

Annual Report of Activities 2025



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

Table of Contents

	From the Executive Director	4
	Highlights and Outcomes	9
	50th Anniversary of the European Centre	9
	Employment & Labour Mobility	11
	Health & Care	17
	Social Protection & Inclusion	22
	Bridging Function	28
	Projects	34
	Publications	59
	Books and Chapters in Books	59
	Journal Articles	59
	Policy Briefs	61
	Reports and other Publications	61
	Working Papers and Blogs	65
	Conference Papers and Presentations	65
	Datasets	69
	Training and Teaching Materials	69
	International Seminars and Webinars	69
	Organisation	71
	Management and Staff	71
	Board of Directors	73
	NLOs (National Liaison Officials)	75

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

Following the successful celebrations of the European Centre's 50th anniversary in 2024, the management and staff returned to the routine activities we are best at: delivering social policy expertise in defined areas of applied research. We offer this expertise to various stakeholders across the UNECE region, with the aim of improving governance in disability policies, long-term care, ageing, labour mobility, platform work, anti-poverty initiatives, partnership working in public employment, social dialogue, and many more issues at stake.

Still, in the context of global polycrises and scepticism toward international organisations and diplomacy, social policies are often seen as a privilege for the few, as a minor priority that may have contributed to reducing poverty, but could be put aside now. And yet, this year has seen several important global events, related reports and declarations designed to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation, including in social development, underpinned by social security and social policies in a broader sense:

- The *Summit of the Future in September 2024* (New York) aimed to accelerate action to achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), strengthen multilateralism and address future global challenges. The resulting *Pact for the Future* defines 56 actions to accelerate sustainable development, ensure that technology benefits people, encourage investment in young people, support human rights and gender equality, and enhance global governance. The Pact comes with two annexes on a *global compact on digital cooperation*, e.g. regarding the regulation of artificial intelligence, and a *declaration on the interests of future generations* (IISD, 2024).
- The *World Social Report (WSR) 2024*, published in spring 2025 (UN DESA, 2025), was released amid preparations for the *Second World Summit for Social Development* (Doha) in autumn 2025. The WSR addresses the effects of far-reaching geopolitical and environmental shocks and growing interconnectivity, which exacerbate economic insecurity, inequalities and declining social trust. The aims of the *First World Summit for Social Development* in 1995 (sic!) were to address the structural causes and consequences of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion as profound social problems. With the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in 2015, this approach has been expanded and, while social development remains central, the challenges have multiplied and national efforts alone are insufficient: “Only 47 per cent of the global population is estimated to have access to at least one social protection benefit, meaning that more than 4 billion people still lack any social protection. Furthermore, only 31 per cent of the working-age population is legally covered by a comprehensive social security system. In high-income countries, on average, 85 per cent of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit, while in low-income countries, it is only 13 per cent” (UN DESA, 2025, p.16). The WSR concludes that national actions for social



development, including the expansion of social security, need to be reinvigorated by renewing international collaboration for social development.

- The *Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development* in spring 2025 (Seville) highlighted the serious funding challenges to reach the Sustainable Development Goals in the next four years. There are currently at least 3 billion people living in countries that spend more on interest payments than on health or education. To address these difficulties, the *Sevilla Commitment* lays out a path to close the \$4 trillion annual SDG financing gap in developing countries.

The *Second World Summit for Social Development* in Doha (coming up in autumn 2025) presents yet another opportunity to reach a consensus that would modernise the Copenhagen declaration, originally adopted in the Danish capital at the *First World Summit for Social Development* in 1995 (sic!), and make it suitable for our current times. Thus, while the UN system is working slowly to update its “software”, major structural reforms are underway to ensure a more effective way of implementing what is left of the 2030 Agenda. Driven by the constant liquidity crisis and as a response to threats to the multilateral system, the UN80 Initiative proposes merging UN entities, relocating staff, and overcoming “projectitis” (Baumann, 2025). Regardless of how this reform is implemented, the wider context of global power shifts remains critical.

The European Centre, with its affiliation to the United Nations, is not directly affected by these reforms, but the broader context of rising nationalism and distrust towards multilateral organisations remains a threat to our goals as well. Operating with a focus on the UNECE region, e.g.

through our bridge-building activities, collaboration with the Standing Working Group on Ageing, and support for the SDGs, we face increasing challenges. Still, there are some very rewarding moments of bi- and multilateral cooperation, mutual learning and support when it comes to tangible research that backs social policies with knowledge and evidence. This has always been the main driver of our activities and the core of our work, even throughout the past year:

- The European Centre is currently involved in several framework contracts with the European Commission. We contribute to the European Disability Expertise (Birtha & Groß-Wohlgemuth, 2025; Zólyomi, 2025) as well as to Peer Reviews and Mutual Learning Activities in Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Additionally, we provide analytical and methodological expertise in qualitative analysis, mapping and mixed methods to the European Labour Authority (ELA). We also continue to deliver updates for the Austrian segment of EUROMOD (Geyer & Wohlgemuth, 2025; Fuchs et al., 2025) and collect and analyse data to gain comprehensive insights into all aspects and consequences of the posting of workers (e.g. Danaj et al., 2025; Kayran & Kadi, 2024). We are particularly proud of the successful start of two new projects launched this year under the EU research framework Horizon Europe, in which our experts analyse the capacity for social dialogue and co-creation with stakeholders in navigating ongoing transformations regarding workforce challenges. The project “Encouraging a digital and green transition through revitalised and inclusive Union-Employer negotiations” (E-GRUiEN) is exploring ways to ensure a just transition for all affected parties by using social dialogue. Similarly, NEXT-UP will



examine responses to the unprecedented challenges faced by European youth in education-to-employment transitions by seeking solutions through co-creation processes with stakeholders.

- Our expertise has also been relevant in enhancing the human rights conditionality of EU funds and in guiding the European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP). In addition, we have been collaborating with international organisations such as the World Bank, UNDP, WHO Europe, EU institutions such as the European Parliament and Eurofound, as well as with universities, national governments and NGOs to contribute expertise on selected topics. For instance, based on international research in the area of employment and labour mobility, the experts of the Employment & Labour Mobility Team provided training and expert inputs at many events, e.g. in ETUC workshops as well as international conferences. A wide range of publications has resulted from finalised projects (e.g. Geyer et al., 2025). Also, experts from the Health & Care Team were invited to international workshops and conferences, and to carry out quantitative and qualitative research, for instance, regarding statistics on long-term care (Kalavrezou et al., 2025) or support mechanisms for informal carers in an ongoing project. Important projects such as COORDINATE, which contributes to expanding the European research infrastructure through a panel survey on children and youth, and DISCOPMB, which enables health and social care professionals to provide diversity-sensitive care (Kadi et al., 2025), were successfully completed. Experts from the Social Protection & Inclusion Team contributed to the implementation of the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

The activities produced numerous tangible products and events that shared findings and made an impact. The European Centre's experts authored dozens of reports, book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, and created policy briefs, blogs, and newspaper articles. We organised around a dozen international seminars, webinars, and BBinars and delivered nearly 50 presentations at conferences, workshops, and webinars. Additionally, our activities and findings were shared via 24 newsletters and hundreds of tweets, enhancing our social media presence.

These achievements reflect the European Centre's successful operation and pay tribute to its three research teams and smooth administration. Managing multiple projects leads to tension, crunch times, bottlenecks, and overtime, which must be balanced with other periods. Given the constant need to acquire new projects, any opportunities are welcome and must be evaluated for relevance and feasibility. This angle of our work should be acknowledged when you go through our activities synthesised in this Annual Report. Acquisition demands time and energy, often causing frustration, as even a 50% success rate leads to moments of despair. However, with proven and impeccable administration, as acknowledged by every audit over the past decade, and a stable staff of 20, the European Centre has demonstrated its resilience through solid and thorough research.

As this will be my last letter to you as Executive Director of the European Centre, I would like to thank all our colleagues for bringing in their creativity, resilience and emotional intelligence, in addition to their professional expertise, to make



the European Centre a great workplace. As Executive Director, I had the pleasure of collaborating with numerous colleagues under a wide range of conditions, including a pandemic and periods of uncertainty. However, thanks to excellent support and mutual understanding, we always found solutions, made proposals and won tenders against all odds, brought projects to a successful conclusion, and maintained an economically sound base throughout the entire period.

At the end of my second five-year term as Executive Director, I would like to use this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their support in overcoming the multiple challenges and for fostering a solution-oriented dialogue at all levels. But the European Centre does not rely only on our employed staff. It would not thrive without support from our host country ministries (as of 2025: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, and Ministry for Women, Science and Research), international Board Members and National Liaison Officials, as well as our partners in research and consultancy. It would be too long a list to name all those with whom I have enjoyed collaborating, not only over the past 10 years, but throughout my career in international social policy research and consultancy.

When I retire from my role as Executive Director in February 2026, a chapter will end, but new opportunities will arise to combat inequalities and find innovative solutions for sustainable social policies. I look forward to meeting you at appropriate events, and I wish my successor every success in ensuring a prosperous future for the European Centre.

Yours sincerely,

Kai Leichsenring
Executive Director

References

Baumann, M. O. (2025). *UN at 80 needs a new approach to reforming the UN Development System*. IPI Global Observatory Blog. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/>

Birtha, M., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). *European Semester 2024 mainstreaming disability equality*. Publications Office of the European Union.

Danaj, S., Kayran, E. N., & Zólyomi, E. (2025). Access to information on labor and social regulations and compliance in the posting of foreign workers in construction in Austria. *Two Homelands*, 61, 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.3986/2025.1.3>

Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., Geyer, L., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., & Scopetta, A. (2025). *The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on child poverty and material deprivation in Austria* (Policy Brief 2025/1). European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

Geyer, L., Bilitza, N., & Danaj, S. (2025). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy: Country report Austria*. European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

Geyer, L., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). The buffering effect of the Austrian tax-benefit system on child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Euromod Working Paper Series*, EM 02/25.

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2024). *Summary of the Summit of the Future and the SDG Moment: 22–24 September 2024*. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, 3(22), 1–11. <https://enb.iisd.org/summit-future>



Kadi, S., Leichsenring, K., Hadziabdic, E., De Koker, B., Lambotte, D., Inkila, M., Ikonen, K., Trogu, G., Rompianesi, C., & Pezzini, A. (2025). *Improving education and training for health and social care staff to provide person-centred, diversity-sensitive care* (Policy Brief 2025/3). European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

Kalavrezou, N., Pot, M., Kadi, S., Simmons, C., & Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Facts and figures on healthy ageing and long-term care*. European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

Kayran, E. N., & Kadi, S. (2024). *Background report Austria: JUSTMIG – Sustainable and socially just transnational sectoral labour markets for temporary migrants*. European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2025). *World social report 2024 – Social development in times of converging crises: A call for global action*. UN DESA.

Zólyomi, E. (2025). *Employment of persons with disabilities: Statistics – 2022 data*. Publications Office of the European Union.

50th Anniversary of the European Centre: A Review

The 50th Anniversary marked a significant milestone for the European Centre, which was celebrated in 2024 through a series of activities and events. To recognise our longstanding partnership with various ministries in Austria and the countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), including our research partners and commissioning agencies, as well as with NGOs and social partners across the UNECE Region, we highlighted our achievements and approaches in research, policy consultancy and other activities.

To provide background and facts, all three research teams produced discussion papers on the future of social welfare policy and research in the areas of employment and labour mobility, health and care, as well as social protection and inclusion. These papers were accompanied by articles and press releases on selected issues, such as the bridge-building function of the European Centre. On 25 September, we organised a Ceremonial Act with the (former) Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (now: Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection), which hosted us in the prestigious Marmorsaal. Participants representing research, policymaking and other stakeholders enjoyed the event, including a keynote speech, and moderated round table discussions reflecting on 50 years of social welfare policy and research.



Photo: Alex Tuma. From left to right: Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director, European Centre; Anette Scoppetta, Deputy Director, European Centre; Sonja Kato, Moderation.

This background set the stage for the subsequent invitational conference at the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), featuring prominent international experts from both science and politics, focusing on “The Future of Welfare Policy and Social Research”. Overall, more than 130 participants from 27 different countries contributed to fruitful discussions and reaffirmed the importance of continuing international cooperation in developing social policies in the UNECE Region.



Photo: Anna Obernberger. From left to right: Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director, European Centre; Anette Scoppetta, Deputy Director, European Centre; Angela Me, Acting Chair, UNOV; Klaus Famera, Ambassador, Head of Department, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

All these activities were made possible by the remarkable engagement of the European Centre’s administrative and research staff – we are thankful and can be proud of ourselves for the achievements! We are particularly grateful for the generous financial and logistical support from the (former) Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. Additionally, the activities surrounding the 50th anniversary of the European Centre were supported by the City of Vienna and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (now: Austrian Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research). Our special thanks go to our Board Members and National Liaison Officials who actively contributed to these events, as well as invited colleagues from research who shared their expertise in an impressive manner. These debates and the exchange of expertise have certainly motivated us to continue contributing to high-quality research outcomes and improving the delivery of social policy.



Employment & Labour Mobility

Highlights

The Employment & Labour Mobility (ELM) research team supports the advancement of the UN Agenda 2030 and the European Union's priorities, particularly the European Pillar of Social Rights. It offers specialised expertise in employment and labour market policies, labour mobility and migration, labour standards and working conditions, and the relationships between workers, employers, and social partners. The team comprises experienced researchers who excel in research and policy advisory work, all striving to enhance the labour market and related areas, such as employment, mobility, and migration policies, through comparative analysis and policy consultancy. The team's work includes the following aspects:

The ELM team helps create policies aimed at improving working conditions

Research: qualitative and quantitative research methods, particularly comparative research and case studies. We possess specific expertise in 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 employment), green transition, working conditions, labour and social rights, social dialogue, employer attitudes and practices, and unionisation.

Policy consultation: planning, monitoring, and evaluating employment and labour mobility programmes, policies, and enforcement. We possess unique expertise in sharing best practices, mutual learning, stakeholder networking, social dialogue, and other consultation processes using various formats such as focus groups, peer reviews, participatory workshops, and training methods.

The Employment & Labour Mobility team consists of five full-time researchers who have contributed to 12 projects over the past year, including the European Centre's Bridge Building function, contracted expert inputs, and other networking and dissemination activities.

Strategic aim

The strategic aim of the ELM team is to conduct high-quality research and contribute to improved labour markets and evidence-based employment, mobility and migration policies through comparative analysis and policy

consultancy. The team constantly updates and expands its knowledge base through project acquisition and implementation. We currently organise our work primarily around 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-scale and small-scale projects:

Employment and labour market policies: In the past year, team members have provided expertise in various aspects of employment and labour market policies, such as active labour market measures and integrated employment in social policy schemes, particularly through projects focusing on cooperation, mutual learning, and capacity building. The ongoing project “European Community of Practice on Partnership” (ECOPP) involves various stakeholders, including several DGs of the European Commission, managing authorities, and other representatives from regional, local, and public authorities, as well as economic, social, and civil society partners, including NGOs and research institutes, to share knowledge and build capacities on partnerships. Furthermore, the ELM team continues to work under the ICF lead framework contract “Peer reviews and mutual learning activities in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion” for the European Commission, which is implemented by the entire staff of the European Centre. The ELM team also provides “Support Services for Bilateral Labour Market Cooperation in the Danube Region with Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine” (Danube Strategy) for the period 2025-2029 to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

The team launched two new Horizon projects in 2025 on labour market policies and social dialogue to be implemented in the next four years. The project “Navigating the Next Normal: Innovative Approaches to Enhancing Youth’s Education-Employment Transitions in Post-COVID-19 Europe” (NEXT-UP) aims to investigate and predict the long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis on youth transition from school to work and co-create, with stakeholders, evidence-informed, future-oriented policies and programmes. This year, the ELM team is mapping, categorising and analysing youth employability policies in the European Union. The second project, “Encouraging a Digital and Green Transition through Revitalised and Inclusive Union-Em-



ployer Negotiations" (E-GRUiEN), aims to study the capacity of social dialogue actors and institutions in navigating the current and future challenges in the workforce and its increasing heterogeneity in employment status and socio-demographics driven by the dual digital and green transformation. The team is currently reviewing historical case studies of past economic transformations in Europe to understand the long-term effects of past transitions and the reasons why social dialogue was effective or ineffective in mitigating them, which serves as a foundation for understanding current transformations. The greening of jobs and working conditions was also studied in the case of the Western Balkans by members of the ELM team in the frame of the "Comparative analysis of job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans" research commissioned by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound).

Labour mobility: The second key ELM theme is the nexus between various forms of employment and mobility and the related labour and social rights. In the last year, we continued research on the posting of workers as our core topic. We carried out three country case studies on the posting of third-country nationals for the project "Contracting chains and recruitment patterns of posted third-country nationals within the European Union" (TCN Study), commissioned by the European Labour Authority (ELA), and have been implementing the second round of the project "Enhancing the collection and analysis of national data on intra-EU posting 2.0" (Posting. STAT 2.0) in which we collect and analyse data from multiple sources on the posting of workers to and from Austria as well as violations of posting rules. Furthermore, under a framework contract (ELA FWC LOT 2), we have been providing analytical and methodological support to the European Labour Authority through qualitative analysis, mapping, and mixed methods, contributing to studies on labour mobility and cross-border recruitment in the long-term care sector and on the support instruments for employers and workers in EU cross-border seasonal work. In addition, we have analysed the increased presence of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and EU candidate countries in four different sectors through the project "Sustainable and socially just transnational sectoral labour markets: Industrial relations and labour market adjustment to the rise in temporary labour migration" (JUSTMIG).

Labour standards and working conditions: As another core theme of our research, labour standards and working conditions have been addressed in multiple projects, covering sectors like the app-mediated ride-hailing and food delivery sectors, international transport, construction, food production, and care, focusing on various categories of workers, such as posted workers,

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

temporary migrant workers, temporary agency workers, third-country nationals, EU seasonal workers, platform workers, artists and cultural workers. This year, labour standards and working conditions were also studied from the perspective of the digital and green transition. The projects with a focus on labour standards and conditions include the Driver Survey, the TCN Study, JUSTMIG, GDPower, PostingStat 2.0, EGRUiEN, the “Comparative analysis of job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans”, and the two studies commissioned by ELA within the ELA FWC LOT 2, on long-term care and seasonal workers.

The relationship between workers, employers, and social partners: Over the past year, the fourth key theme of our research focused on ride-hailing drivers’ working conditions and their knowledge and perceptions of trade unions and their expectations regarding the work of social partners (Driver Survey). In the GDPower project, the focus was on the strategies deployed by platform workers, activists, trade unionists, employer organisations and the platforms when negotiating workers’ pay and working conditions. This included debates about the collection and use of personal data, and the monitoring and enforcement of collective bargaining agreements. Meanwhile, in the JUSTMIG and EGRUiEN projects, the focus has been on social dialogue and social partners’ engagement across various policy areas. Specifically, in JUSTMIG, we have researched how industrial relations structures are adjusting to the increased presence of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and candidate countries, and in EGRUiEN, we are studying social partners’ approaches and activities related to the digital and green transformation. The role of social partners in the green transition was also studied in the project on job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans.

In addition, our team has also been involved in Mutual Learning Workshops and Peer Learning Events organised by the European Commission, covering topics such as access to social protection with respect to data, indicators and monitoring systems; access to social protection for artists; and structured dialogue for collective bargaining and collective agreements. Last but not least, the ELM team provided training and expert inputs in the ETUC workshop “Negotiating the algorithm and accessing information” and the ERC-funded “European Birds of Passage Mid-Project Conference” organised by the University of Strasbourg, as well as in international conferences, e.g. of the International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE) and the European Political Science Association (EPSA).



Our team in a nutshell

The five members of the Employment & Labour Mobility research team complement each other regarding their academic background, research areas, and methodological skills (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method analysis as well as policy consultancy, evaluation, and training). Our core areas of expertise encompass comparative and case study analyses of 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 ELM Team:

Sonila Danaj
(team lead)
Nikko Bilitza
Leonard Geyer
Elif Naz Kayran
Anette Scoppetta

Our clients and project partners

Our projects are based on international cooperation and networks with partners from the EU and the Bridge Building (BB) countries. The team has worked on projects funded mainly by institutions such as:

- EU bodies, particularly the European Commission, e.g., DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, the European Labour Authority, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
- International organisations and EU social partner organisations, e.g. the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and
- other territorial or sectoral donors, e.g., the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

The team's projects are based on international cooperation and networks with EU and Bridge Building partners

Next to the above mentioned partners, the ELM team collaborates with universities & research institutes (e.g. Central European Labour Studies Institute, Slovakia; The Scientific Bureau for the Dutch Trade Union Movement, Foundation de Burcht; the Netherlands; Tampere University, Finland; HIVA-KU Leuven, Belgium; ThEMA-University of Cergy-Pontoise, France; Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy; Slovak Academy of Science; Peace Institute - Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, Slovenia; Institute for Structural Research, Poland; Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences; University of Belgrade, Serbia; University of Castilla-la Mancha, Spain; University of Jyväskylä, Finland; University of Cardiff, United Kingdom; University of Parma, Italy), national-level social partners (e.g. ACV-Innovatief in Belgium, the Austrian Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Federation, Riders Collective in Austria, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, Fundación 1 de Mayo in Spain), civil society organisations (e.g. Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research, Bosnia and

Herzegovina), country experts and consultancy agencies (e.g. ICF International, Belgium and United Kingdom, Ecorys Europe, and Milieu, Belgium).

Reflection & brief outlook

The Employment & Labour Mobility team has successfully continued its work this year in its core areas of labour market policies, labour mobility, and working conditions. We also met our target of expanding our project portfolio in various directions, particularly regarding target groups (e.g., youth, temporary EU and third-country migrant workers), sectors of activity (e.g., manufacturing, care, automotive, and energy), aspects of work transformation (e.g., digitalisation, greening), and workers' welfare. Additionally, we achieved the goal of strengthening our industrial relations expertise and linking it with our other long-standing areas of expertise, such as employment policy, labour mobility, working conditions, and labour standards. Notably, the two Horizon Europe projects E-GRUiEN and NEXT-UP represent significant growth by further integrating digitalisation and greening as key transformative factors in our research focus. Participating in these projects within the framework of the EU's main funding programme for research and innovation marks an increase in the scale and profile of our transnational collaborative efforts.

All team members work across multiple thematic areas, and together we design and implement projects where the abovementioned and other relevant thematic areas often overlap. We also expanded our successful cross-team collaboration in thematic areas of mutual interest, such as long-term care, social protection of non-standard workers, and policy evaluation.

Since its inception, the ELM team has consistently sought opportunities to collaborate with new and existing partners. Of the 12 projects carried out last year, eight originated in the previous period, and four were new initiatives. We are presently applying for funding for projects that focus on active labour market measures for vulnerable groups, cross-border mobile workers, and undeclared work. Our aim is to continue researching various target groups (e.g., non-standard workers, youth, posted workers, migrant workers, seasonal workers, precarious workers, platform workers), examining specific aspects of work transformation (digitalisation, greening), social dialogue, and collective bargaining, as well as expanding into new sectors such as personal and household services and cultural and creative industries. The team strives to secure projects through various national and EU funding streams within our core thematic and expansion areas, in line with the new initiatives planned for 2026.



Health & Care

Highlights

Our work continues to enhance research on long-term care in the context of ageing populations and related societal trends, promoting sustainable, inclusive, and integrated approaches to care. Over the past year, our work has placed particular emphasis on the development of diversity-sensitive training resources, the co-creation of social innovations in long-term care, policies to support informal carers, and comparative analyses of sociodemographic, health, and system-level trends across Europe. Results were disseminated through peer-reviewed publications, reports, policy briefs, a European Parliament event, and international peer reviews. The team's expertise also contributed to capacity building through a multilingual Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), a series of webinars, and training materials for students and professionals.

Research

The DISCOPMB project, completed in 2025 and funded by the European Commission, aimed to enhance diversity-sensitive and person-centred care for older people with migration backgrounds across Europe. The project developed open educational resources for students and professionals, including a 40-hour training handbook and a multilingual e-learning course available in six languages, as well as two policy briefs with recommendations to incorporate diversity sensitivity into health and social care education. Stakeholders and older migrants themselves contributed to the design of training materials and workshops, ensuring relevance and inclusivity. The European Centre also evaluated the project using a Theory of Change approach and disseminated results through webinars and a European Parliament event, raising awareness of the importance of culturally competent care.

In 2024, the team also completed an update of the European Centre's comprehensive data collection on ageing and long-term care in Europe, funded by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Facts & Figures on Long-Term Care). The report analysed trends in supply and demand for LTC, highlighting emerging challenges such as digitalisation, climate-related risks, and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, including dementia. Findings revealed persistent disparities across EU Member States in funding,

The Health & Care team completed 5 projects, continued to work on informal care and entered into a new flagship project on violence against older persons

workforce, and recognition of LTC as a core area of social protection. The analysis underlined the need for further investment, improved coordination between health and LTC systems, and more accessible care approaches to meet evolving needs and reduce inequalities.

The COORDINATE project, funded by Horizon 2020 and completed in 2025, aimed to enhance the availability and accessibility of longitudinal data on children's and young people's well-being across Europe, laying the groundwork for the "Growing Up in Digital Europe" (GUIDE) survey. By improving access to existing survey data, extending the GUIDE network, and piloting a harmonised cohort survey in key countries, the project addressed the lack of consistent and comparable data needed to inform evidence-based policies. The European Centre supported COORDINATE by mentoring international PhD students and senior researchers through Transnational Access Visits (TAV) and facilitating Austria's participation in this pan-European research infrastructure.

In late 2024, the team began focusing on measuring and preventing violence against older people. The ongoing Older Persons Affected by Violence and Abuse project, funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, investigates this salient, complex and under-researched issue. The project seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of elder abuse, encompassing age-related discrimination, vulnerability, social isolation, and criminally relevant forms of violence. Through scoping reviews of national and international literature and analyses of existing data collection instruments, the project identifies gaps and challenges in current research. Building on this, the team is developing and piloting quantitative and qualitative survey methods and instruments, engaging experts and stakeholders to ensure that future data collection is methodologically robust, economically feasible, and policy-relevant, ultimately informing strategies to prevent and address violence against older adults in Austria.

Launched in 2025 and funded by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the InfoCare project examines how countries with well-developed long-term care systems support informal carers, who remain a cornerstone of health and care provision despite facing heavy workloads, emotional strain, and limited recognition. The project benchmarks key indicators across the EU-27, reviews recent evidence and conducts expert interviews to explore challenges, policy developments, and good practices in selected countries to provide insights into effective and targeted measures to improve support for informal carers and strengthen their role within the LTC system.



In 2024-2025, earlier projects continued to generate significant output and insights. InCARE published several publications reflecting on social innovation in long-term care and the funding and delivery of LTC across Europe. Research on young carers highlighted gaps in public support and the experiences of young people balancing care with education or employment. Findings from the Informal Care and Employment project examined the challenges of combining informal caregiving with professional work in Austria, providing evidence through policy briefs, reports, and blog contributions that informed both regional and European-level discussions on supporting carers.

The team continued to support other teams at the European Centre in their projects. This includes research on live-in care, in the JUSTMIG project, on migration law in the care sector in the ELA project, on the role of the digital and green transition in social bargaining processes related to health and care in the EGRUiN project, and on disability policy in the EDE project.

Policy consultancy: The team continued its policy consultancy and dissemination activities, contributing to mutual learning events at the EU level, such as the Mutual Learning Programme (DG Employment), participating in Bridge Building peer reviews and training funded by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, and disseminating findings from the DISCOPMB project through a European Parliament event. These activities complemented research output by supporting evidence-informed policy and practice across European and national long-term care systems.

Strategic aim

The strategic aim of the Health & Care team is to promote a life-course approach to healthy ageing by designing care systems and policies that allow for better coordination and integration of health and social care delivery. Our comparative research, therefore, addresses systemic issues such as funding, quality assurance and improvement, workforce challenges, including informal carers and live-in migrant care, needs assessment, diversity-sensitive care, case and care management, and overall governance of integrated care. Additionally, specific cross-cutting issues such as ageing, inequalities, the transition into care, dementia, technology (digital transformation and LTC), and preventive and participatory approaches are central to our activities.

The Health & Care team addresses key research issues in coping with long-term care challenges

The Health & Care team has extensive expertise and a long-standing track record in LTC research, public health and population ageing. Our networking efforts include active participation in the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Joint Programming Initiative “More Years, Better Lives,” and the EUROCARERS’ research network.

Our team in a nutshell

The Health & Care

Team:

Niki Kalavrezou

(team lead)

Selma Kadi

Kai Leichsenring

Mirjam Pot

Selam Woldemariam

The Health & Care team consists of five researchers: two political scientists, one sociologist, one health economist, and one public health researcher, Ms. Selam Woldemariam, who joined in early 2024. All members hold PhDs, except for one who is very close to completion. This combination of disciplinary perspectives and strong academic and research expertise enables the team to conduct rigorous, evidence-informed analyses across social and political dimensions of health and long-term care, applying both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Team members also bring professional experience that complements their academic backgrounds, enabling the group to connect research with practical policy and operational insights. In the area of long-term care, the team conducts comparative analyses of care systems, evaluates policy and service delivery, examines workforce and informal care dynamics, and investigates interventions to improve quality, accessibility, and equity. With our interdisciplinary approach, the team possesses the methods, tools, and experience to take on a wide range of diverse tasks and projects.

Our clients and project partners

In 2024, the European Centre’s 50th anniversary offered an excellent opportunity to reconnect with our extensive network of partners and clients, reaffirming and strengthening collaborations built over the years. While our main clients remain the European Commission, in particular DG Employment and DG Research, and WHO, our research partnerships span academic institutions, third sector organisations, and national ministries. These include Linnaeus University (Sweden), Hogeschool Gent (Belgium), Linköping University (Sweden), the Centre for Socio-Economic Research on Ageing at INRCA (Italy), the University of Manchester (UK), Vilans (The Netherlands), the Institute for Health and Welfare – THL (Finland), Jade (Finland), the University of Vienna (Austria), the Austrian Interdisciplinary Platform on Ageing (ÖPIA), the Institut für Konfliktforschung IKF (Austria),



the Federal Ministry of 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 Fundacion Instituto Gerontologico Matia Ingema (Spain), Chance B Group (Austria), the Red Cross (Austria and North Macedonia), the Chamber of Labour (Upper Austria), Eurocarers (Belgium), the London School of Economics & Political Science (UK), AGE Platform Europe (Brussels), the Social Cooperative ‘Anziani e non solo’ (Italy), the European Social Network (ESN), and many others.

Reflection & brief outlook

The team can be proud of its project completion and publication achievements in 2024–2025. In long-term care and informal care, the Facts & Figures on Long-Term Care report analysed trends, disparities, and emerging challenges in LTC across Europe, while InCARE and ICE produced publications and policy briefs on social innovation, financing, and the experiences of informal carers balancing work and care. In diversity-sensitive care for older people, the DISCOPMB project developed training materials, e-learning resources, and policy briefs to promote culturally competent, person-centred care for older migrants. In support of young carers, published research highlighted gaps in public support and the challenges faced by young people balancing care with education or employment. In violence prevention, the Older Persons Affected by Violence and Abuse project commenced with the aim of developing survey instruments and methods to inform strategies addressing elder abuse in Austria. Finally, in child and youth well-being, the COORDINATE project strengthened longitudinal data research by mentoring international PhD students and advanced researchers from across Europe.

Looking ahead, the team will continue to focus on long-term care and healthy ageing, building on recent project outputs to support system reforms and improvements in care delivery. Ongoing and upcoming work will, amongst other things, include strategies to effectively measure and prevent elder abuse, research on the best policies aimed at supporting informal carers, and active engagement in research and consultancy that strengthens LTC systems and informs policy reforms across Europe. Several related proposals have been submitted to diverse funding authorities. At the same time, the team is looking forward to leveraging its expertise in health economics and public health to expand comparative research and provide evidence-informed policy advice in its two core areas of health and care.

Proposals for future research are focusing on collaborative practice in health and care, migration, and long-term care system development

The team will further leverage its expertise in health economics and public health

Social Protection & Inclusion

Highlights

The Social Protection and 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 or the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. 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 possess 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 evaluating social protection policies alongside support services and measures for groups that are often discriminated against and marginalised (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, as well as conducting ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of social support services. We regularly facilitate social policy dialogue and mutual learning among diverse stakeholders, provide expert advice to EU institutions and international organisations when they develop new or update existing policy frameworks (e.g., Expert Advisory Group for UNICEF ECARO Regional Situation Analysis), and carry out other consultation services using various formats.

The team works towards policies to improve social protection systems and foster the full participation of marginalised groups in Europe



The Social Protection and Inclusion team employs six researchers who implemented nine projects in the past year. Individual team members were also involved in additional projects across teams and actively participated in Bridge Building activities such as implementing peer and policy reviews in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions, organising BBinars and contributing to the EESPN website. These activities were complemented by networking and dissemination of results at conferences and in 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, as well as in acquiring new projects within the EU and beyond. Our ongoing projects mainly fall within the following thematic clusters:

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

Within these clusters, the team implements various projects that 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 and HBS microdata. The basic scope of the model includes social (insurance) contributions, income taxes and monetary benefits. Since 2024, we have updated information on Austrian policies for the new EUROMOD tool that enables simulation of multiple consumption taxes (value-added tax, excise taxes, etc.). Based on EUROMOD, the team also annually updates SORESI, an on-line tax-benefit microsimulation calculator for Austria, which has been in use since 2012. In 2024/2025, we updated EUROMOD and SORESI to reflect the 2025 policy rules and developed the most current input data (SILC 2023 with incomes for 2022, HBS 2019/20). In May 2025, we delivered thematic expertise at the 13th Mutual Learning Event on Distributional Impact As-

We analyse the effects of social welfare policies amid interlinking crises and propose changes to improve the situation of groups in a vulnerable situation

assessment and contributed to the European Commission's summary report with several EUROMOD-related pieces of evidence.

Inequality and poverty reduction: The team has 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 well-being and participation of different groups in society (e.g. persons with disabilities, older people, children). As part of the European Disability Expertise (EDE), we oversee the implementation of the European Semester task, which entails coordinating 27 country fiches and drafting a synthesis report to illustrate the main developments and challenges for persons with disabilities in the EU. This task provides the European Commission with input from a disability perspective on the European Semester process each year, highlighting inequalities faced by persons with disabilities in employment, social policies and education, as well as ongoing policy efforts in the individual Member States to mitigate these. Furthermore, we are responsible for producing statistical reports linked to key thematic areas at the request of DG EMPL, focusing on employment in 2024 and on housing in 2025. Different deprivation indices applied to EU-SILC data, as well as the model EUROMOD (see above), were used to complete an analysis of the effect of COVID-19 on poverty among children in Austria funded by the Jubiläumsfonds of the Austrian National Bank. Among other research questions, we investigated how the prevalence of monetary poverty and material deprivation among children developed during the time of crisis, and how effective COVID-induced policies and automatic stabilisers were in counteracting an increase in child poverty. In a new project (NKV 2025) for the umbrella organisation of the Austrian health insurance, we analyse the extent and causes of non-coverage by health insurance based on registry data and on data from a primary survey distributed in ambulances caring for non-insured persons.

Social inclusion and support services for distinct groups: The team provides expertise to central governments, social partners, and international organisations on social inclusion policies, including on the development, implementation, and monitoring of social services for persons with disabilities, children, pensioners, beneficiaries of social assistance, and older people. We facilitated an online policy review on measures to support access to social housing in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions with the participation of over 50 representatives from ministries and public bodies from Albania, Armenia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. As EU funds continue to play an important role in promoting social inclusion, we completed and published a research



report within the framework of the ECHO Funds project (financed by DG Justice and Consumers of the European Commission). The report examines how fundamental rights are considered during the planning and implementation of EU-funded programs in Austria, Greece, and Poland. It also explores the perspectives of Managing Authorities on fostering strong partnerships with various stakeholders at all stages of the funding period, including collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions. The SPI team also contributes to high-level academic and policy conferences, for instance, the European Parliament's (Committee on Petition) Annual Workshop on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 36th Conference on Trade Union Cooperation in Europa (KGZE), the EUROMOD research workshop 2024 & 2025, and the ESPANet Austria conference 2025. Research results and policy recommendations were also presented to policymakers and other stakeholders at the European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar with the European Commission, an expert workshop of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and during a study visit by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

Our team in a nutshell

The six members of the SPI team complement each other with their academic backgrounds, research interests, policy expertise, as well as their methodological skills (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method analysis, evaluation, participatory methods and training). The SPI team has extensive expertise in 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 SPI Team:
Magdi Birta
(team lead)
David Conforti
Michael Fuchs
Sabina Gjylsheni
Felix Groß-
Wohlgemuth
Eszter Zólyomi

Our clients and project partners

The team's projects are based on international cooperation and partnership networks, particularly from the EU and beyond. Our clients include, among others:

- the European Commission (e.g. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Justice and Consumers, Joint Research Centre),
- the European Parliament,
- EU agencies (e.g. the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Eurostat),

The team delivers high-quality research projects and policy consultancy to a wide range of international clients

- International organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNDP),
- National ministries (e.g. the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs),
- Other territorial and sectoral donors (e.g. the Austrian National Bank), and
- NGOs (e.g. Volkshilfe Austria, Caritas Austria, Diakonie Austria).

Reflection & brief outlook

The Social Protection and Inclusion team will continue to build on its members' strengths to acquire and implement projects in the areas of social security, poverty reduction, social assistance, and support services for groups in vulnerable situations. Well-established cooperations, networks, and tools, such as the tax-benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD and the related European research network, will be maintained and further expanded (e.g., the inclusion of household budget survey data and the simulation of consumption tax policies) to provide better research results addressing current societal challenges. In 2024/2025, global megatrends (i.e., climate change, population ageing, and increased use of AI), ongoing interlinked crises (i.e., energy crises and increased cost of living), and the changing geopolitical situation result in shifting priorities across the EU and beyond, including increased spending on defence and security.

At the same time, persistent equality gaps exist, and EU countries are far from reaching their social headline targets under the European Pillar of Social Rights by 2030. The EU's next-year budget post-2027 may reflect these shifting priorities, which could have an impact on European welfare states, particularly in terms of social spending, maintaining social safety nets, and providing high-quality, person-centred, human rights-compliant social support services in the community. Social policy research and evidence-based policymaking is as important as ever and the SPI team will continue studying the underlying reasons behind inequalities, the effectiveness of existing policy initiatives (e.g. on gender equality, the number of children living in poverty, or the inclusion of persons with disabilities to the open labour market) and recommend viable policy solutions to policymakers and other stakeholders. We closely follow EU policy developments, including the expected EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, the European Affordable Housing Plan, and new actions proposed under the EU Disability Strategy until 2030. Within the European Centre's Bridging Function, the SPI research team will continue to collaborate with countries in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partner-



ship, supporting 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.

In line with our strategic goals as defined in previous years, in 2024/2025, the team successfully implemented framework contracts (EDEII, EURO-MOD) and several small and medium-sized projects (e.g. ECHO Funds, NKV 2025). We will pursue our research interest through national and EU funding streams, and our existing core thematic areas (social security, tax-benefit microsimulation, tackling child poverty, disability policy, transition from institutional to community-based social services, quality assurance of social services) will remain in focus for future proposals. The SPI team is also working on the acquisition of new multiple-year projects in identified thematic niches where team members share interest and expertise, such as the effect of family-related tax policies on parents' intra-household distribution of unpaid care work and employment analysed with registry data, and their implications for family well-being and broader gender inequalities. Strategically important opportunities for policy consultancy with international organisations and key partners will be seized whenever possible, for instance by offering tailor-made training courses to share good practice with civil servants of relevant Ministries. Beyond the existing ample network of partners, we constantly seek new partnerships with academic institutions, think tanks, international and regional organisations, as well as NGOs and service providers.

Bridging Function of the European Centre

Highlights

We continued our successful collaboration with partners in the “Bridge Building” countries, focusing on the need to improve social policy in times of multiple crisis

In 2024/25, the European Centre furthered its strategic goal of bridging the gap between knowledge and policy evidence in social policy research between Western and Eastern countries in the UN European region. We believe that fostering cooperation between Western and Eastern partners is key to facilitating democracy and European integration. We focus our activities on evidence-based policymaking in social welfare.

During the past year, we have continued our intensive collaboration with the so-called “Bridge Building” (BB) countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine), while also following up on our cooperation with Uzbekistan as a “BB-light” country. The Bridging Function is based on close collaboration and participation with the national governments, the European Union, and other relevant international and national stakeholders in the UNECE region. We work with people from a variety of institutional backgrounds, including academics, research institutions, civil servants from the relevant ministries, civil society organisations, and social partners. Our key contacts, however, are the National Liaison Officers (NLOs), with whom we collaborate based on memoranda of understanding (MoUs). These NLOs have been nominated as points of contact to facilitate regular communication with the European Centre. As of August 2025, we have renewed, or are in the process of renewing, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the respective ministries in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Three MoUs remain active: those with Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Moldova.

We facilitate exchange on equal terms and build on shared needs across the group of countries. One of these shared needs is the joint requirement for social policy reforms to support those most affected by crises, wars and conflicts, and those who have been left behind. During the past year, we further strengthened our collaboration with BB partners, primarily through research and mutual learning activities such as peer reviews. For example, we continued to collaborate on the follow-up to the BB Mutual Learning project, an initiative of the European Centre originally funded by



the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection from 2021 to 2024. Our work in the BB region also saw an increase in the dissemination of our research project findings, primarily through the Eastern European Policy Network (EESPN) and BBinars (online webinars in the BB region).

Projects in/about the Bridge Building region

During the past 12 months, the European Centre implemented four projects funded by third parties in or about countries of the BB region. The projects are:

- Support Services for Bilateral Labour Market Cooperation in the Danube Region with Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine 2025-2029 (02/2025 – 12/2029):** The five EU accession states – Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine – are part of the Danube region. The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is an EU macro-regional strategy to jointly address common challenges. Generally speaking, and compared to EU countries, the challenges that the countries are facing include limited economic and social progress, widespread corruption and lower efficiency in public administration. By investing in people and promoting human capital, the Danube region can grow in a smart and inclusive way. The project aims to provide guidance and services towards integrated policies and solutions that are based on the needs of the respective countries and that build on already accomplished work, such as the Danube Region Monitor 2022. In 2025, we will conduct an evaluation of the Employment Strategy of Montenegro in the form of a policy document review, assessing the status quo of the Employment Strategy of Montenegro.
- Sustainable and socially just transnational sectoral labour markets (11/2023 – 10/2025):** The JUSTMIG project combines innovative research and data collection on labour market dynamics in both service and manufacturing sub-sectors across six EU Member States where fixed-term contracting of migrant workers occurs, and three candidate countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine) as source countries for workers. Starting from the development and application of innovative participatory methodology, the project addresses and involves social partners and labour market institutions throughout the project. Activities are evenly designed to have both short/medium-term

Four projects have been implemented during the past year funded by third parties in or about countries of the BB region, all of which aim at strengthening social welfare policies

The projects implemented in the BB region are funded by the European Commission, Eurofound, the European Labour Authority and the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

and long-term impacts on experts and social partners, as well as migrant and local workers themselves. The project's impacts range from strengthening social partner capacities to supporting policies for just and sustainable labour market outcomes.

- **Comparative analysis of job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans** (10/2024 – 06/2025): The countries of the Western Balkans face numerous economic and social challenges. Less than a decade ago, the Western Balkan countries were considered to be among the countries with the worst labour market statistics. The contracted study aimed to: 1) deepen the understanding of job quality, gender equality at work and quality of working life within the context of significant socio-economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically focusing on the six countries of the Western Balkans, i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia; and 2) extract actionable insights that can inform policymaking and contribute to the improvement of working conditions across the region. Methods applied included comparative analysis across the six Western Balkan countries, a case study on green transition in the Western Balkans and expert meeting organisation and facilitation.
- **Contracting chains and recruitment patterns of posted third-country nationals within the European Union** (01/2024 – 12/2024): The European Labour Authority commissioned a study on the participation of third-country workers in providing services through posting within the European Union. This study was a collaborative effort by the European Centre in partnership with Milieu Consulting SRL in 2024. The study involved collecting background material and drafting a report on contracting chains and recruitment patterns of posted third-country nationals in three case studies, namely Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia, with particular attention paid to Ukrainian, Brazilian, and Bosnian nationals in those countries, respectively, as these nationals represent some of the highest shares of TCN workers.



BB Peer reviews and BB Policy reviews

As part of its BB function and as a follow-up to the successful Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings – Mutual Learning Activities in BB countries project, implemented from 2021 to 2024, the European Centre organises one or two BB Peer/Policy Reviews per year. These mutual learning activities are based on existing cooperation with stakeholders in the following BB countries: EU accession countries, potential EU accession countries, Eastern Partnership countries, and associated BB-light countries.

The following two mutual learning events were held during the past year, based on requests from BB countries and facilitated by the European Centre.

- **BB Peer Review in Social Welfare: Fighting Undeclared Work** (upon request from the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers of the Republic of Kosovo, 5-6 December 2024, online): The Peer Review explored Kosovo's approach to tackling Undeclared Work, with peer reflections from Albania, Armenia, and Moldova. The event facilitated a rich exchange, leveraging the knowledge and policy evidence of BB countries from across the UN-Europe region. The discussions highlighted shared challenges and innovative strategies for tackling undeclared work, demonstrating that a combination of legislative reforms, digital tools, enforcement mechanisms, and public engagement is essential for fostering a sustainable environment in which formal employment thrives.
- **BB Policy Review in Social Welfare: Social housing policies to support access to adequate and affordable housing** (upon request from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, 25-26 June 2025, online). In this policy review, social housing policies aiming to provide affordable and decent housing for groups in vulnerable situations in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries were discussed. Practical information about how social housing provision currently works in the BB countries was shared, and different strategies and measures to support access to social housing were reflected in terms of their effectiveness and their potential for improvement and innovation.

Fighting undeclared work and designing social housing policies to support access to adequate and affordable housing have been explored during two mutual learning events

BBinars (online webinars)

BBinars are online webinars dedicated to specific areas of social welfare in the BB region. This series of webinars aims to provide an opportunity for our partners to exchange ideas and learn about topics of interest, especially to our BB NLOs and members of the East European Social Policy Network (EESPN), as well as a wider audience with a keen interest in social welfare in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership region. The format includes contributions from our research partners, regional policymakers, policy experts, and civil society and international organisations (e.g. the WHO and the European Commission). There are also two or three reflections from relevant regional actors and European Centre staff, followed by a moderated discussion with the audience. In 2024/25, we brought together researchers, policymakers and NGOs from across the region to discuss two key issues:

BBinars of the past year built upon key expertise areas of the European Centre: Policy developments in pension systems and labour migration in the BB countries were explored and shared with a wider audience

- **Pension systems in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries: between financial sustainability and adequacy (24/06/2025):** The 10th BBinar focused on the state, functioning and target achievement of pension systems in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries as of today and forecasted for the future. Starting with the increasing challenges posed by demographic change, we analysed the pillars of the pension systems and their most important (reformed) parameters, like legal pension age, accrual rates, and deductions for early retirement. The BBinar further addressed the situation on the labour markets and the extent to which these enable older people to remain in employment for longer. An attempt was made to position the pension systems in terms of their balance between the (sometimes contradictory) goals of financial sustainability on the one hand and adequacy or prevention of poverty in old age on the other hand. Finally, potential plans for reform and expert recommendations were discussed.
- **Labour Migration: Drivers, impact, and responses in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries (06/02/2025):** The 9th BBinar focused on discussing how high emigration rates from the Western Balkans, particularly among young and skilled workers, combined with the other unfavourable demographic trends, have turned the region once known for an abundance of available workforce into a region facing significant labour shortages. In response, countries in the region have started to redesign their immigration policies aimed at easing the employment of foreigners. The BBinar focused on (1) the key trends and motivations of migration from the



Western Balkans, (2) its impact on labour markets and the policies of adjustment, and (3) the various measures undertaken by countries in the region to address migration-driven labour shortages.

Eastern European Social Policy Network (EESPN)

In addition to implementing these projects, which were funded externally or invested in internally, we organised regular dissemination activities and capacity-building events. These strengthened our network and increased our visibility in the BB region. We continued to expand 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. We also published a monthly EESPN newsletter and continued to develop the European Centre's EESPN website (<https://eespn.euro.centre.org/>).

We also maintained our successful cooperation with the Central European University (CEU) as part of our BB activities. In relation to the BB peer review on tackling undeclared work, students from the Policy Lab prepared and published a policy brief on the role of non-state actors in addressing this issue in Georgia and North Macedonia.

Future developments and prospects

Through these activities, the European Centre brings together researchers and policymakers from the UN-European region to improve their understanding of and advance their work on social welfare policies in the BB region with the aim of supporting candidate countries' EU accession process.

In the upcoming year, we will continue our work in the BB region by implementing BB Peer reviews and BB Policy reviews as well as BBinars, conducting research and policy advice within our BB projects and disseminating the activities via EESPN. We also aim to include our BB partners in upcoming calls for proposals and tenders to continue the well-established cooperation with them, with funding being provided by third parties.

Future BB activities will again be implemented at eye level, enabling experts in the field to exchange expertise and advance social welfare policies across the UNECE region, developing policy measures to those in need.

Future BB activities will again be implemented at eye level, enabling experts in the field to exchange expertise and advance social welfare policies across the UNECE region

Projects

Working Conditions and Collective Action in Platform-Mediated, Ride-Hailing Sector and Beyond (Driver Survey)

Duration	02/2023-09/2024
Status	Completed
Project Team	Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Sonila Danaj, Nicolas Prinz, Nikko Bilitza
Project Partners	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)
Funded by	Chamber of Labour Vienna, Digitalisierungsfonds 4.0

The rise of platform work has led to intense public debates over workers' rights and the future of social dialogue. Recent studies in Austria have focused on several sectors in which digital labour platforms play a crucial role, including food delivery and cleaning. However, despite criticism of low pay and bad working conditions, there has been very limited data on the conditions of drivers in the app-mediated, ride-hailing sector. Furthermore, research in other countries shows significant cross-sectoral differences in working conditions, pay and attitudes towards collective action, which had not been examined in Austria before.

Against this backdrop, the Driver Survey project had three interrelated objectives:

- 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.

The survey results show that most drivers enjoy the autonomy and flexibility of the job, but are split on working conditions. Drivers view intermediaries – online platforms, radio dispatchers – as helpful to customers, but platforms are viewed more negatively. The main criticism is that they try to push down fare prices. The results were presented and discussed at an event organised with taxi drivers and the social partners.

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

Duration	01/2023-10/2024
Status	Completed
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta, Michael Fuchs, Leonard Geyer, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, Eszter Zólyomif
Funded by	Anniversary Fund of the Austrian Nationalbank (OeNB)

This project provided empirical evidence concerning poverty and material deprivation among children in Austria by examining the effects of the COVID-19 crisis during 2020 and 2021. The study adopted a comprehensive approach, analysing various factors related to the prevalence of child poverty. It addressed key concepts and indicators, the socio-economic characteristics of affected children, and assessed the impact and effectiveness of policy measures. These included measures implemented due to COVID-19, automatic stabilisers, and potential alternative policies.

Secondary analysis of EU-SILC data showed that “at-risk-of-poverty and material deprivation” among children increased during the pandemic, and that the effects intensified for children already at risk of poverty before the pandemic.

However, tax-benefit microsimulation using the model EUROMOD proved that COVID-19-induced policies and automatic stabilisers were partly effective in preventing a sharper increase in child poverty.

Analyses of hypothetical reforms revealed that transfers to children in low-income families would have been the most cost-effective way of preventing a further increase in child poverty, highlighting a characteristic trade-off in policy design between means-tested and universal benefits.

Briefing for the European Parliament's Petitions Committee on the EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030 (EP_Disability Strategy)

Duration	10/2024 – 12/2024
Status	Completed
Project Team	Magdi BIRTHA
Project Partner	EP Committee on Petitions
Funded by	European Parliament

The Policy Department on Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament requested the European Centre (Magdi BIRTHA) to prepare a briefing on "The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030: Achievements and perspectives". The European Commission is expected to propose new initiatives for the remaining period of the Strategy until 2030. It was therefore timely to take stock of what had been achieved, where gaps remain and what new actions could help advance the implementation of the Strategy.

The briefing took place on 2 December 2024 in Brussels at the Annual Workshop on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, organised by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. The event was attended by MEPs from across the political spectrum, the European Ombudsman, representatives of the European Commission, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Disability Forum and other stakeholders.

Based on the assessment of the flagship initiatives as well as other policy actions outlined in the EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030, the briefing concluded that there are some obvious gaps where more EU action is needed to improve the equal rights and participation of persons with disabilities post-2024. For instance, despite facing disproportionately higher rates of unemployment and poverty, persons with disabilities were only marginally addressed by recent EU initiatives to tackle the impact of the multiple ongoing crises (cost-of-living, energy crises). Disability mainstreaming is therefore recommended in upcoming general EU policy initiatives such as the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy or the European Affordable Housing Plan. A range of further recommendations were proposed to implement the principles of the EU Disability Strategy in a more holistic way, for instance by coordinating the EU monitoring framework with those of the UN Convention.

Facts & Figures on Long-Term Care – Update

Duration	01/2024 – 12/2024
Status	Completed
Project Team	Kai Leichsenring, Niki Kalavrezou, Cassandra Simmons, Mirjam Pot, Selma Kadi
Funded by	Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden

The updated research from the European Centre on long-term care (LTC) highlights new trends and challenges faced by LTC systems in the EU. This comprehensive dataset focuses on the evolution of supply and demand over time while also identifying emerging issues such as digital transformation and challenges related to climate change.

The report, organised into nine chapters, shows that the historical progression to higher shares of persons with chronic diseases and LTC needs has created new areas of concern both in health and social care systems. Significant differences among Member States still persist in terms of funding, workforce and the acknowledgement of LTC as a key area of social protection. For instance, the prevalence of dementia has increased by up to 10 percentage points over the past decade, and it is likely to rise further over the coming decade.

Together with other factors, the increasing demand for LTC will continue to challenge all European governments and policymakers as more refined and personalised care models are required. While the facts and figures show a general tendency to delimit places in residential care, the pace of expansion in community care and overcoming fragmented service delivery has not kept up with the growing demand. Disparities between EU Member States persist, but a common trait is the lack of labour force to ensure equal access to affordable and quality services, as claimed by the European Pillar of Social Rights.

A key characteristic of LTC provision, therefore, remains the vital role of informal care that should be considered an integral part of the LTC workforce, acknowledging the dominant role of unpaid care mainly provided by women.

Looking ahead, further investment in LTC will be necessary across all European countries, particularly in prevention and improved coordination between health and LTC systems. This is crucial not only to meet the growing demand but also to stimulate employment, reduce avoidable acute healthcare interventions, address unmet care needs and inequalities, and improve the quality and overall effectiveness of both health care and LTC services.

Contracting Chains and Recruitment Patterns of Posted Third-Country Nationals within the European Union (TCN Study)

Duration	01/2024 – 12/2024
Status	Completed
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Eszter Zólyomi
External Project Co-ordinator	Claire Dupont, Milieu (Belgium)
Project partners	Milieu Consulting SRL
Funded by	European Labour Authority (ELA)

In the past decade, the posting of third-country nationals (TCNs) within the European Union has increased significantly. This trend is influenced by both labour mobility and immigration policies, primarily arising from worker shortages and skill gaps in sectors such as construction, healthcare, tourism, and agriculture. While there have been general studies on posted TCNs, little information existed regarding aspects directly related to the operational mandate of the European Labour Authority (ELA). This study addressed that gap by examining the specific vulnerabilities faced by posted TCNs.

Research focused on the complex contracting chains that facilitate TCN postings, including employment contracts, working terms, and the roles of labour market intermediaries. Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia were selected as case study countries, each with considerable levels of TCN postings relative to their labour forces. The study paid special attention to Ukrainian, Brazilian, and Bosnian nationals.

The study highlighted that the experience of posted TCN workers depends on various factors, including their situation in the sending country, preferences for the residency country, assignment length, working conditions, and pay. A key concern for these workers is uncertainty about visas and permits. Effective enforcement of EU regulations requires cross-border cooperation. TCNs often face barriers to accessing information and are less likely to report issues, making it essential to address resource challenges to better protect their rights.

European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024 (EDPD2024)

Duration	11/2024 – 01/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Magdi Birtha
Funded by	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

The European Commission organises this annual conference in partnership with the European Disability Forum to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This two-day event took place on 28-29 November 2024 in Brussels and brought together more than 400 policymakers, high-level experts, and disability advocates. The broad participation of persons with disabilities allowed their concerns and aspirations to be heard and facilitated dialogue with public authorities and other stakeholders. Magdi Birtha from the European Centre acted as Rapporteur.

Among other key topics, the 2024 conference discussed how to make the second phase of implementing the EU Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 a success. Furthermore, the right of persons with disabilities to independent living and accessible and inclusive cities was the focus of discussions, particularly regarding the European Commission's recent adoption of the Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding. This guidance provides practical recommendations to Member States on the use of EU funding to accelerate the transition from institutional care to community-based services and independent living for persons with disabilities.

During the second day of the conference, the 15th anniversary of the Access City Award (ACA) was marked, and discussions centred around the significance of accessibility in urban spaces and the role of digitalisation in shaping more inclusive cities. Past winner cities were also invited to share how the award transformed their cities and benefited residents and visitors with disabilities and others. Additionally, there were discussions about the accessibility challenges persons with disabilities still face in their daily lives and while travelling across Europe.

Social Reform Microsimulation Austria (SORESI)

Duration	09/2012 – 02/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, Michael Fuchs, David Conforti
Project Partners	BRZ (Austria)
Funded by	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria

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

SORESI offers the opportunity to explore strategic policy goals and potential measures such as a flat-tax model, increased family benefits, a guaranteed income or changes in social insurance contributions.

Policymakers are thus able to immediately evaluate the social and financial impact of policy measures at the household and national levels. Recently, EUROMOD/SORESI was used by researchers of the European Centre to simulate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on child poverty in Austria.

In 2025, SORESI was updated to 2025 policy rules (incl. adaptation for bracket creep, indexation of benefits, etc.) using the latest (updated) input data (SILC 2023 with incomes for 2022).

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

Duration	04/2021 – 03/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Niki Kalavrezou, Cassandra Simmons, Kai Leichsenring, Selam Woldemariam
External Project Coordinators	Gary Pollock, Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom) and Jennifer Symonds, University College Dublin, The Geary Institute (Ireland)
Project Partners	Manchester Metropolitan University (Coordinator)(United Kingdom); University College Dublin, The Geary Institute (Ireland); 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, The Institute for Social and Economic Research (United Kingdom); Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper (Slovenia); ISCTE/Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (Portugal); Helsingin Yliopisto (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, Generations and Gender Programme – GGP (The Netherlands); GESIS – Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften (Germany); Ipsos GmbH (Germany); TNS UK Ltd – Kantar Public (Great Britain); cApStAn SA (Belgium)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020

‘The availability of longitudinal data on children's well-being varies across Europe. COORDINATE is the next phase of preparing the "Growing Up in Digital Europe" (GUIDE) survey, funded by Horizon 2020. It aims to provide consistent and high-quality data on children's well-being for policymakers by improving access to existing survey data, expanding the GUIDE network, and initiating a large-scale cohort pilot survey using a harmonised instrument and research design in key European countries.

The European Centre hosted 13 PhD students from around the world through COORDINATE Transnational Access Visits (TAV), assisting them in utilising longitudinal panel surveys, such as the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), in their research. Moreover, the European Centre promoted the accession of additional Member States, in particular Austria and the Czech Republic, in this important research infrastructure.

Comparative analysis of job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans (CAJQWC_WB)

Duration	10/2024 – 06/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Anette Scoppetta, Sabina Gjylsheni
External Project Coordinator	Aleksandar Radivojević, FREN (Serbia)
Project Partners	FREN - Foundation for the Advancement of Economics (Serbia)
Funded by	The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) has developed three probability-based EU-wide surveys that provide high-quality data: the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) and the European Company Survey (ECS) and created more recently the Living and Working in the EU e-survey. The 2021 European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS) was particularly important since it was conducted amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic, and covered 36 countries (EU27, UK, Switzerland and Norway), including the six Western Balkan countries, i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. It is in this context that Eurofound contracted FREN and the European Centre to conduct a comparative analysis of job quality and working conditions, drawing recommendations for their improvement in the region.

The contracted study aimed to deepen the understanding of job quality, gender equality at work and quality of working life within the context of significant socio-economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the six countries of the Western Balkans based on the data drawn from EWCTS 2021, EU-LFS and other national statistics as well as a scenario building exercise with experts from the Western Balkan region. The results are to be published as a Eurofound report in the upcoming period.

Recovering Workers' Data to Negotiate and Monitor Collective Agreements in the Platform Economy (GDPowerR)

Duration	10/2023 – 09/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Nikko Bilitza, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
Project Partners	HIVA - Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium); ACV-Innovatief (Belgium); ThEMA (Théorie Economique, Modélisation et Applications) - CY Cergy Paris (France); UCLM - Universidad de Castilla-la Mancha (Spain); Fundación 1 de Mayo (Spain)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL)

GDPowerR was a collaborative research project on industrial relations in the platform economy involving seven research and social partner organisations from five EU countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Poland, Spain). It centred on two sectors, ride-hailing and food delivery, and explored three areas:

- The collection and use of worker data by digital labour platforms, its impact on worker well-being and their inclination to engage in collective actions.
- Strategies employed by social partners to negotiate and implement collective and company-level agreements in the platform economy. These agreements cover, for instance aspects like pay and working conditions.
- The implementation, monitoring and enforcement of these agreements.

The project aimed to enhance industrial relations in the platform economy by analysing the strategies of platform workers, activists, trade unionists, and employer groups in negotiating pay and working conditions. Utilising a citizen-science approach, the project audited data collection practices of platforms, raising awareness about these practices and informing policymakers.

Findings from five countries revealed a lack of collective agreements on data processing by platform companies. While the types of worker data collected are similar, the storage practices vary. Workers' awareness of surveillance practices is low, with many avoiding exercising their GDPR rights for fear of retaliation. Concerns about monitoring are common, although some workers successfully use recovered data to contest account deactivations or for tax purposes. Companies. Workers' awareness of surveillance practices differs as well. Importantly, many lack information because they refrain from exercising their GDPR rights out of fear of retaliation. Lastly, concerns about intrusive monitoring are widespread, but some workers also successfully use recovered data, for example, to challenge account deactivations or for tax-related purposes.

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

Duration	10/2022 – 09/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Selma Kadi, Magdi BIRTHA, Kai Leichsenring, Sabina Gjylsheni, Mirjam Pot
External Coordinator	Emina Hadziabdic, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Project Partners	Linnaeus University (Sweden), Anziani e non solo (Italy), Hogeschool Gent (Belgium), Jade (Finland)
Funded by	European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme

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 for students and professionals to enable them to provide person-centred and diversity-sensitive health and social care to all individuals.

The project addressed this need by developing open educational resources for students and professionals as well as policy recommendations in various languages. People with migration backgrounds and stakeholders participated in the design of training resources as well as in workshops to discuss access barriers and how to enhance diversity-sensitive person-centred care. The project was based on a Theory of Change approach to project evaluation, which was the responsibility of the European Centre. Another key responsibility was to disseminate the ample material produced by project partners, e.g. a training package for face-to-face training modules and web-based training in Austria. Additionally, the European Centre implemented several activities to raise awareness about the need for training to improve diversity-sensitive care. These included a series of five webinars on care for older migrants with presentations from international experts and the publication of two Policy Briefs, which were disseminated during an event at the European Parliament for diverse stakeholders in the field of care for older migrants.

The project results include a training handbook, an e-learning course, and two policy briefs. The handbook features a 40-hour curriculum for in-person teaching using diverse methods and is available in Dutch, Swedish, Italian, Finnish, German, and English. The policy briefs synthesise recommendations, highlighting the need for integrating diversity sensitivity into core education and specialised courses to improve skills like listening, analysis, reflection, and cultural knowledge.

Sustainable and Socially Just Transnational Sectoral Labour Markets (JUSTMIG)

Duration	11/2023 – 10/2025
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot, Anette Scoppetta, Nikko Bilitza, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
External Coordinator	Tibor Meszmann, CELSI
Project Partners	CELSI - Central European Labour Studies Institute (Slovakia); CREDI - Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research (Bosnia and Herzegovina); De Burcht - The Scientific Bureau for the Dutch Trade Union Movement, Foundation de Burcht (The Netherlands); Peace Institute - Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies (Slovenia); Uni of Belgrade - University of Belgrade Faculty of Economics (Serbia); JYU - University of Jyväskylä (Finland); UTARTU - University of Tartu (Estonia)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL)

In recent years, especially in some economic sectors, a pattern of permanent reliance on temporary employment of migrant workers has grown in significance across the EU. In most EU Member States, industrial relations structures and social partners struggle with problems of declining regulatory influence and deteriorating organisational capacities. Additionally, they find it extremely challenging to regulate sectoral labour markets where precarity and transnationalised vulnerability have been growing.

The JUSTMIG project combines innovative research and data collection on labour market dynamics in both service and manufacturing sub-sectors across six EU Member States, where fixed-term contracting of migrant workers occurs, and three candidate countries as source countries of workers. Starting with the development and application of innovative participatory methodology, the project actively engages social partners and labour market institutions throughout the project's duration. Activities are designed evenly to exert short-, medium- and long-term impact on experts and social partners, as well as on migrant and local workers.

The JUSTMIG project will thus show how industrial relations structures are adjusting to the increased presence of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and candidate countries. The project will strengthen social partner capacities and support policies for just and sustainable labour market outcomes.

Good practices in supporting informal carers (InfoCare)

Duration	02/2025 – 12/2025
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Mirjam Pot, Niki Kalavrezou, Selma Kadi, Selam Woldemariam, Kai Leichsenring
Funded by	Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden

Informal carers provide essential support to relatives or friends due to old age, illness, or disability, playing a crucial role in the health and care system. While caregiving can be rewarding, it often comes with significant challenges, including heavy workloads, emotional strain, and insufficient support. It can also negatively impact carers' health, employment, and family life.

The situation of informal carers varies depending on the availability of formal LTC services and direct support measures, which differ substantially across the EU. While those in countries with well-developed LTC systems may be better off than carers in countries with limited services, they still face distinct challenges. These may include difficulties in coordinating with professionals, inadequate direct support, or a lack of recognition of their specific needs. As a result, informal carers in these systems may have unique but overlooked support needs.

InfoCare aims to provide the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs with an overview of the challenges faced by informal carers and the policies implemented to support them in countries with well-developed formal long-term care (LTC) systems, i.e. countries comparable to Sweden in this regard. The findings can help inform targeted and effective support measures for informal carers in Sweden. To this end, we shall:

- Assess key indicators of informal caregiving across the EU-27 to benchmark and identify three to five countries for further analysis.
- Review and analyse recent academic and grey literature on the challenges faced by informal carers and support measures, with a focus on countries with well-developed formal LTC systems to identify gaps and opportunities for improving support for informal carers.
- Conduct expert interviews with stakeholders in the selected countries to explore the unique challenges of informal carers, best practices for support, policy developments, and experiences with legislative processes and implementation.
- Perform an in-depth analysis of selected good practices, evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) as well as their potential social and economic impact.

European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP)

Duration	10/2021 – 12/2025
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta
Project Partner	Leda Stott, Spain
Funded by	European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO)

The EU funds, encompassed under the Common Provisions Regulation 2021/1060 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 the positive experience of the 2014-2020 period, 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. Leda Stott and Anette Scoppetta act as experts for the European Commission for the ECoPP.

Analysis of persons not covered by health insurance in Austria (NKV 2025)

Duration	04/2025 – 01/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti
Project Partners	Martin Schenk, Diakonie Österreich
Funded by	Austrian Health Insurance Fund (ÖGK)

The project – as a follow-up to earlier studies in 2003 and 2015 – aims at the quantitative and qualitative reassessment of people not covered by health insurance in Austria. The key objectives are to estimate the number of people concerned, to analyse their socio-demographic characteristics, to identify causes for non-coverage and to assess their coping behaviour in case of illness.

For the quantitative part we will use register data by the umbrella organisation of the health insurance fund and by Statistics Austria (data on residence population, insured persons, cross-border commuters, specific group like chamber-related professionals, etc.), for the qualitative part we will run a survey on patients in ambulant facilities caring also for people not covered by health insurance.

Over the past 15 years, various policies have been introduced in Austria to promote inclusion in health insurance. Most likely, the most important aspect is represented by the inclusion of minimum income benefit recipients in health insurance. The measure significantly reduced the problem of non-health insurance among Austrian citizens and migrants with a qualifying duration of stay. However, for several reasons, non-take-up of the minimum income benefit is still an issue. A continued unsolved challenge relates to the coverage of persons from both EU Member States and third countries, who are not employed and are not entitled to monetary benefits in Austria due to their non-qualifying residential status. However, this problem can probably only be solved in the international context and not by Austria alone. The follow-up study will monitor trends in those potentially still existing gaps.

Enhancing Charter Compliance of EU Funds (ECHO Funds)

Duration	03/2024 – 02/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Magdi BIRTHA, Sandra Scharf, Anette Scoppetta, Elif Naz Kayran, Sabina Gjylsheni
External Coordinator	Katrin Wladasch, LBI-GMR
Project Partners	LBI-GMR – Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights (Austria); CECL – Centre for European Constitutional Law, Themistocles and Dimitris Tsatsou Foundation (Greece); INPRIS – Institute for Law and Society (Poland); Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Hungary)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers, CERV Action Grant

EU funds form a significant share of national budgets and are regulated by a set of common provisions. For the funding period of 2021-2027, the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) foresees that the principles enshrined in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights must be complied with throughout the funding cycle as horizontal enabling conditions. Additionally, the CPR also foresees a more articulated role for bodies representing civil society and national bodies with a human rights remit.

The project aims to enhance the human rights conditionality of EU funds by ways of raising awareness about Charter rights and their implications. Moreover, it will contribute to a common understanding of the roles of different stakeholders in EU funding in all stages of the funding period.

Project activities include research (desktop research, key stakeholder interviews), transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience via national events in Austria, Greece and Poland along with virtual transnational open consultation days about Charter rights and their implications in EU funds, dissemination activities tailored to the needs of different target groups and a wider public as well as online tools that can be applied to enhance Charter awareness and compliance.

Enhancing the Collection and Analysis of National Data on Intra-EU Posting 2.0 (Posting.STAT 2.0)

Duration	04/2024 – 03/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Leonard Geyer, Nikko Bilitza, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
External Coordinators	Frederic De Wispelaere, HIVA, KU Leuven
Project Partners	HIVA – Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium); CUE – Cracow University of Economics (Poland); ELMI – European Labour Mobility Institute (Poland); COMILLAS – Comillas Pontifical University (Spain); UCLM – University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain); SEO – SEO Amsterdam Economics (Netherlands); UNIVE – University Ca'Foscari of Venice (Italy); UNISTRA – University of Strasbourg (France); CNRS – The French National Centre for Scientific Research (France); ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Slovenia); CELSI – Central European Labour Studies Institute (Slovakia); LCSS – Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences (Lithuania); WMP CONSULT – Wilke Maack GmbH (Germany)
Associated Organisations	EFBWW – European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (Belgium); CEEMET aisbl – Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology-based industries (Belgium); SIOD – The Social Information and Investigation Service (Belgium); ACV-CSC – ACV-CSC Transcom (Belgium)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, ESF-PJG

This project aims to complement the data collected on intra-EU posting at the European level by bringing together a research consortium from the main sending and receiving Member States (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain). Following up on Posting.STAT 1.0, the goal of this project is to increase the level of empirical evidence on intra-EU posting.

The project aims to collect and analyse national administrative data related to research questions that were not explored in the original project, such as data on third-country national postings, temporary work agency assignments, subcontracting chains, and monitoring and infringements. The consortium, coordinated by KU Leuven, includes 14 beneficiaries, mostly research institutes and universities, along with one affiliated and four associated partners representing social partners and a public authority.

The main objective of the project is to collect administrative (micro) data from the competent public authorities to obtain more detailed information on the scale, characteristics, and impact of intra-EU posting, both in the main receiving and sending Member States and a better view of the enforcement of the posting rules based on data from national labour inspectorates. Based on this data, the project will be able to stimulate the discussion about intra-EU posting. Moreover, the dissemination of results (data collection) will enhance the knowledge base on the posting of workers within the EU.

Older Persons Affected by Violence and Abuse (Gewalt_Older Persons)

Duration	10/2024 – 06/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Kai Leichsenring, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot, Niki Kalavrezou, Selam Woldemariam
Project Partners	Austrian Interdisciplinary Platform on Ageing (ÖPIA) Institut of Conflict Research IKF, Austria
Funded by	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria

Violence and abuse of older persons has gradually moved out of its taboo status in recent years, leading to increased debates about the scope of the issue and, ultimately, its definition. Broad definitions include discrimination based on age (“ageism”), age-related limitations, vulnerability to loneliness and social isolation, as well as criminally relevant experiences of violence among older individuals and their avoidance in various settings. “Elder abuse, neglect and maltreatment,” as understood in the Anglo-Saxon context, remains an area with limited research interest and scarce data on the topic. The risk of experiencing at least one form of violence appears to rise with age, but also varies with gender, dependency, and other intersecting factors. This may partly explain why surveys often focus on specific target groups, settings, or types of violence. The ongoing challenge is to operationalise a comprehensive concept of violence for a representative sample of society, using international theoretical models and practical examples to conduct meaningful surveys.

Drawing from national and international literature and considering global discourses (structures, experiences), the topic of “violence against older people” will be systematically analysed in this project to clarify and explore questions about a comprehensive definition and its operationalisation. Current efforts include identifying, summarising, and critically analysing existing data collection tools and data gathered in Austria and internationally (including data gaps). Based on this research, survey methods and instruments for both quantitative and qualitative primary data collection in various settings will be developed and tested in the field. In collaboration with selected experts and stakeholders, we will then discuss the requirements for systematic primary data collection from methodological, economic, and (social) policy perspectives to determine the next steps for data collection in Austria.

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

Duration	10/2022 – 10/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta, Selma Kadi, Cassandra Simmons, Kai Leichsenring, Magdi Birtha, Sonila Danaj, Eszter Zólyomi, Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Michael Fuchs, Mirjam Pot, Sabina Gjylsheni
External Coordinator	Mattias Wihlborg, ICF (United Kingdom)
Project Partners	ICF International (Belgium & United Kingdom), Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (Italy)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

ICF, in collaboration with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and IRS, has 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 levels 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.

Over the past year, the European Centre supported the organisation of six peer reviews and mutual learning activities through facilitation and analytical support services, including thematic and country discussion papers. Mutual learning is facilitated through various activities, including peer reviews, peer learning, policy learning conferences and events, working groups, and expert groups.

EDE II: European Disability Expertise II

Duration	03/2024 – 03/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Magdi BIRTHA, Eszter Zólyomi, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, Sabina Gjylsheni, David Conforti, Niki Kalavrezou
External Coordinator	Tobin den Blijker, Human European Consultancy
Project Partners	Human European Consultancy
Funded by	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). The Human European Consultancy manages the EDE network and is now in its fourth contract period (March 2025 – February 2026). Under this contract, as with ANED, data on disability across the EU is assessed to support EU policymaking. European Centre's experts are part of the central team of senior experts in the EDE network and are responsible for the European Semester task as well as for statistical reports, linked to the annual thematic and ad-hoc reports.

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, as well as their relationship to policy and legislation at the EU level, and the situation of persons with disabilities.

The information and data collected is intended to regularly support the European Commission by:

- providing updated 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 (UN CRPD).

Technical Support for Development and Update of EUROMOD (EUROMOD Update 2025-2028)

Duration	01/2021 – 02/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth
External Project Coordinator	JRC Seville
Funded by	European Commission, 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 the EU as a whole. EUROMOD is free for academic and not-for-profit use.

The EUROMOD consortium consists of the core developer group at JRC Seville and the national expert groups of each Member States. The European Centre participates as the Austrian expert team and contributes with an annual update of policy parameters, the Austrian input data (EU-SILC national data) for the model, as well as validation. This update is published in the Austrian EUROMOD country report.

In 2025, the Austrian part of EUROMOD was updated to 2025 policy rules, including adjustments for bracket creep, indexation of benefits, etc., using the latest (uprated) input data (SILC 2023 with incomes for 2022). Moreover, work on the new indirect tax-tool continued with the aim to simulate also the fiscal and distributive consequences of value added tax and excise taxes using merged SILC/household budget survey data as input).

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

Analytical and Methodological Support in Qualitative Analysis, Mapping and Mixed Methods (ELA FWC Lot 2)

Duration	03/2024 – 03/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Leonard Geyer, Anette Scoppetta, Eszter Zólyomi, Judith Schreiber, Kai Leichsenring
External Project Coordinator	Monica Andriescu, Ecorys (Belgium)
Project Partners	ECORYS -Ecorys Europe (Belgium), HIVA - Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium), Milieu Consulting SRL (Belgium)
Funded by	European Labour Authority

The European Centre is partnering in a consortium with Ecorys Europe, HIVA KU Leuven, and Milieu Consulting to provide analytical and methodological support related to qualitative analysis, mapping and mixed methods to the European Labour Authority (ELA). The provision of analytical and methodological support consists of identifying, compiling, analysing and presenting qualitative data from external sources. The consortium thus designs and implements qualitative data gathering exercises on behalf of ELA, as well as compiles, analyses and presents the information gathered. While the focus of this programme is on qualitative research methods and data, a mixed methods approach is sometimes requested for individual assignments, e.g. to contextualise specific analyses by providing supplementary statistics.

The aim of this framework contract is to provide analytical services and methodological consultancy support for ELA. Over the past year, the European Centre contributed to this programme with an Austrian country report on challenges and recurring problems in the labour market of the long-term care sector and research on the identification and mapping of support workers in the field of (intra-EU mobile) seasonal work.

These services provide support and complement analytical and other strategic, as well as operational, activities performed by ELA. The commissioned services will enable ELA to carry out its operational activities, including analysis and risk assessment, provision of labour market intelligence, information provision, tasks related to the European Network of Employment Services (EURES) and supporting Member States in tackling undeclared work and communication.

Navigating the Next Normal (NEXT-UP)

Duration	01/2025 – 06/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Leonard Geyer, Anette Scoppetta, Sabina Gjylsheni, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
External Project Coordinator	Jussi Kivistö, Tampere University Yuzhuo Cai (co-principal investigator), The Education University of Hong Kong
Project Partners	TAU – Tampere University (Finland); UiS – University of Stavanger (Norway); UAveiro – University of Aveiro (Portugal); CIPES – Center for Research in Higher Education Policies (Portugal); UT – University of Twente (The Netherlands); UAB – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain); UniTrento – University of Trento (Italy); UHEI – Heidelberg University (Germany); TLU – Tallinn University (Estonia); SAMOK – National Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Finland)
Funded by	European Commission, HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions, Horizon Europe

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, European youth faced unprecedented challenges in education-to-employment transitions, followed by the revolution of AI technology and shifting geopolitical landscapes. Against this background, the NEXT-UP project aims to investigate and predict the long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis on youth transitions from school to work and co-create, with stakeholders, evidence-informed, future-oriented policies and programmes in the European Union and EFTA countries.

The project explores school-to-work transitions and young people's labour market situation from various angles and through multiple methods, including qualitative and quantitative research, agent-based modelling and machine learning.

The European Centre's primary focus is on the analysis of youth employability policies and their effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, we shall be involved in the co-creation of effective policies for the future together with stakeholders in Living Labs, thereby incorporating the findings from all other research activities carried out by a large consortium of experts from across Europe.

Encouraging a Digital and Green Transition Through Revitalised and Inclusive Union-Employer Negotiations (E-GRUiEN)

Duration	01/2025 – 12/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Elif Naz Kayran, Sonila Danaj, Nikko Bilitza, Leonard Geyer, Selma Kadi, Kai Leichsenring, Mirjam Pot, Anette Scoppetta, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
External Project Coordinator	Nathan Lillie, JYU
Project Partners	JYU – University of Jyväskylä (Finland); UNIPR – University of Parma (Italy); UiO – University of Oslo (Norway); CU – Cardiff University (United Kingdom); UWr – University of Wrocław (Poland); TLU – Tallinn University (Estonia); Unizar – University of Zaragoza (Spain); CELSI – Central European Labour Studies Institute (Slovakia); LUT – Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology (Finland); Notus – Applied Social Research (Spain)
Funded by	European Commission, HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions, Horizon Europe

There is a clear need for better adaptation of social dialogue institutions given the systemic labour market transformations, such as digitalisation and green transition, as well as the growing share of non-standard work in the European workforce. Social dialogue institutions are a means to guide European economies through economic change, helping ensure both worker and employer views are represented at the level of firm, sector, or national policymaking and in EU forums. Recent research shows that despite social dialogue's undeniable role in labour regulation in many countries and at the EU level, its ability to manage crises and transformations in an equitable and just way is uncertain and requires further research.

E-GRUiEN will break new ground in the study of industrial relations and economic transformation by developing a comprehensive analytical framework to examine how social dialogue actors and institutions can navigate workforce challenges, support economic transitions, and protect workers amid increasing precarity and nonstandard employment.

The European Centre will be involved in case study research to contribute to the diverse picture of extant social dialogue institutions, economic characteristics, and impact of the twin transition (green and digital) in automotive production, energy, care services and transport on demand. Through historical case studies, participatory action research, and cross-disciplinary collaboration, the project will uncover effective strategies for inclusive representation, forward-looking bargaining, and transnational social dialogue.

Support Services for Bilateral Labour Market Cooperation in the Danube Region with Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine 2025-2029 (Danube Strategy)

Duration	02/2025 – 12/2029
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta, Sabina Gjylsheni
Funded by	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria

The five EU accession states, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine are part of the Danube region. The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in December 2010, endorsed by the European Council in 2011. It was developed by the EU Commission together with the Danube Region countries and stakeholders to jointly address common challenges. Generally speaking, compared to EU countries, the challenges these countries face include limited economic and social progress, widespread corruption, and lower efficiency in public administration. By investing in people and promoting human capital, the Danube region can grow in a smart and inclusive way.

The project aims are to provide guidance and services towards integrated policies and solutions that are based on the needs of the respective countries and that build on already accomplished work such as the Danube Region Monitor 2022.

The methods applied include policy document reviews, desk research, interviews, workshops, etc.

During 2025, an evaluation of Montenegro's Employment Strategy through a policy document review has been conducted to assess its current status, with results to be published by the end of this year.

Publications

Books and Chapters in Books

Medgyesi, M., Rodrigues, R., & Zólyomi, E. (2025). Methods to match a novel concept: Approaches to measuring care poverty. In T. Kröger, N. Brimblecombe, R. Rodrigues, & K. Rummery (Eds.), *Care poverty and unmet needs* (pp. 61–76). Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Rodrigues, R., Simmons, C., & Leichsenring, K. (2025). Sharing the burden: The impact of long-term care on the financial situation of families in Europe. In J. Cylus, G. Wharton, L. Carrino, S. Ilinca, M. Huber, & S. L. Barber (Eds.), *The care dividend: Why and how countries should invest in long-term care* (pp. 266–298). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009563444.008>

Rodrigues, R., Simmons, C., Ilinca, S., & Zólyomi, E. (in press). “Who will still need me, who will still feed me, when I’m sixty-four?” Inequalities in long-term care. In C. Ranci & T. Rostgaard (Eds.), *Research handbook on social care policy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Simmons, C., Fischer, J., & Leichsenring, K. (2025). Emerging long-term care systems: Learning from comparison. In J. Morgan & V. La Placa (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in health and social care policy and practice: A comparative introduction* (Chapter 15). Milton Park, UK: Routledge.

Stott, L., & Scoppetta, A. (forthcoming). Changing the focus: Towards a new evidence base for SDG 17. In *The Elgar companion to data and indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Stott, L., & Scoppetta, A. (forthcoming). Revisiting SDG 17: Navigating the pitfalls of partnership. In *The Elgar companion to leadership beyond the Sustainable Development Goals*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Journal Articles

Breuer, E., Kadi, S., Kahlert, R., Champeix, C., García-Soler, Á., Grbevaska, T., Ondas, K., Comas-Herrera, A., Oliva, S., Ulla Díez, S. M., Slavkoska, A., Stouthard, L., Iturburu, M., Galdona, N., & Ilinca, S. (2025). Co-developing program theories for best fit social innovations in long-term care: Lessons from a cross-European implementation project. *Journal of Long-Term Care*. <https://doi.org/10.31389/jltc.306>

Calderón-Larrañaga, A., von Saenger, I., de la Fuente-Núñez, V., Ferrucci, L., Semenza, J. C., Veenstra, M., Sidorenko, A., Kröger, T., Koivunen, K., Iwarsson, S., Fratiglioni, L., Nilsen, C., Religa, D., Torgé, C. J., & Lennartsson, C. (2025). Ageing in a transforming world: insights for future research and policy from the 27th Nordic Congress of Gerontology. *Journal of Global Ageing* (published online ahead of print in 2025). <https://doi.org/10.1332/29767202Y2025D000000036>

Danaj, S. (2025). Introduction: Posting of workers–Company profiles, access to information, and rule compliance. *Two Homelands*, 61. <https://doi.org/10.3986/2025.1.1>

Danaj, S., Kayran, E. N., & Zólyomi, E. (2025). Access to information on labour and social regulations and compliance in the posting of foreign workers in construction in Austria. *Two Homelands*, 61. <https://doi.org/10.3986/2025.1.3>

Kayran, E. N. (2025). Attitudes towards immigration and unemployment risk cleavages: Untangling the economically rooted group conflict framework. *Migration Studies*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnae003>

Lillie, N., Kärkkäinen, K., & Kayran, E. N. (2025). The uncertain social insurance of intra-EU mobile construction workers. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10242589251315851>

Pot, M. (2025). Caring around and through medical tests in primary care: On the role of care in the diagnostic process. *Social Science & Medicine*, 367, Article 117767, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117767>

Pot, M., Kadi, S., & Staflinger, H. (2024). Gaps in public support for young carers: Policies and young people's experiences in Austria. *International Journal for Care and Caring*. <https://doi.org/10.1332/23978821Y2024D000000087>

Sidorenko, A., & Leichsenring, K. (2025). Research agendas on ageing and longevity: Linking research and policy – A review and discussion article. *Journal of Ageing and Longevity*, 5(9). <https://doi.org/10.3390/jal5010009>

Simmons, C., Ilinca, S., Kadi, S., & Comas-Herrera, A. (2024). Financing and provision of long-term care in Europe: Reflections on intergenerational solidarity in care for older people. *Social Policy & Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.13113>

Zang, X., Simmons, C., & Yang, L. (2025). Context matters: Longitudinal associations between childhood adversity and mental health outcomes of middle-aged and older adults in 26 countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 389, Article 119649. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2025.119649>

Policy Briefs

Ivanenko, A., Beraia, T., Sigua, T., & Poon, Y. S. (2025). *The involvement of non-state actors in tackling undeclared work in Georgia and North Macedonia* (Policy Brief 2025/4). Vienna: European Centre (in co-operation with CEU). <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5292>

Kadi, S., Hadziabdic, E., De Koker, B., Lambotte, D., Leichsenring, K., Inkila, M., Ikonen, K., Trogu, G., Rompianesi, C., & Pezzini, A. (2025). *Improving education and training for health and social care staff to provide person-centred, diversity-sensitive care* (Policy Brief 2025/3). Vienna: European Centre. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5288>

Kadi, S., Berggren, A., Hadziabdic, E., Khatiri, N., De Koker, B., Lambotte, D., Leichsenring, K., Lehtovaara, S., Inkila, M., Ikonen, K., Trogu, G., & Rompianesi, C. (2025). *Six principles to enhance health and care for older migrants* (Policy Brief 2025/2). Vienna: European Centre. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5267>

Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., Geyer, L., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., & Scoppetta, A. (2025). *The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on child poverty and material deprivation in Austria* (Policy Brief 2025/1). Vienna: European Centre. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5193>

Kayran, E. N., Kadi, S., & Pot, M. (2025). *The simultaneity of self-employment and dependency of live-in carers in Austria: A labour relations paradox*. JUSTMIG Policy Brief. Vienna: European Centre. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5272>

Kadi, S., Pot, M., Simmons, C., Leichsenring, K., & Staflinger, H. (2024). *“Ich habe anfangs geglaubt, ich schaffe das mit meiner normalen Arbeitszeit”: Angehörigenpflege und Berufstätigkeit in (Ober-)Österreich* (Policy Brief 2024/7). Vienna: European Centre. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5054>

Reports and other Publications

Birtha, M. (2024). *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030 – Achievements and perspectives. Briefing*. Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, PE 767.095. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_BRI\(2024\)767095](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_BRI(2024)767095)

Birtha, M., Cadudal, S., & Kadi, S. (2024). *Summary Report of the Peer Review on “Participation of persons with disabilities in the development of social services at local level”, 3–4 October 2024, Vienna, Austria*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1024&langId=en&peerReviewId=10924&iframe=true>

Birtha, M., Wladasch, K., Bliminger, J., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025). *Enhancing Charter Compliance of EU Funds*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5207>

Danaj, S., Gillis, D., Geyer, L., De Wispelaere, F., & Bilitza, N. (2025). *What is “temporary agency posting” and how far can we count it? Linking legal definitions to empirical evidence*. Vienna & Leuven: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research & HIVA – KU Leuven (POSTING.STAT 2.0 Project Thematic Paper). <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5234>

European Commission (written by Birtha, M.) (2024). *European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://www.euro.centre.org/news/detail/5298>

European Commission (written by Birtha, M., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F.) (2025). *European Semester 2024 mainstreaming disability equality – Synthesis report with input from the country experts of the European Disability Expertise (EDE)*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://www.euro.centre.org/news/detail/5304>

European Commission (written by Zólyomi, E.) (2025). *Employment of persons with disabilities – Thematic statistical report of the European Disability Expertise (EDE)*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://www.euro.centre.org/news/detail/5300>

European Commission Joint Research Centre (Fuchs, M., & Wohlgemuth, F.) (2025). *EUROMOD Country Report – Austria*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/5124408>

European Labour Authority (written by Danaj, S., Kayran, E.N., Zólyomi, E., Vancauwenbergh, S., Homem, F., & Paron Trivellato, M.) (2025). *Posting of third-country nationals: Contracting chains, recruitment patterns, and enforcement issues. Insights from case studies. ELA Strategic Analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5206>

Fuchs, M., Geyer, L., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Scoppetta, A., & Zólyomi, E. (2024). *The Effects of COVID-19 on Poverty and Material Deprivation of Children in Austria*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5314>

Geyer, L., Bilitza, N., & Danaj, S. (2025). *GDPoweR – Recovering workers’ data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. Country Report Austria*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5244>

Geyer, L., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). *The buffering effect of the Austrian tax-benefit system on child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic* (Euromod Working Paper Series, EM2/25). <https://www.microsimulation.ac.uk/euromod-working-papers/em2-25/>

Geyer, L., Prinz, N., & Bilitza, N. (2024). *Driver Survey – Arbeitsbedingungen und kollektives Handeln im plattformbasierten Personenverkehrssektor und darüber hinaus. Abschlussbericht*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5058>

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Kayran, E.N., Giacumacatos, E., Danaj, S., & Jakubowska, K.) (2025). *Summary report of the Mutual Learning Event on “Structured dialogue for collective bargaining and collective agreements”, 19–20 May 2025, Larnaca, Cyprus*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Fiorio, C., & Fuchs, M.) (2025). *Summary report of the Mutual Learning Event on “Addressing Inequalities: Distributional Impact Assessment across Member States”, 12–13 May 2025, Brussels, Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392862616_Addresssing_Inequalities_Mutual_Learning_Event_on_Distributional_Impact_Assessment_across_Member_States

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Kayran, E.N., & Danaj, S.) (2025). *Summary report of the Mutual Learning Event on “Access to social protection for artists”, 6–7 May 2025, Brussels, Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Kadi, S., Pot, M., Jalvingh, H., & Schönenberg, L.) (2024). *Summary report of the Peer Review on “Social protection and inclusion of older persons”, 3–4 December 2024, Oslo, Norway*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Cadudal, S., Colosimo, L.-M., & Zólyomi, E.) (2024). *Summary Report of the Peer Review on “Implementation of Housing First approach to tackle long-term homelessness of people with complex needs”, 10–11 October 2024, Dublin, Ireland*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15710&langId=en>

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Kayran, E.N., & Gjylsheni, S.) (2024). *Summary report of the Mutual Learning Event on “Access to social protection: Data, indicators and monitoring systems”, 26–27 November 2024, Brussels, Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ICF & European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (written by Birtha, M., Cadudal, S., & Kadi, S.) (2024). *Summary Report of the Peer Review on “Participation of persons with disabilities in the development of social services at local level”, 3–4 October 2024, Vienna, Austria*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Kadi, S., Pot, M., Simmons, C., Leichsenring, K., & Staflinger, H. (2024). *Angehörigenpflege und Berufstätigkeit in Oberösterreich: Ausgangssituation und Handlungsbedarf. (Informal care and employment in Upper Austria: context and need for action)*. Linz und Wien: Arbeiterkammer Oberösterreich & Europäisches Zentrum für Wohlfahrtspolitik und Sozialforschung. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5051>

Kalavrezou, N., Pot, M., Kadi, S., Simmons, C., & Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Facts and Figures on Healthy Ageing and Long-Term Care*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5202>

Kayran, E.N., & Kadi, S. (2024). *Background report Austria: JUSTMIG – Sustainable and socially just transnational sectoral labour markets for temporary migrants*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5046>

Kowalik, Z., Prusak, A., & Szymczak, W. (2025). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. Country Report Poland*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research & Institute for Structural Research. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5250>

Leichsenring, K. (2024). Internationale Modelle und Erfahrungen ressourcenorientierter Langzeitpflege. In Österreichisches Komitee für Soziale Arbeit (Ed.), *Pflege und Betreuung als knappes Gut. Auswirkungen – Chancen – Strategien* (pp. 43–60). Wien: ÖKSA. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5160>

Rodríguez Fernández, M.L., Cruces Aguilera, J., Fuente Sanz, L., & Trillo Párraga, F.J. (2025). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. Country Report Spain*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research & UCLM & Fundación 1 de Mayo. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5251>

Scoppetta, A. (2024). *Incentivising employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market – mapping of national policies, strategies and measures. Austrian Country Report*. Vienna: European Centre (unpublished).

Scoppetta, A., Bilitza, N., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025). *Bridge Building Peer Review Report. Fighting Undeclared Work*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5198>

Scoppetta, A., & Zólyomi, E. (2024). *Towards piloting Integrated Case Management in Uzbekistan*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5096>

Srnec, C., Cornet, M., & Avila, P.M. (2025). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. Country Report France*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research & CY Cergy. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5252>

Thil, L., Gillis, D., Kennes, S., & Lenaerts, K. (2025). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. Country Report Belgium*. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, HIVA-KU Leuven & ACV Innovatief. <https://www.euro-centre.org/publications/detail/5249>

Working Papers and Blogs

Birtha, M., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025). *Building resilient social protection systems for all* (Discussion Paper No. 3). Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5137>

Danaj, S., Kayran, E. N., Geyer, L., Scoppetta, A., & Bilitza, N. (2024). *Developments and future prospects in the world of work* (Discussion Paper No. 1). Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5090>

Kadi, S., Kalavrezou, N., Leichsenring, K., & Pot, M. (2024). *Caring societies: The future of long-term care* (Discussion Paper No. 2). Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. <https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5108>

Staflinger, H., Kadi, S., & Pot, M. (2024). *Angehörigenpflege und Berufstätigkeit in Österreich*. A&W Blog. <https://www.awblog.at/Soziales/Angehoerigenpflege-und-Berufstaetigkeit-in-Oesterreich>

Conference Papers and Presentations

Kadi, S. (2025). *Tracing progress in the development of LTC: where we're at and some suggestions for where to go next*. Keynote presentation at the conference *Long-Term Care: Opportunities, Challenges and Good Practices*, Maribor, Slovenia, 23 September.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Ageing 4.0 – New life-course models to combat age discrimination*. Presentation given at the *5th ASEM Forum on the Human Rights of Older Persons: Present and Future* (online), 20 August.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Employment and migration in long-term care. Who cares, and how can we ensure an appropriate workforce in long-term care?* Presentation at the *Complutense Summer School workshop "Long-term care: dilemmas related to employment, accreditation and training of professionals"*, El Escorial, Spain, 22-23 July.

Bilitza, N., Geyer, L., & Danaj, S. (2025). *Posting trends in Austria – Preliminary findings*. Presentation at the *Posting. Stat 2.0 National Webinar* (online), 10 July.

Birtha, M. (2025). *The implementation of the EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030: Achievements and perspectives for disability rights in Europe*. Presentation at the *Alter 2025 European Disability Research Conference*, Innsbruck, Austria, 8-10 July.

Pot, M. (2025). *(De-)Legitimising change in healthcare: A critical discourse analysis of primary care reform in Austria*. Paper presented at the *Conference of the International Public Policy Association*, Chiang Mai, Thailand, (online), 2-4 July.

Scoppetta, A. (2025). *Job Carving & Crafting. Creating Access*. Presentation at the *CEFEC Conference*, Mainz, Germany, 1-2 July.

Danaj, S. (2025). *Drivers and patterns of temporary employment in manufacturing and services and circular labour migration in 6 EU countries*. Chair of Session 136 at the *22nd IMISCOE Annual Conference "Decentering migration studies"*, Aubervilliers–Paris, France, 2 July.

Berntsen, L., Danaj, S., de Beer, P., & Bilitza, N. (2025). *Sourcing in or sourcing out? What is next for migrant labour in the Dutch and Austrian food industries?* Paper presented at the *22nd IMISCOE Annual Conference "Decentering migration studies"*, Aubervilliers–Paris, France, 2 July.

Kadi, S., & Lambotte, D. (2025). *Improving social and health care provision for persons with migrant background at different levels*. Presentation of DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. project results at the event *Towards Inclusive Care: A Policy Dialogue on Diversity-Sensitive Approaches for People with Migrant Backgrounds*, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, 2 July.

Kayran, E. N., & Nadler, A. L. (2025). *Job precarity and attitudes towards labour unions: The mitigating role of immigrant background*. Paper given at the *European Political Science Association (EPSA) Annual Conference*, Madrid, Spain, 26-28 June.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Challenges in strengthening the long-term care workforce*. Presentation at the *First Central European Workshop on Frontiers in Long-Term Care Reform*, organised by the World Bank, Vienna, Austria, 17-18 June.

Birtha, M. (2025). *Inclusion and rights of disabled workers on the European labour market*. Presentation at the *36th Conference on trade union cooperation in Europa (KGZE)*, Vienna, Austria, 11-13 June.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Aspects of intergenerational cohesion in the context of longevity – Towards a Caring Society?* Keynote presentation at the *8th International Conference on Ageing* organised by "eng-ageing", Prague, Czech Republic, 5-6 June.

Scoppetta, A. (2025). *Partnerships within EU Funds*. Presentations at the *ECHO Funds Regional Conferences* in Vienna (8 May) and Graz, Austria, 15 May.

Fuchs, M. (2025). *"Distributional impact assessment in practice"*, *"Resilience and stress tests: Key considerations"*, and *"Enhancing the accessibility and usability of Distributional Impact Assessment results for various stakeholders"*. Presentations given at the *13th Mutual Learning Event on "Distributional Impact Assessment: Addressing inequalities: Mutual learning on distributional impact assessment across Member States"*, Brussels, Belgium, 12-13 May.

Berntsen, L., Danaj, S., de Beer, P., & Bilitza, N. (2025). *Sourcing in or sourcing out? What is next for migrant labour in the Dutch and Austrian food industries?* Presentation given at the *JUSTMIG Final Conference* (online), 28 May.

Birtha, M. (2025). *The European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research – An Overview*. Guest lecture at the *Central European University “Skills for Impact Course: Engaging international organisations”*, Vienna, Austria, 22 May.

Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., Geyer, L., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., & Scoppetta, A. (2025). *The effect of COVID-19 on poverty and material deprivation of children in Austria*. Paper presented at the *7th ESPAnet Austria Research Conference on Social Policy*, Innsbruck, Austria, 24-25 April.

Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). *The buffering effect of the Austrian tax-benefit system on child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Paper presented at the *7th ESPAnet Austria Research Conference on Social Policy*, Innsbruck, Austria, 24-25 April.

Kadi, S. (2025). *Wege zur Unterstützung pflegender Angehöriger mit Migrationshintergrund aus internationaler Perspektive*. Presentation at the *14th Annual Conference of IG Pflege, the Austrian interest group of informal carers* (online), 15 April.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Policy issues of live-in migrant care from the perspective of informal carers*. Presentation at the *EUROCARERS Workshop*, Vienna, 10-11 April.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Working for the rights of older persons*. Presentation at the *AGAC Global Advisory Group Meeting* (online), 10 April.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *From quality assurance to continuous improvement with users and care workers: A new paradigm for long-term care*. Presentation at the *ESN Members Forum and Workshop*, Warsaw, Poland, 7 April.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Challenges of emerging long-term care systems – Needs, rights and choices in Europe*. Guest lecture and workshop at the *Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies*, Brno, Czech Republic, 18 March.

Birtha, M., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). *Mainstreaming disability equality – trends and policies relevant to disability: Key findings of the European Semester 2024*. Presentation at the *European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar* organised by the European Commission, Brussels, Belgium, 20 February.

Zólyomi, E. (2025). *Employment of persons with disabilities. Key findings of the Thematic Statistical Report on Employment*. Presentation at the *European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar* organised by the European Commission, Brussels, Belgium, 20 February.

Birtha, M., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2025). *Implementation of the European Semester task in 2024*. Presentation at the *European Disability Expertise Internal meeting*, Brussels, Belgium, 19 February.

Birtha, M. (2024). *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030: Achievements and perspectives*. Presentation at the *Annual Workshop on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament*, Brussels, Belgium, 2 December.

Geyer, L. (2024). *Driver Survey – Arbeitsbedingungen und kollektives Handeln im plattformbasierten Personenverkehrssektor und darüber hinaus*. Presentation of selected project results at the City of Vienna's working group on the future of taxis, Vienna, Austria, 2 December.

Leichsenring, K. (2024). *Grundsicherung in Europa – Armutsbekämpfung, Anreiz zur Lohnarbeit oder Ermöglichung gleicher Lebenschancen?* Presentation given at the *Conference "50 years of social autonomy in South Tyrol"*, Brixen/Bressanone, Italy, 29 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2024). *Ageing 4.0 and the need for international research*. Invited lecture at the *Researchers Meeting of Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies*, Brno, Czech Republic, 27 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2024). *Global challenges of long-term care and policy responses*. Guest lecture and workshop at the *Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies*, Brno, Czech Republic, 26 November.

Birtha, M., & Wladasch, K. (2024). *Enhancing Charter Compliance of EU funds (ECHO Funds)*. Input to the Expert workshop of the *EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)* on the role of NHRIs on the fundamental rights compliance in the use of EU Funds, Vienna, Austria, 26-27 November.

Kadi, S. (2024). *Diversitätssensible Betreuung älterer Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*. Presentation at the lecture series organised by the City of Vienna *"Wien.Vielfalt.Wissen"*, Vienna, Austria, 20 November.

Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2024). *Family Policies in Austria – Parental leave & formal childcare*. Presentation in the framework of the study visit of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Vienna, Austria, 19 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2024). *Internationale Modelle und Erfahrungen ressourcenorientierter Langzeitpflege*. Presentation at the *Annual Meeting of the Austrian Committee of Social Work (ÖKSA)*, Klagenfurt, Austria, 7 November.

Geyer, L. (2024). *Driver Survey – Arbeitsbedingungen und kollektives Handeln im plattformbasierten Personenverkehrssektor und darüber hinaus*. Presentation of the project results at a joint event with *Arbeiterkammer*, Vienna, Austria, 8 October.

Fuchs, M., & Groß-Wohlgemuth, F. (2024). *Simulation of an increase of the minimum pension top-up in Austria*. Presentation at the *EUROMOD Annual Meeting*, Marseille, France, 25 September.

Zólyomi, E. (2024). *Depends on whom you ask: Discordance in reporting spousal care between older women and men across European welfare states*. Presentation at the *Conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA)*, Porto, Portugal, 29 August.

Zólyomi, E. (2024). *Differences in informal care to parents between women and men: the role of individual gender role attitudes and institutional context*. Presentation at the *Conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA)*, Porto, Portugal, 28 August.

Datasets

De Smedt, L., Zólyomi, E., Kayran, E. N., De Wispelaere, F., & Danaj, S. (2025). *INFO-POW Project Survey Dataset on Posting and Receiving Companies in the Construction Sector (OA edition)*. AUSSDA. <https://doi.org/10.11587/049CFJ>

Bilitza, N., & Prinz, N. (2024). *GDPower – Recovering workers' data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy. GDPower-Data-Visualization (Version 1.0) [R script]*. GitHub. <https://github.com/nikkobilitza/GDPower-Data-Visualization>

Training and Teaching Material

DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. (2025). *Diversity-sensitive care: Strengthening competences to support older people with migrant background and their families: Handbook with teaching materials*. Available online: <https://www.diversitysensitivitycare.eu/courses/training-programme/> (English, also available in German, Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, and Italian).

DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. (2025). *Providing diversity-sensitive care for older migrants and their families: MOOC course*. Available online: <https://lnu-ftk.eu-west.catalog.canvaslms.com/browse/mooc/fhl/english/courses/discopmb-english> (English, also available in German, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, and Finnish).

Geyer, L. (2025, 12-13 February). *Practical training on retrieving and analysing worker data with the help of GDPR requests*. ETUC Thematic Workshop “Negotiating the algorithm and accessing information,” Copenhagen.

International Seminars and Webinars

Kadi, S., Leichsenring, K., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025, 2 July). *Towards inclusive care: A policy dialogue on diversity-sensitive approaches for people with migrant backgrounds*. European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium (onsite and online).

Fuchs, M., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025, 24 June). *10th BBinar: Pension systems in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries: Between financial sustainability and adequacy* (online).

Kadi, S. (2025, 26 March). *Promoting competencies for the care and healthcare of older migrants: A webinar on the occasion of the launch of the DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. e-learning course* (online).

Kadi, S. (2025, 12 March). *Collaboration with informal carers of older migrants – DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. webinar series* (online).

Leichsenring, K., & Sidorenko, A. (2025, 13 February). *The future of research on ageing and social policy – International Seminar* (online).

Danaj, S., & Gjylsheni, S. (2025, 6 February). *9th BBinar: Labour migration: Drivers, impact, and responses in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries* (online).

Kadi, S. (2025, 8 January). *Transcultural nursing for older migrants – DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. webinar series* (online).

Kadi, S. (2024, 11 December). *Care for older migrants with dementia – DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. webinar series* (online).

Kadi, S. (2024, 13 November). *Migrants facing language barriers in accessing services – DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. webinar series* (online).

Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Geyer, L., & Scoppetta, A. (2024, 28 October). *The effect of COVID-19 on poverty and material deprivation of children in Austria – International Seminar* (online).

Kadi, S. (2024, 9 October). *Migrants facing barriers in accessing health and long-term care – DI.S.C.O.P.M.B. webinar series* (online).



Organisation

Management and Staff

Management

Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director

Anette Scoppetta, Deputy Director

Judith Schreiber, Head of Administration and Finance

Researchers

Nikko Bilitza

Magdi BIRTHA

David Conforti

Sonila Danaj

Michael Fuchs

Leonard Geyer

Sabina Gjylsheni

Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth

Selma Kadi

Niki Kalavrezou

Elif Naz Kayran

Kai Leichsenring

Mirjam Pot

Anette Scoppetta

Eszter Zólyomi

Selam Woldemariam



Administration, Public Relations and IT

Daria Jadric
Anna Valerie Obernberger
Sebastian Ruttner
Sandra Scharf
Judith Schreiber

Research Affiliates / Policy Consultants

Nikolai Botev
Adelina Comas-Herrera
Katrin Gasior
Cornelius (Cees) Goos
Giovanni Lamura
Ricardo Rodrigues
Andrea E. Schmidt
Alexandre Sidorenko
Cassandra Simmons
Maria Varlamova

Board of Directors

Chair

Ghada Fathi Waly, Director-General
United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)

Acting Chair

Angela Me, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)

Ex Officio Member

Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research

Austrian Mandate

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz)

Georg Reibmayr
(Alternates: Matija Rutar, Marc Pointecker, Andreas Schaller)

Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research
(Bundesministerium für Frauen, Wissenschaft und Forschung)

Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy
(Alternate: Bettina Glaser)

Vienna City Administration (Magistrat der Stadt Wien)

Ursula Ganai

Federation of Austrian Trade Unions
(Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund, ÖGB)

Julia Stroj
(Alternate: David Mum)

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer, WKO)

Emanuel Ludwig
(Alternate: Christa Schweng)

International Mandate

Israel

(to be nominated)

Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs

Poland

Agnieszka Sowa-Kofta

Institute of Labour and Social Studies

(Alternate: Ewa Chylek, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy)

Slovenia

(to be nominated)

Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future

Spain

María Teresa Sancho Castiello

(Alternate: Manuel Veguín García)

Institute for Older Persons and Social Services (IMSERSO)

Sweden

Tony Malmborg

(Alternate: Kristoffer Lundberg)

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Switzerland

Sabina Littmann-Wernli

(Alternate: Thomas Vollmer)

Federal Social Insurance Office

Finland (coopted)

Minna-Liisa Luomai

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)

Norway (coopted)

Thore Hansen

Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

Ireland (coopted)

Jim Lynch

Department of Social Protection

NLOs / National Liaison Officials

Armenia

Yevgine Vardanyan

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Austria

Georg Reibmayr and **Monika Austaller**

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

Azerbaijan

Aygun Khalilova

National Observatory on Labour Market and Social Protection Affairs under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population

Belgium

Koen Vleminckx

FOD Sociale Zekerheid (SPF Sécurité Sociale)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jasmina Khechan

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Federation of BiH

Czech Republic

Robin Maialeh

Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

Finland

Minna-Liisa Luoma

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)

France

Jeanne Jezierski and **Stefania Chiru**

Ministry of Labour, Health, Solidarity and Families; General Directorate for Social Cohesion

Georgia

Ketevan Goginashvili

Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs

Greece

Nikolaos Vettas

Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE)

Ireland

Jim Lynch

Department of Social Protection



Israel

Benjamin Behar and **Anat Raz**
Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs

Kosovo

Muhamet Klinaku
Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo

Moldova

Oleg Barcari
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

North Macedonia

Aleksandra Slavkoska
Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics and Youth

Norway

Thore Hansen
Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

Poland

Agnieszka Sowa-Kofta
Institute of Labour and Social Studies

Portugal

José Albuquerque and **Rute Guerra**
Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security

Slovak Republic

Daniel Gerbery
Institute for Labour and Family Research

Slovenia

Martina Trbanc
Social Protection Institute

Spain

Manuel Veguín Garcia
Institute for Older Persons and Social Services (IMSERSO)

Sweden

Kristoffer Lundberg
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Switzerland

Sabina Littmann-Wernli and **Thomas Vollmer**
Federal Social Insurance Office

Ukraine

Viktoria Lykova
Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity

Uzbekistan

Sardor Yusupov
National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

**Copyright © 2025 European Centre
for Social Welfare Policy and Research**

Publisher

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research
Berggasse 17

A-1090 Vienna, Austria

Tel +43-1-319 45 05-0

Email ec@euro.centre.org

<http://www.euro.centre.org>

Editor Kai Leichsenring

Copy-Editing & DTP Daria Jadric,

Anna Valerie Obernberger

Design Barbara Waldschütz

Status as of 1 October 2025



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH