



# Capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning

Findings and policy recommendations  
from selected projects

Anette Scoppetta, Magdi BIRTHA, Selma Kadi

**11 October 2023**

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



**2023**

# Content

- What did we do regarding capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning during the past year?
- How did we do it?
- What are the lessons (to be) learnt?
- What are the plans for future?



Joint reflection &  
suggestions for policy  
recommendations

## Testimonial

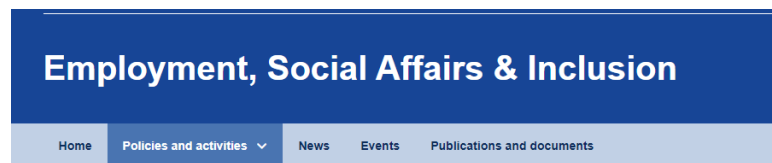
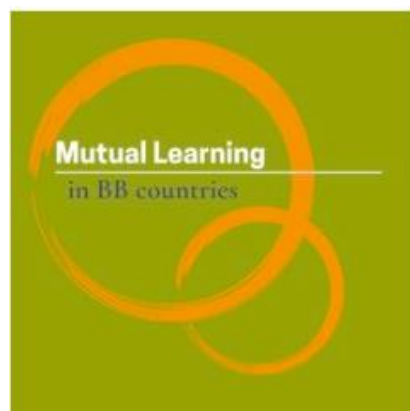
Peer reviews and mutual learning activities in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion

### Core team participant

*“This event was a big deal as it was the first event bringing together the national LTC coordinators to discuss implementing the EU Care Strategy. The fact we were able to be part of the facilitation/support team was huge, given the substantial relevance this event had for policymaking for LTC.”*

# What did we do?

## Capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning Key elements of work in all three research teams in 2022/2023



### Social protection & social inclusion

Addressing poverty and supporting social inclusion

Social protection

Social Protection Committee

Indicators' sub-group

Peer reviews

Minimum Income Network (MINET) working group

### Peer reviews

Peer Reviews are a key instrument of the Social 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC). They foster open discussion and mutual learning.

Each Peer Review meeting:

- is hosted by one country which presents a selected good practice (e.g. a programme, policy reform, institutional arrangement);
- is attended by experts from the European Commission, peer countries and relevant stakeholders who provide feedback.



**Challenges and solutions in preventing, detecting and proving undeclared work in new forms of work**

**Report from peer learning dialogue**

**January 2023**

## What did we do?

### Key objectives

- Through our activities we support and facilitate **exchange and dialogue on social policy challenges and practices** among different countries and different governance levels
- We thereby produce novel knowledge, also through participatory research methods

## What did we do?

### The example of a BB Peer Review in Social Welfare: Deinstitutionalisation of children and persons with disabilities (8-9 February 2023; online)

- ✓ Key message 1: Embed the transition from institutional to community-based care in a comprehensive social policy reform
- ✓ Key message 2: Follow a human rights approach when creating new services in the community
- ✓ Key message 3: Individual needs assessment is key to provide person-centred services
- ✓ Key message 4: Attracting, (re)training, and retaining qualified workforce, especially in rural areas
- ✓ Key message 5: Quality assurance mechanisms for newly created community-based services
- ✓ Key message 6: Partnership is needed to successfully plan and implement the deinstitutionalisation



## What did we do?

# The example of ECoPP: Suggestion for the Revision of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP)

### PROPOSAL FOR A REVISED DELEGATED REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT ON PARTNERSHIP IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EU FUNDS.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006; and in particular Article 5(3) thereof,	Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, and to Regulation (EU) No 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development,
--	--

Whereas:	
(1) The aim of this Regulation is to provide for a European code of conduct in order to support and facilitate Member States in the organisation of partnerships for Partnership Agreements and programmes supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime	(1) The aim of this Regulation is to revise and strengthen the European code of conduct on partnership in order to support and facilitate co-creation processes that assist Member States in the organisation and implementation of partnerships for Partnership Agreements and programmes supported by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the

10

- ✓ The Partnership Principle is one of the main principles of programming and implementation of EU cohesion policy, recognised in the legislative framework
- ✓ There are five DGs engaged in the ECoPP (DG REGIO, DG EMPL, DG HOME, DG MARE, DG AGRI)
- ✓ During 2022/2023 six sub-groups of the European Community of Practice on Partnership comprising 180 members across EU-27 (stakeholders from public, private and civil society) worked on gathering insights and practices on working in partnership
- ✓ The sub-groups, for instance, worked on the Complementary of Funds, Recommendations on the revision of the ECCP, Accountability framework, etc.
- ✓ Our suggestion for the revision of the ECCP will be reviewed by all 5 DGs before a consolidated version will be presented to the EP which should decide on the final legal text



## What did we do?

### The example of **tailor-made trainings** (online): Provided to Ministry officials/public authorities to support ongoing policy reform processes

- ✓ Training on *Ageing and long-term care* to the **Ministry for Social Policy for Ukraine** (15-16 December 2021)
- ✓ Training on *Financing social services* to the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy North Macedonia** (7-8 June 2022)
- ✓ Training on *Quality assurance in delivering social services – From commissioning to monitoring performance* to the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Armenia** (20-21 June 2023)
- ✓ Upcoming: Training to the **Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Moldova** on *Innovation in long-term care and quality assurance in delivering social services* (15-16 November 2023)
- ✓ + Training for staff members of the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** on *Social services for children, persons with disabilities and older people* (Nov-Dec 2022)





**Testimonial****BB Peer review & Training****Representative from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia**

*“I would like to warmly thank you for all your efforts in delivering the training. It was extremely helpful in a stage when we are trying to figure out our further steps in the direction of quality assurance. I appreciate how attentive you were to our needs and how professionally you tailored the learning event to cover all the worrying aspects.”*

Story telling

BB Peer Review & Training project

The image shows the front cover of a report. The background is a solid olive green. On the left, the title 'BRIDGE BUILDING POLICY REVIEW IN SOCIAL POLICY' is written in large, bold, white and blue capital letters. To the right, there is a graphic consisting of two overlapping orange circles. Inside the top circle, the text 'Mutual Learning in BB countries' is written in white. Inside the bottom circle, the text 'FUNDED BY' is written in white, followed by the Austrian flag and the text 'Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection'. At the bottom left, the text 'Host country: Armenia' is next to the Armenian flag, and 'Co-organiser: European Centre' is next to the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research logo. At the bottom right, the logo 'eeSPN' is written in a white script font.

**BRIDGE BUILDING  
POLICY REVIEW  
IN SOCIAL POLICY**

**Mutual Learning  
in BB countries**

**FUNDED BY**  
Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Social Affairs, Health, Care  
and Consumer Protection

Host country:  Armenia  
Co-organiser:  European Centre

eeSPN

## Testimonials

### BB Peer reviews and Trainings



#### Ukrainian BB Training

Governmental official

*"I suggest to conduct such trainings more often if possible."*



#### North Macedonian BB Training

Governmental official

*"Thank you for the efforts. I really enjoyed it".*



#### Kosovo Peer Review

Participant

*"This meeting organized by you was welcomed as we had the opportunity to exchange experiences from the country which were present".*



#### Policy Review on gender equality

Participant

*"Thank you so much for this great session! The experience of other states in different areas such as gender equality was welcomed. At the same time, we would greatly appreciate further cooperation with you in other social areas".*

**Comments****BB Peer review & training****Comments by**

- NLO / BB country: **Oleg Barcari**, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova

## How did we do it?

During the past year we offered **tailor-made peer learning** activities such as:

- policy reviews,
- peer reviews,
- peer-to-peer learning sessions;
- trainings;

and **participatory research** such as:

- policy labs,
- action research, and
- formative research activities.

## How did we do it?

Formats	Example for projects/tasks	Specificities
Policy Dialogue	ECoPP/ECCP (2022/2023)	Dialogue across all stakeholder groups (public, private, civil), across all CPR funds plus AGRI and across all EU Member States
Policy Learning Dialogue	European Undeclared Work Platform (07/2022 – 12/2022)	Peer learning dialogue on platform work: 3 events that have built on each other, established between the ELA/European Labour Authority and interested EU/EFTA-Member States, including the testing of new approaches in volunteering countries and the mainstreaming of the learnings across other countries
Peer review	BB Peer review & training; e.g., Deinstitutionalisation of children and persons with disabilities (8-9 February 2023)	Focussing on an identified policy of a host country that is reviewed by peers (other countries) (here: North Macedonia's current reforms in the deinstitutionalisation of children and persons with disabilities; peer countries were the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Armenia amongst other countries)

## How did we do it?

Formats	Example for projects/tasks	Specificities
Policy review	BB Peer review & training; e.g., Gender Equality and Care for relatives (5-6 June 2023)	‘Light’ form of a peer review focussing on a policy area where all participating countries peer each other without prior preparation (here: discuss participating BB countries’ existing institutional structure and approach in care policies especially childcare policies from the perspective of gender equality)
Mutual learning workshop	DG EMPL Peer reviews and mutual learning activities	Bringing together the national LTC coordinators to discuss implementing the EU Care Strategy with focus on person-centred and integrated care including the definition of quality standards and quality assurance mechanisms (19-20 June 2023)
Trainings	ILO-follow up/Improving coordination of social protection and employment service delivery in Armenia & Tajikistan (12/2022)	Follow-up on already trained staff (Public employment counsellors and social workers) on integrated case management



## How did we do it?

Formats used	Example for projects/tasks	Specificities
Peer-to-peer learning sessions	BBinars (since 11/2021). every 2-3 months	BBinars are a series of webinars, offering EESPN members and a wider audience in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership region, a possibility to exchange and learn about topics of key interest (e.g., <i>The social investment approach</i> , 13 June 2023)
Policy labs	CEU Policy Lab (since 2021)	Institutional collaboration between the European Centre and the CEU; students prepared country profiles for for the EESPN website in 2023 and wrote a Policy brief on <i>Enhancing social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Western Balkans</i> .
Action research	Con3Post (01/2019-12/2020)	Exploring the recruitment and posting of third country nationals (non-EU citizens) in the construction sector. The project used action research methodology to work with stakeholders and policymakers in forecasting future labour flows to inform strategies and planning.
Formative research activities	InCARE (11/2021-10/2023), Young carers (01/2023-06/2023)	Proof of concept – using Theory of Change to develop pilot projects on integrated care, emergency button service, support for informal carers of older people with dementia together with diverse stakeholders

# What are the lessons (to be) learnt?

- Capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning are **constant tasks** within projects
- An exchange **at the same eye level** is key for learning
- **Multi-stakeholder** groups (public, private, civil) and a mix of **different countries** (EU, BB) can increase learning outcomes
- Participatory approaches are more common within the EU than in the BB region (**be prepared** for everything to be changed when working with the BB countries😊)


# What are the lessons (to be) learnt?

- Capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning activities are not just an add-on, but require **careful planning** and **know-how about the partners**
- Plan **adequate resources** for these kind of activities (Don't underestimate the time needed for clarification issues, coordination, organisation of interpretation etc.)
- The **methods** can easily be adapted to the varying needs of participants (we can be creative and flexible)
- **Learning effects** are not easily to be collected (allow for enough time between the events and the potential steps taken by participants in order to capture outcomes)

**Testimonial****ECoPP/European Community of Practice on Partnership****Policy officer from DG Employment, European Commission**

*“We would like to say that it was a pleasure to read such a bold, comprehensive and well-presented proposal [ECCP revision] and we are grateful for your sustained efforts and wise steering of the [ECoPP] network which have led to such high-quality deliverables”*

## Partner feedback BBinars and others

 Home Explore Notifications

**Adi Buxbaum** @AdiBuxbaum · Jun 13  
Wie immer ein lehrreicher Austausch ...




Danke für die Einladung 📍

Ein gut [#ausgebauter](#) [#Sozialstaat](#) ist leider keine Selbstverständlichkeit! Nirgends!

Gebraucht wird er überall ...

**European Centre for Social Welfare Polic...** @EuroCentre... · Jun 13  
Our [#BBinar](#) on 'The social investment approach in the [#WesternBalkans](#) & [#EasternPartnership](#) countries kicked off!

[#Albania](#) [#Austria](#) [#Azerbaijan](#) [#Belgium](#) [#BosniaandHerzegovina](#) [#Croatia](#) [#France](#) [#Georgia](#) [#Kosovo](#) [#Montenegro](#) [#Netherlands](#) [#NorthMacedonia](#) [#Serbia](#) [#Turkey](#)

**Monika Hunjad...**   


**BBinar** **The social investment approach in Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries**


BBinar – 13 June 2023

Adi Buxbaum – Sonja Aviljas – Leonard Geyer

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

1 1 9 709

 Search




**European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research**

1,966 followers

**Thomas Bignal** · 2nd  
Passionate about social inclusion, social services & Europe  
1mo · 🌐


A must read!

 **European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research**  
1,966 followers  
1mo · 🌐

**New report!** 📄











This report examines the effects of changing [#social](#) care models, evolving user needs, & the increased use of digital tools and technologies on the skills & training needs of workers in social [#care](#) services as well as the role of [#social](#) partners in managing the needs of the changing sector.

📖 Read more in the full report: <https://bit.ly/43kerU3>



9

Reactions

**Comments****BB Peer review & training****Comments by**

- Board member Austria: **Andreas Schaller**, Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

## What are the plans for future?

- There are ongoing training requests and three projects running in 2024 (DG EMPL Peer review and training until 2026; ECoPP (annually to be renewed) until 2027; BB PR & TR ends 3/2024)
- Capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning elements should constantly be included in third-party funded projects
- Innovative methods should be implemented (Policy Learning Labs) and activities linked with evaluation (Theory of Change)
- 'Light' BB PR & TR follow-up? (once a year?, as part of the regular BB work?)



## Flashlights

### Peer learning key competence

Key competence video – Peer learning (<https://vimeo.com/849084986>)



# Conclusion

(1) from pilot to upscaling, (2) from research to policy evidence; and (3) capacity building, policy dialogue and mutual learning:

- ✓ frequently overlap in applied research
- ✓ have in common that policy areas aim to be improved together with partners from different background (e.g., implementing partners, policy-makers, scientists)
- ✓ search for practicable improvements (solution-orientation) of policies
- ✓ include step-by-step changes (incremental innovations; no radical changes)

# Policy recommendations

Rather than constantly applying **reactive rationing** (continuous adjustments of failing parts of the system), **proactive policy approaches** are vital that



Source: pixabay

- ✓ comprise a **vision** and build on a **joint understanding of all parties** (voluntary policy dialogue with actors across sectors, governance levels, etc. as a basis)
- ✓ include **forward-looking** analysis and foresight methodologies
- ✓ comprise gradual but **timely processes of 'real' change** towards an inclusive society



# Thank you!



@EuroCentre\_SWPR



European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research

**Berggasse 17, 1090 Vienna, Austria**

**+43 1 319 45 05-0**

[ec@euro.centre.org](mailto:ec@euro.centre.org)