persons with disabilities.

The study aimed to give an overview of the existing applicable international legislation and of the legislation, policies and measures at EU level seeking to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities. Among other aspects, it will examine the availability of disaggregated data with regard to impact of the rising cost of living and energy crisis on persons with disabilities and will assess the additional costs that can arise from having a disability or from living in a household with a person with disabilities. Practices of national legislation, policies, and schemes that are made available to meet the extra needs of persons with disabilities will be presented from a few selected EU Member States.

Available data, studies and analysis from various sources were used to provide concrete quantitative and qualitative evidence and policy recommendations.

## Supporting INclusive Development of Community-Based Long-Term CARE Services through Multi-Stakeholder Participatory Approaches (InCARE)

<b>Duration</b>	11/2020 - 10/2023
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Selma Kadi, Kai Leichsenring, Cassandra Simmons, Elif Naz Kayran, Klara Lorenz-Dant, Rahel Kahlert, Stefania Ilinca, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
<b>Project Partners</b>	Chance B Gruppe (Austria), Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales – IMSERSO (Spain), Fundación Instituto Gerontológica Matia – INGEMA (Spain), Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (North Macedonia), Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, Stichting Vilans (Netherlands), Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics (United Kingdom), Eurocarers (Belgium), Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria, Associated Partner), Ministry of Health (North Macedonia, Associated Partner)
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, EaSI Programme

As European countries face the formidable challenge of providing adequate, affordable and sustainable support to their ageing populations, socially innovative approaches are required to manage the inherent complexity of long-term care systems and respond to such challenges in a flexible but coordinated fashion at all governance levels. InCARE aims to promote participatory, innovative and integrated approaches to long-term care policy and service development by focusing on aspects that are instrumental for system sustainability and innovation capacity: multi-stakeholder cooperation, evidence-based decision-making, capacity building and skills transfer.

InCARE has emphasised multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary collaboration. Technical partners are providing support with research, outreach, implementation and evaluation activities, while national policy and implementation partners have been empowered to develop a coherent local approach to long-term care policy and service design.

Activities have included formative research in support of policy processes (Theory of Change, data collection, evidence synthesis and generation of policy-relevant toolkits), national pilot implementation activities in Austria, Spain and North Macedonia, and their evaluation.

## Technical Support for the Development and Update of EUROMOD

<b>Duration</b>	01/2021 - 12/2023
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Felix Wohlgemuth, Michael Fuchs, Leonard Geyer
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Seville (JRC-Seville)

EUROMOD is a tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union (EU) that enables researchers and policy analysts to calculate, in a comparable manner, the effects of taxes and benefits on household incomes and work incentives for the population of each of the 27 Member States and for the EU as a whole.

EUROMOD is free for academic and not-for-profit use. For information about accessing EUROMOD, please see the JRC-Seville website.

The EUROMOD consortium consists of the core developer group at JRC Seville and the national expert groups of each Member State. The European Centre's task is to act as the Austrian Expert Team providing an annual update of policy parameters, the Austrian input data (EU-SILC national data) for the model, as well as validation.

In 2023, the Austrian part of EUROMOD was updated to 2023 policy rules (incl. adjustments for bracket creep, indexation of benefits, etc.) using latest input data (SILC 2021 with incomes for 2020).

A detailed description of the policy parameters, the micro-database as well as on validation results is provided in the Austrian EUROMOD country report.



## European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP)

<b>Duration</b>	10/2021 - 01/2024
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Anette Scoppetta
<b>Project Partner</b>	Leda Stott, Spain
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

The EU funds, encompassed under the Common Provisions Regulation 2021/1060 (“the CPR funds”) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are implemented under shared management. Shared management is perceived as best tailored to achieve policy objectives in different national and regional institutional environments.

The Partnership Principle is one of the main principles of programming and implementation of cohesion policy, recognised in the legislative framework. The provisions on partnership were strengthened with the establishment of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, which was adopted as Delegated Commission Regulation no. 240/2014. Article 18 of this regulation foresaw the creation of a community of practice on partnership to exchange good practices.

Building on a positive experience of 2014-2020 precedent forum, the European Commission established a group of experts as the European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP) for the 2021-2027 programming period. The community involves managing authorities as well as other representatives of regional/local and other public authorities, economic, social and civil society partners, including NGOs and research institutes.

The ECoPP tasks are to:

- (a) Facilitate exchange of experience with partnership;
- (b) Stimulate capacity building;
- (c) Disseminate relevant outcomes, in particular good practice and innovative approaches;
- (d) Review the existing European Code of Conduct and prepare proposals for its update for the 2021-2027 period.

The ECoPP involves several DGs of the European Commission, not only those under the CPR, but also the EAFRD that used to be part of European Structural and Investment Funds and now functions independently, but still recognises the partnership as a basic principle. The European Centre provided expertise for the European Commission for the ECoPP.

## Assessment of the Channels of Information and their Use in the Posting of Workers (INFO-POW)

<b>Duration</b>	09/2022 - 02/2024
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Eszter Zólyomi, Anette Scoppetta, Leonard Geyer, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
<b>Project Partners</b>	HIVA–Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium), UNIVE–Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (Italy), CSPV SAV–Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia), ZRC SAZU–Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Slovenia)
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Social Fund+ (ESF+), Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL)

Info-POW brings together research institutions from five EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Slovakia, and Slovenia) as well as social partners at both national and EU levels to promote the evidence basis through the collection and evaluation of original data, and the analysis specific to the posting process and posted workers' working conditions.

The overarching aim of this research project is to identify and assess new as well as existing challenges and needs of undertakings (in the construction sector more specifically) in accessing and using relevant information regarding the process of posting workers and the undertakings' obligations as a result thereof. Previous studies have found that despite the existence of information provided through different channels, whether by state or non-state actors, information is insufficient and/or difficult to access by the stakeholders it should be provided for. It also remains unclear to what degree existing channels of information are used by posting undertakings and in what way(s).

This study fills a gap in the understanding of how transnational posting undertakings and user undertakings find and use information in their interaction with national institutions and how that affects their overall performance in terms of the correct application of the posting rules and the protection of labour and social standards. The study focuses on the specific case of the construction sector as the main sector where posting occurs, and where both larger companies and SMEs as well as self-employed are active.

## Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings – Mutual Learning Activities in BB Countries

<b>Duration</b>	06/2021 - 03/2024
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Magdi BIRTHA, Sabina GJYLSHENI, Kai LEICHSENRING, Amália SOLYMOSSI, Monika HUNJADI, Eszter ZÓLYOMI, Selma KADI, Felix WOHLGEMUTH, Elif NAZ KAYRAN, Cassandra SIMMONS, Leonard GEYER, Veronica SANDU, Rahel KAHLERT
<b>Project Partners</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia, National Observatory on Labour Market and Social Protection Issues / Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of North Macedonia, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of Serbia, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and other partners in those countries and in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Moldova.
<b>Funded by</b>	Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

As part of its Bridge Building (BB) Function, the European Centre established collaboration with stakeholders in eleven EU accession countries, potential EU accession countries and Eastern Partnership countries (BB countries). Due to the regular exchange between the European Centre and the ministries' needs for research-based and policy-relevant knowledge on social policy are expressed constantly. By implementing mutual learning activities in the BB countries, the European Centre provides answers to countries' needs related to the better coping with the health and social consequences of COVID-19 and to fighting poverty, especially for vulnerable groups. The project corresponds to the principles, objectives and priorities of the three-year programme of the Austrian development policy from 2019 to 2021.

Through a tailored needs assessment at the beginning of the project, the specific topics of the mutual learning activities are being constantly fine-tuned with the ministries and actors in the partner countries resulting in the following actions, including their monitoring and evaluation:

- *Peer Reviews or Policy Reviews:* Six online peer (or policy) reviews are carried out. They promote mutual exchange of experience and knowledge transfer about the situation on the selected topic in the host country and in the respective peer countries.
- *Trainings:* Four online trainings are carried out. These enable participatory learning on a specific topic in a partner country.
- *Hands-on pilot:* One applied pilot project is developed that builds on the results of the peer reviews and training sessions and provides the specific state with detailed recommendations for action as part of a strategy implementation plan or action plan.

## The Effect of COVID-19 on Poverty and Material Deprivation of Children in Austria (COVCHILD)

<b>Duration</b>	01/2023 - 06/2024
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Anette Scoppetta, Michael Fuchs, Leonard Geyer, Felix Wohlgemuth, Eszter Zólyomi
<b>Funded by</b>	The Anniversary Fund of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB)

The European Centre aims at raising the empirical evidence on poverty and material deprivation of children in Austria by analysing the respective consequences of the COVID-19 crisis during 2020 and 2021. The study takes a comprehensive approach and analyses different aspects related to child poverty by addressing different concepts and indicators, socio-economic characteristics of children concerned as well as the impact of policy measures (COVID-induced measures, automatic stabilisers, and hypothetical policies) in its entirety and at the level of individual policy interventions. Four main research questions will be addressed:

- How did the prevalence of at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) and material deprivation of children in Austria develop during the COVID-crisis?
- To what extent did the socio-economic background of children concerned change due to the crisis?
- How effective were COVID-induced policies and automatic stabilisers in counteracting an increase in child poverty and to what extent?
- How would alternative policies to counter child poverty have performed during the COVID-crisis?

For analysing the first two issues, latest EU-SILC 2020-2022-data also covering the crisis-years (incomes 2019-2021) will be used. The prevalence of poverty and material deprivation during the crisis will be measured by traditional indicators related to monetary poverty as well as by an innovative index on material deprivation and social exclusion (employing the six dimensions debts and arrears, financial capacity, health, social interaction and personal relationships, housing and local environment quality, and education and care) which was compiled by the European Centre in a former research project for the City of Vienna.

The effectiveness of measures will be investigated by using EUROMOD/SORESI based on respective EU-SILC input data. To investigate the impact of both already existing automatic stabilisers and COVID-induced policy measures – both in their entirety and by individual (groups of) measures – on counteracting child poverty and losses of disposable income for families with children, we will apply a decomposition analysis based on two scenarios: (1) a COVID-world as in reality, and (2) a counterfactual scenario without the COVID-employment and income shock.

## Driver Survey – Working Conditions and Collective Action in the Platform-Mediated, Ride-Hailing Sector and Beyond

<b>Duration</b>	02/2023 - 09/2024
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Sonila Danaj, Nicolas Prinz
<b>Project Partners</b>	Vida–Austrian transport and service sector trade union (Austria), Association for Passenger Car Transport within the Austrian Chamber of Commerce (Austria), ETUI–European Trade Union Institute (Belgium)
<b>Funded by</b>	Chamber of Labour Vienna (Arbeiterkammer Wien, Digitalisierungsfonds 4.0)

The growth of platform work threatens workers' rights and social dialogue. Recent studies in Austria have covered several sectors including food delivery and cleaning. However, despite criticism of low pay and bad working conditions, the conditions of drivers in the app-mediated, ride-hailing sector have not been researched. Furthermore, research in other countries shows significant cross-sectoral differences in working conditions, pay and attitudes towards collective action which have not been explored in Austria.

Against this background, the Driver Survey project has three interrelated aims:

- To collect novel data on the working conditions and attitudes of drivers in the platform-mediated, ride-hailing sector
- To compare the findings with research on platform workers in other industries in Austria
- To use the results of the survey and the comparative analysis to develop recommendations for social partners and policymakers

Based on focus groups and qualitative interviews with drivers and an online survey among drivers, a comparative analysis of the results will be carried out. In addition, the project aims to strengthen networking and the exchange of knowledge between researchers, activists, social partners and policymakers in the field of platform work. Results will, therefore, be discussed in an expert workshop with researchers and stakeholders to develop policy recommendations.

## Cohort Community Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout Europe (COORDINATE)

<b>Duration</b>	04/2021 - 03/2025
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Kai Leichsenring, Cassandra Simmons
<b>External Project Coordinators</b>	Gary Pollock, Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom) and Jennifer Symonds, University College Dublin, The Geary Institute (Ireland)
<b>Project Partners</b>	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives, European Research Infrastructure Consortium (Norway), Institut Drustvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar (Croatia), Universidad Pompeu Fabra (Spain), Institut national d'études démographiques (France), University of Essex (United Kingdom), Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper (Slovenia), ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal), Helsingin Yliopisto, University of Helsinki (Finland), Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna (Italy), Stichting CentERdata (The Netherlands), University College London, Centre for Longitudinal Studies-CLS and Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resources-CLOSER (United Kingdom), Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie Van Wetenschappen-KNAW (The Netherlands), GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Germany), Ipsos GmbH (Germany), TNS UK Ltd (Kantar Public) (United Kingdom), cApStAn SA (Belgium)
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020

The availability of longitudinal data to analyse the well-being of children as they grow up and to develop policies to improve their well-being is uneven across Europe. COORDINATE is, therefore, the next phase of the 'Growing Up in Digital Europe' (GUIDE) project funded by Horizon 2020 in recognition that policy-makers across Europe are currently unable to draw upon consistent, comparable and high-quality data on child well-being to inform policy.

COORDINATE aims to fill the gaps in the availability of robust and suitable data for the monitoring and evaluation of child well-being in Europe by (1) facilitating improved access to existing longitudinal data, particularly on child well-being; (2) extending the GUIDE/Eurocohort survey network; and (3) initiating the GUIDE survey with a large-scale cohort pilot survey using a harmonised instrument and research design in key European countries.

Over the four years of the project, the European Centre contributes to facilitating access to the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) by hosting international researchers and providing training on data extraction, processing, analysis and data visualisation. Moreover, the European Centre supports network development to help build the expertise and operational capacity required for implementing the GUIDE survey in Europe.

## EUROMOD – JRC Web Interface Update

<b>Duration</b>	07/2021 - 06/2025
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Leonard Geyer, Michael Fuchs
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Seville (JRC-Seville)

EUROMOD is a tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union (EU) that enables researchers and policy analysts to calculate the effects of taxes and benefits on household incomes and work incentives for the population of each Member State and for the EU as a whole. The EUROMOD – JRC web interface is an online tool that provides a simplified access to the tax-benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD. It allows users to implement simple tax reforms and analyse their fiscal and distributional effects.

This project provides technical support to JRC-Seville to extend the functionality of the web interface by adding new data and the possibility for simulating a wider range of policy reforms. In addition, technical support is provided for the annual updating of the web interface for all 27 EU countries.

## Diversity-Sensitive Care of Older People with Migration Background (DISCOPMB)

<b>Duration</b>	10/2022 - 09/2025
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Selma Kadi, Magdi BIRTHA, Kai Leichsenring
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Emina Hadziabdic, Linnaeus University (Sweden)
<b>Project Partners</b>	Linnaeus University (Sweden), Anziani e non solo (Italy), Hogeschool Gent (Belgium), Jade (Finland)
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, Erasmus+

High-quality health and social care services should be available to all individuals and their families irrespective of age, ethnic and cultural origin. The increasing diversity in European societies creates the need for training to students and professionals to enable them to provide person-centred and diversity-sensitive health and social care to all individuals. The project addresses this need through the development of training for health and care students, open educational resources for students and professionals as well as policy recommendations. People with migration background and stakeholders participate in the design of the trainings and open educational resources.

The expected outcome of this project is to improve person-centred and diversity-sensitive care for older migrants through training of students and professionals in diverse health and social care disciplines.

Based on desk research of existing literature and curricula, a training programme will be designed, piloted and disseminated, including open educational resources. This development is being accompanied by the involvement of experts by experience (older people with migration background) and potential users of the educational resources. The project will be evaluated based on a Theory of Change process. Policy recommendations for national and European stakeholders and policymakers will help to raise awareness and contribute to the further dissemination of the training programme.



## Peer Reviews and Mutual Learning Activities in the Fields of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (MFC ICF Peer Review 2)

<b>Duration</b>	10/2022 - 10/2026
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing
<b>Project Team</b>	Anette Scoppetta, Selma Kadi, Cassandra Simmons, Kai Leichsenring, Magdi BIRTHA, Sonila Danaj, Eszter Zólyomi, Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Michael Fuchs
<b>External Coordinator</b>	Mattias Wihlborg, ICF
<b>Project Partners</b>	ICF SA (Belgium), Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS) (Italy)
<b>Funded by</b>	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

ICF, in collaboration with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and IRS, have been awarded a framework contract with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) to organise and provide content for peer reviews and mutual learning activities for another four years (2022-2026). In the preceding framework contract, which was implemented between 2016 and 2021, ICF and its partners organised around 100 events and mutual learning activities.

The general objective of the peer reviews and mutual learning activities in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion is to facilitate learning debate regarding policy developments, reforms and investments at European and national level in domains such as: employment, social protection, social inclusion, labour law, health and long-term care, pensions, free movement and coordination of social security, working conditions, health and safety at work, social dialogue, labour mobility, minimum income, inclusion of migrants, competences, skills, including digital skills, vocational education and training, adult learning, and other policy fields relevant to social economy.

The European Centre supports the organisation of peer reviews and mutual learning activities through facilitation and analytical support services, including thematic and country discussion papers.

# Publications

## Books and Chapters in Books

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Scoppetta, A. (2023). Institutionelle Partnerschaften als Gestaltungselement zur Förderung von Innovation in der Arbeitsmarkt- und Sozialpolitik [Institutional partnerships as a design element to promote innovation in labour market and social policy], pp. 149-160. In: M. Hüttemann & A. Parpan-Blaser (Eds.), *Innovative Soziale Arbeit - Grundlagen, Praxisfelder und Methoden*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag GmbH.

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