Annual Report of Activities

2026

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

Table of Contents

From the Executive Director **4**

Highlights and Outcomes **6**
- Key milestones of the past year 6
- Employment & Labour Mobility 8
- Health & Care 15
- Social Protection & Inclusion 20
- Bridging Function 26

Projects **31**

Publications **55**
- Books and Chapters in Books 55
- Journal Articles 55
- Policy Briefs 56
- Reports and other Publications 56
- Working Papers and Blogs 57
- Conference Papers and Presentations 58
- European Centre events 60

Organisation **61**
- Management and Staff 62
- Board of Directors 65
- NLOs (National Liaison Officials) 67

Dear colleagues & friends of the European Centre!

After a year of high geopolitical turbulence, a summer of extreme temperatures and limited rainfall, and polycrises that have had a significant impact on the lives of people in the UNECE countries, especially those in vulnerable situations, good social policies are in high demand. What we can observe, however, are trends in our societies that divide people rather than bring us closer together. This puts additional stress on our societies and on policies, especially social policies. Comparative research, along with the exchange of views, collaboration, and mutual learning, is therefore more crucial than ever.

In this regard, the European Centre has much to offer. And, at least on a small scale, the past year also brought some positive developments: the European Centre completed or is still implementing 23 projects (October 2025-August 2026; see the Projects chapter) and, as of end August, we have about 20 project acquisitions, all of which contribute to strengthening the evidence base for social policymaking in the UNECE countries. The new management of the European Centre, comprising Sonila Danaj as Deputy Director, Judith Schreiber as Head of Administration and Finance and me as Executive Director, together with other members of the European Centre Steering Group, specifically the Research Team leads, has built a team that jointly discusses and drives project acquisition and implementation.

Over the past year, we have been able to strengthen our unique selling proposition - delivering excellence in comparative social policy research – by successfully implementing projects in our expertise areas. The European Centre is well known for delivering high-quality research in social welfare and, as such, is regularly invited to join consortia for project applications. As a unique organisation embedded in the UNECE research landscape and closely linked to policymaking, we have further fostered our Bridge Building (BB) function over the past year, with projects running in and for the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. Since the European Centre operates at the interface between policy, practice and science, partnership is key. Together with all of you, we are on a promising path towards achieving our vision for the Centre to become THE evidence-based hub for integrated social policies in the UNECE countries.

I became Executive Director in March 2026, aiming to strengthen collaboration between our Members of the Board of Directors and National Liaison Officials. The European Centre thrives on the collaboration we have built over 50 years, our networks in science, practice, and policy, and our partnerships across approximately 50 countries in the UNECE region. Memorandums of understanding between the respective ministries in the BB region facilitate joint applications for third-party funding.

The first thematic seminar, which aimed to intensify the exchange of ideas among our members on a topic of key interest, was held online on 30 June 2026. Monitoring child poverty was chosen because it received the most attention from our key supporters. The seminar showed where the challenges lie in the countries (e.g. gathering high-quality data from sub-national levels), how we try to overcome them in taking a holistic approach to child poverty (e.g. measuring child poverty by including services and regional/local contexts), and, finally, what solutions can be transferred to other regions. The seminar confirmed the need to strengthen discussions between our members. The exchange will continue through a BB Policy review of national action plans for implementing the European Child Guarantee, to be

conducted in autumn/winter 2026. In 2026, we thus focused on combating child poverty in our exchange activities for our members. This should assist the UNECE countries in further developing their social policies for the benefit of children and families in vulnerable situations, and of society at large.

Due to the success of the event, we plan to intensify our collaboration with and among our members in the coming year, again on a topic of their mutual interest. Discussions with members to date indicate a focus on expanded learning activities related to demographic change and ageing, a topic for which the European Centre is already well-known. This aligns with the European Centre being co-responsible for the UNECE Joint Forum on Civil Society and Research, organised in September 2027 prior to the Ministerial Conference in the context of updating the RIS/MIIPA, the new Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, so-called "A future for all ages".

Over the past year, we have invested in acquisitions in our key areas of expertise to build a strong and fruitful foundation for the coming year(s). We are widely recognised in the community for our expertise in specific "niches" such as posting of workers and tax-benefit modelling (EUROMOD), as well as in the broader spheres of combating poverty and inequality, active ageing, long-term care, social inclusion, disability policy, active labour market policies and new forms of work, to just name some of our expertise areas. Our three research teams - Employment and Labour Mobility (ELM), Health and Care (HC) and Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) - together develop ideas with partners in response to open calls of donor organisations such as the European Commission. For instance, we are working jointly on HORIZON projects and proposals mainly in the TRANSFO (Social and Economic Transformations) program line of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) as well as on Technical Support Instruments (TSIs) with partner countries. Moreover, we collaborate with other disciplines, such as the natural sciences, to scrutinise the social impact of policies beyond the social sciences, thereby attesting to the transdisciplinary approach applied at the European Centre.

Our collective achievements over the past year are something that every colleague can take pride in. This becomes clear when you read this Annual Report on Activities. A heartfelt thank you goes to all our employees - the heart of our institute - and to you, our supporters, collaborators, and friends. Your constant contributions in so many ways, whether by sharing knowledge (which we build upon), connecting us with stakeholders (helping us expand our networks), or funding our activities (enabling us to co-fund or invest in high-potential areas), are invaluable. A special thank you also goes to Kai Leichsenring, the former Executive Director, for enabling such a smooth transition!

The upcoming year will be busy – full of ideas, full of exchange and full of work. My colleagues at the European Centre, the members of the Board of Directors, the National Liaison Officials, our research affiliates, our project partners and I are very much looking forward to jointly improving policy delivery by inter-sectoral action, especially in the context of the triple transitions (digitalisation, sustainability and social transformation). We all share the belief that, through research and evidence-based policymaking in social welfare, we can collectively contribute to achieving real, positive change.

Yours sincerely,

Anette Scoppetta
Executive Director

Key Milestones of the past year

As an intergovernmental organisation affiliated to the United Nations, the European Centre facilitates cooperation in the field of social welfare between governments and relevant organisations. Operating at the nexus of policy, practice, and science, we:

- provide applied social science and comparative empirical research,
- develop the evidence base to inform social policymaking and mutual learning, and
- initiate innovative public policy debates through strategic networking.

Our vision is to become the evidence-based hub for integrated social policies in the UNECE countries. Through our Bridging function, we link knowledge and policy evidence with a specific focus on Eastern Europe.

Public and Scientific Outreach 2026

7 422
Followers on social media (LinkedIn, Bluesky)

55 560
Impressions on LinkedIn

27 094
LinkedIn members reached

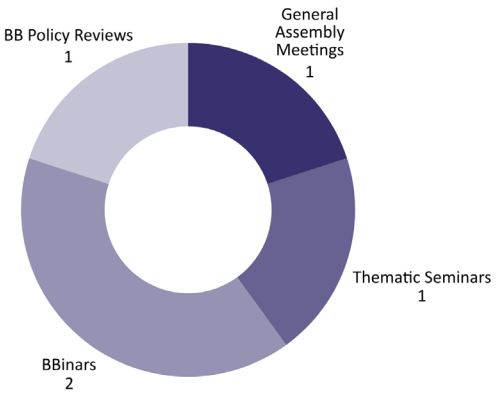
6 123
Newsletter subscribers

60 400
Website visits

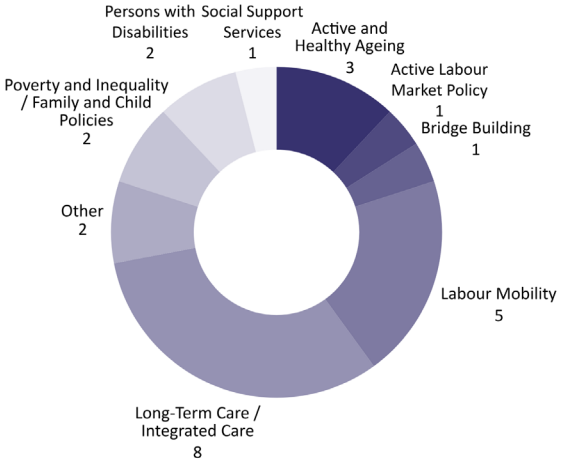
221
Event registrations

Events & Presentations

In addition to project related events, the European Centre hosted 5 events:

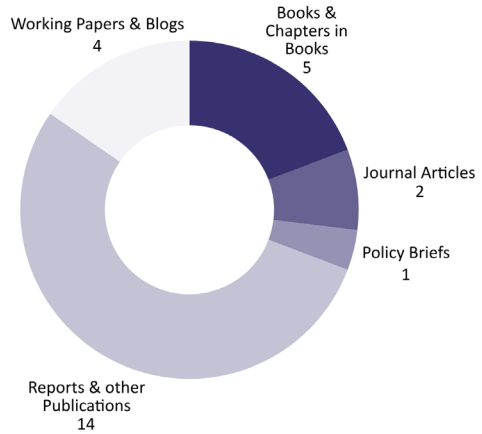


Our researchers gave 25 non-project-related presentations at conferences and workshops, addressing the following topics:



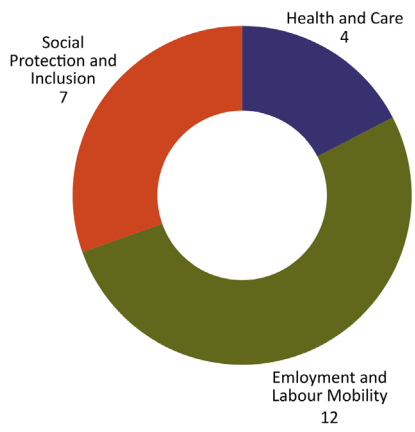
Publications

In total, 26 publications were published:



Projects

During the past year, we worked on a total of 23 projects, distributed across our teams as follows:



Employment & Labour Mobility

Highlights

The ELM team helps create policies aimed at improving working conditions.

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:

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, facilitating mutual learning, fostering stakeholder networking and social dialogue, and conducting other consultation processes through various formats, including focus groups, peer reviews, workshops, and training.

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 across various aspects of employment and labour market policies, including active labour market measures and integrated employment within social policy schemes, particularly through projects focused on cooperation, mutual learning, and capacity building. The ongoing project "European Community of Practice on Partnership" (ECoPP) brings together a range of stakeholders, including several DGs of the European Commission, managing authorities, and 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 capacity on partnership. 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 to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, through two projects: "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 and the "Accompanying evaluation – Roma Empowerment for the labour market" (Eval_RomaEmp) for the period 2025-2031. Additionally, the ELM team, in collaboration with members of other research teams, has provided evidence-based insights into the interplay between Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and drug and health policies implemented in the EU Member States through the project "Socioeconomic Determinants of the Drug Phenomenon: Labour and Drug Policies" (EUDA).

The team continues its work on the two ongoing Horizon projects, which started in 2025 on labour market policies and social dialogue, with implementation over four years. The project "Navigating the Next Normal: Innova-

tive Approaches to Enhancing Youth's Education-Employment Transitions in Post-COVID-19 Europe" (NEXT-UP) investigates the long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis on youth transition from school to work and co-creates, with stakeholders, evidence-informed, future-oriented policies and programmes. In the past year, the ELM team completed the mapping, categorisation and analysis of youth employability policies in the European Union. The second project, "Encouraging a Digital and Green Transition through Revitalised and Inclusive Union-Employer Negotiations" (E-GRUiEN), examines the capacity of social dialogue actors and institutions to navigate current and future workforce challenges amid increasing heterogeneity in employment status and socio-demographics driven by the dual digital and green transformation. In the past year, the team completed a historical case study of past economic transformations in Austria, which now serves as a foundation for understanding current transformations in the sectoral case studies underway, specifically the energy and automotive production.

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

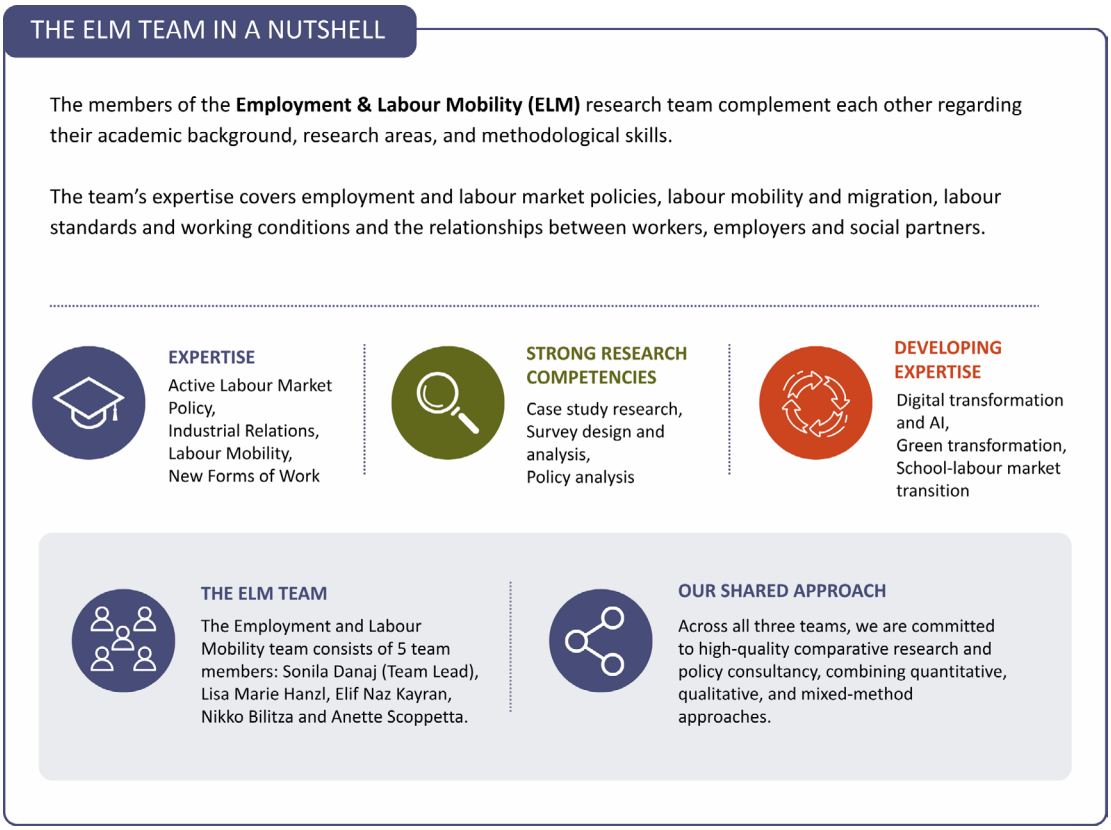
Labour mobility: The second key ELM theme concerns the nexus between various forms of employment and mobility and related labour and social rights. In the last year, we continued research on the posting of workers as our core topic. We completed the project "Enhancing the collection and analysis of national data on intra-EU posting 2.0" (Posting.STAT 2.0), in which we collected and analysed data from multiple sources on the posting of workers to and from Austria, as well as on 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: a) labour mobility and cross-border recruitment in the long-term care sector; b) labour mobility recruitment, working conditions, enforcement and information in the manufacturing sector; and c) national support instruments for return mobility. In addition, we completed the study of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and EU candidate countries in the food manufacturing and domestic care 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). Furthermore, we are currently studying access to justice for third-country posted workers commissioned by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA TCN Justice) as well as mapping and assessing counselling support services for cross-border mobile workers in agriculture, construction, international road transport, and hospitality under the European Commission's Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA)- funded project "Fair Labour Mobility EU: Counselling Network and Research for Mobile Migrant Labour" (FELM).

Labour standards and working conditions: As another core theme of our research, labour standards and working conditions have been addressed in multiple projects across sectors, including the app-mediated ride-hailing and food delivery sectors, international transport, construction, care, energy production, manufacturing (in specific subsectors such as automotive, food production, meat processing, shipbuilding), agriculture, and hospitality focusing on various categories of workers, such as posted workers, temporary migrant workers, temporary agency workers, third-country nationals, EU seasonal workers, platform workers, self-employed and other types of non-standard workers. In the past year, labour standards and working conditions were also studied through the lens of the digital and green transitions. The projects with a focus on labour standards and conditions include JUSTMIG, PostingStat 2.0, EGRUiEN, FRA TCN Justice, FELM, and the three studies commissioned by ELA within the ELA FWC LOT 2, on long-term care, manufacturing and return mobility.

The relationship between workers, employers, and social partners: Over the past year, research on the fourth key theme of our research focused on the nexus between social partners and workers' vulnerabilities. In the JUSTMIG project, we examined how industrial relations structures are adapting to the growing presence of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and candidate countries in the care and food production sectors. In the EGRUiEN project, we examine social partners' approaches and activities related to the digital and green transformation across industries such as energy production and the automotive industry. The FELM project emphasises the role of trade unions in offering support and counselling services to mobile workers across borders.

In addition, our team has been involved in Mutual Learning Workshops and Peer Learning Events organised for the European Commission, covering topics such as access to social protection, including coverage and contributions for the self-employed, and the regulation of new forms of work in the digital economy – platform work. Last but not least, the ELM team provided expert input at the SCEUS Workshop on European Union Labour Migration Policies; the workshop for the EFBWW Standing Committees Building & Wood Rethinking Organising in Construction and Woodworking "From Fragmentation to Unity: Boosting Trade Union Representation in our Sectors"; the workshop "Posting of third-country nationals in the EU: identifying and potentially closing data gaps to better inform policy making," organized by OECD and the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue, Belgium; the

final EFBWW's ECMIN V Final Conference, the (eng)aging! Conference in Prague; and the Swiss Political Science Association Conference in Zürich.



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, including DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Justice and Consumers, DG Regional and Urban Policy, Horizon Europe, the European Labour Authority, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Union Drugs Agency.
- International organisations and EU social partner organisations, e.g. the European Federation of Building and Woodwork, the Fair Labour Mobility EU Network.
- 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; 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 and University of Zaragoza, Spain; University of Jyväskylä and Tampere University, Finland; University of Oslo, Norway; University of Cardiff, United Kingdom; University of Parma, Italy). The team also works with national-level social partners in Austria and other European countries (e.g. ACV-Innovatief, Belgium; the Austrian Chamber of Labour; the Austrian Trade Union Federation; the Riders Collective, Austria; the Austrian Chamber of Commerce; Fundación 1 de Mayo, Spain; IQ CONSULT Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft für Weltoffenheit, Toleranz und Vielfalt; MBH in Germany; Blocul National Sindical, Romania; Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, Bulgaria; Ogolnopolskie Porozumienie Zwiazkow Zawodowych, Poland; VASAS Szakszervezeti Szovetseg, Hungary; Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia; and Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia), 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, Ramboll, and Milieu, Belgium).

Reflection & brief outlook

The Employment & Labour Mobility team has successfully continued its work during the past year in its core areas of labour market policies, labour mobility, and working conditions. We also met our target to expand our project portfolio in multiple directions, particularly across target groups (e.g., youth, older workers, temporary EU and third-country migrant workers, Roma and Romnija, persons who use drugs), 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 under 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 designed and implemented projects in which these and other relevant thematic areas often overlap. We also expanded our successful cross-team collaboration in thematic areas of mutual interest, including sectoral analysis of long-term care and manufacturing, social protection for non-standard workers, counselling services for cross-border mobile workers, the interplay between active labour market policy and drug and health policies, 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, 10 originated in the previous period, and two were new initiatives. We are currently applying for funding for projects that focus on the European Social Model, cross-border mobile workers, the posted workers and the highly skilled. 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 (such as digitalisation and greening, algorithmic management, AI-enabled occupations), social dialogue, and collective bargaining, as well as expanding into new sectors such as services, pre-university education and information technology. The team strives to secure projects through various national, EU and international funding streams within our core thematic areas, in line with the new initiatives planned for 2027.

Health & Care

Highlights

Our work continues to advance 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, the team has placed particular emphasis on strengthening long-term care systems and supporting the implementation of reforms in the sector, improving support for informal carers, and advancing research on violence and abuse across the life course. Our work has combined comparative research and policy analysis with the development of methods and instruments for data collection, providing evidence to inform policy and practice at both national and European levels.

Research

The Health & Care Team strengthened its work on long-term care system reform, advanced research on violence against older persons and informal care and expanded its public health research to cyberbullying and violence in digital spaces.

A major new area of work for the team is supporting the implementation of Slovenia's long-term care reform. Launched in late 2025 and funded by the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument, the project supports the implementation of the country's new long-term care system by addressing key challenges in governance, access, needs assessment and care management. Working with the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and relevant national and local stakeholders, the European Centre supports the development of approaches to strengthen equitable access to long-term care, reduce gaps in service provision and better align individual needs assessment with local care planning. The project combines research, stakeholder engagement, and strategic support for implementation, with its outcomes intended to provide practical guidance for the further development of long-term care delivery in Slovenia and, potentially, other European countries facing similar reform challenges.

The team continued its research into violence and abuse against older persons, an important yet under-researched area with significant conceptual and empirical challenges. Funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, the project examines how violence against older people can be comprehensively defined and operationalised, taking into account the contexts of ageism and social isolation as well as specific settings that increase vulnerability and the individual risk of exposure to different forms of violence. Building on national and international research, the team identified and critically assessed existing

data collection tools and available evidence, including important data gaps. This work provides the basis for developing and testing quantitative and qualitative survey methods and instruments for different settings. In collaboration with experts and stakeholders, the project also examines the methodological, financial resources and social policy requirements for systematic primary data collection, thereby contributing to the development of a stronger evidence base for measuring and addressing violence against older persons in Austria.

The team also completed the InfoCare project, funded by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, which reviewed the situation and support needs of informal carers in countries with well-developed formal long-term care systems. Recognising that informal carers may continue to face substantial challenges even where formal services are comparatively well established, the project explored the specific difficulties they encounter, and the policies and measures designed to support them. By examining experiences and approaches in countries with long-term care systems comparable to Sweden's, the study provided evidence on how informal carers can be better recognised and supported alongside formal care provision. The findings were intended to inform the development of targeted and effective support measures for informal carers in Sweden.

The team has also expanded its work on violence prevention for children and adolescents through a new project on cyberbullying and violence in digital spaces, funded by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The project responds to growing concerns about the public health implications of cyberbullying and online harassment and aims to strengthen the evidence base for effective prevention policies. It combines a review of international research on cyberbullying, including risk and protective factors, with an analysis of international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey data to examine prevalence and factors associated with victimisation and perpetration. A comparative policy scan of selected EU countries complements this work by identifying promising and emerging approaches to addressing cyberbullying and technology-facilitated violence among children and adolescents, with a view to informing policy development in Sweden and other European countries.

The team continued to support research activities led by other teams at the European Centre. Under the European Labour Authority framework contract for qualitative analysis, mapping, and mixed methods, the team contributed its expertise in long-term care, including work on the Austrian country report and on the analysis of challenges and recurring labour

market problems in the long-term care sector in the final report (The long-term care sector: Labour mobility and enforcement challenges, ELA Strategic Analysis, 2026). Contributions to European Disability Expertise II (EDE II) included work on the Synthesis Report and a new task analysing the results of the public consultation for the new European disability strategy, including the preparation of a factual summary report and a synopsis report. In addition, team members continued to contribute to the E-GRUiEN project, which investigates how social dialogue can respond to the green and digital transitions across several sectors, including long-term care services.

The team continued its policy consultancy and knowledge exchange activities at the national and European levels, notably by supporting the implementation of Slovenia's long-term care reform. At EU level, the team contributed to the European Commission's Peer Reviews and Mutual Learning Activities in Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, providing thematic expertise as well as analytical and facilitation support. These activities complement the team's research by supporting evidence-informed policy development, implementation and mutual learning across European health, long-term care and social policy systems.

Strategic aim

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

The strategic aim of the Health & Care team is to promote a life-course approach to healthy ageing by designing and supporting care systems and policies that enable better coordination and integration of health and social care delivery. Our comparative research addresses systemic issues such as funding, quality assurance and improvement, workforce challenges, including informal carers and live-in migrant care, needs assessment, case and care management, and the governance and implementation of integrated care systems. Increasingly, this expertise also directly supports the development and implementation of long-term care reforms.

Cross-cutting issues such as ageing, inequalities, transitions into care, dementia, technology and digital transformation, and preventive and participatory approaches remain central to our activities. Our work also increasingly addresses the prevention of violence and abuse across the life course, reflecting the team's broader public health expertise alongside its long-standing focus on long-term care.

The Health & Care team has extensive expertise and a long-standing track record in long-term care (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.

THE H&C TEAM IN A NUTSHELL

The **Health and Care (H&C)** team brings together researchers from political science, sociology, health economics, and public health, offering a broad interdisciplinary perspective.

The team's expertise focuses on long-term care in the context of ageing populations and related societal trends, as well as promoting sustainable, inclusive, and integrated approaches to care.

EXPERTISE

Long-Term Care, Active and Heathy Ageing, Integrated Care, Public Health

STRONG RESEARCH COMPETENCIES

Survey design and analysis, Policy reforms, Qualitative and participatory methods

DEVELOPING EXPERTISE

Violence against persons in vulnerable situations, Public Health in digital environments, Health economics

THE H&C TEAM

The Health and Care team consists of 5 team members: Niki Kalavrezou (Team Lead), Kai Leichsenring, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot and Selam Woldemariam.

OUR SHARED APPROACH

Across all three teams, we are committed to high-quality comparative research and policy consultancy, combining quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches.

Our clients and project partners

The Health & Care team continues to maintain and strengthen its extensive network of partners and clients built over many years. While our main clients remain the European Commission, particulary DG Employment and DG Reform, 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 Labour and Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer

Protection (Austria), the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 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

Proposals for future research focus on sustainable LTC systems across Europe, long-distance care, collaborative practice in primary care and LTC, and loneliness, among other topics.

Over the past year, the Health & Care team further consolidated its work in long-term care while broadening the application of its expertise in public health and policy support. The team expanded its role in supporting long-term care system development by providing technical support for the implementation of Slovenia's long-term care reform. Research on informal care continued to provide comparative evidence on how carers can be better supported within well-developed long-term care systems, while the team's work on violence against older persons progressed towards developing and testing approaches for more systematic data collection in Austria. New work on cyberbullying extended the team's research on violence prevention across the life course, now with a focus on children and adolescents. At the same time, this project will strengthen the team's engagement with public health challenges arising in digital environments.

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

Looking ahead, the team will continue to focus on long-term care and healthy ageing, building on its research and comparative expertise to support system reforms and improvements in care delivery. Ongoing work will include further research into measuring and preventing violence and abuse, comparative analyses of health and care policies, and continued engagement in research and policy consultancy to strengthen long-term care systems across Europe. Our previous work on migration and long-term care will continue through a new project focused on education and training for leaders of diverse teams in the care sector. The team will continue to leverage its expertise in health economics and public health to develop new areas of comparative research and provide evidence-informed policy advice in its core areas of health and care.

Social Protection & Inclusion

Highlights

The Social Protection and Inclusion team (SPI) designs, coordinates, and implements projects in the following areas:

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

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 to social protection and inclusion, such as the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

The team works towards integrated policies to improve social protection systems and foster the full participation of marginalised groups in UNECE countries.

The team comprises experienced researchers and policy advisers with outstanding expertise in *research* (qualitative and quantitative methods, including microsimulation and modelling, comparative research, interviews and case studies), and *policy consultation* (planning, monitoring and evaluating social protection policies alongside support services and measures for groups that are often discriminated against and marginalised, such as persons with disabilities, children, and people experiencing poverty).

We have specific expertise in analysing both the take-up and non-take-up of social benefits, such as social assistance/minimum income support schemes, housing allowances, and health insurance, 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 public institutions and international organisations, and offer consultation services in various formats.

The Social Protection and Inclusion team employed six researchers over the past year who implemented seven projects. Individual team members made valuable contributions to additional projects across teams, for instance by providing evidence-based insights into the interplay between Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and drug/health policies in EU Member

States, evaluating the implementation of projects under the special directive Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market 2022-2030, or understanding cyberbullying and policies to address violence against children and adolescents in digital spaces. 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 to contribute to improved social protection and inclusion policies in the UNECE region. The team draws on a broad range of thematic expertise and skill sets when implementing scientific and applied research projects and when securing new projects within the EU and beyond. Our ongoing projects mainly fall within the following thematic clusters:

- *Social security (tax-benefit modelling)*
- *Inequality and poverty reduction*
- *Social inclusion and support services for different groups*

We analyse the impact of social welfare policies amid interlinked crises and propose changes to improve the situation of vulnerable groups.

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

Social security (tax-benefit modelling): 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 data. The basic scope of the model includes social (insurance) contributions, income taxes and monetary benefits. In 2026, the Austrian part of EUROMOD was updated to 2026 policy rules (incl. adjustments for bracket creep, housing contribution Vienna, etc.) using the latest (uprated) input data (SILC 2025 with incomes for 2024). Work on the ITT-tool (simulation of indirect taxes using merged SILC/HBS data as input), including tables on VAT rates for detailed commodities, excise taxes, and specific prices in Austria, will continue. Based on EUROMOD, the team also updates SORESI, an online tax-benefit microsimulation calculator for Austria, annually; SORESI has been in use since 2012. Currently, EUROMOD/SORESI is also used by researchers of the European Centre to simulate the fiscal effects of potentially higher employment rates among persons aged 55-64 (project Older Workers: Labour Market and Pension System). The main aim of this project is to show the extent to which a higher employment

rate among older workers contributes to the financing of Austria's social security system as a whole.

Inequality and poverty reduction: The team has extensive experience in delivering policy-relevant research on poverty and income inequality, contributing to the monitoring of living standards across Europe and the evaluation of policies affecting 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 involves 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 disability-perspective input into 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 individual Member States to mitigate these inequalities. In addition to the semester tasks, the team prepares annual thematic statistical reports covering all EU Member States and drawing on EU-wide comparative surveys, including EU-SILC, EU-LFS, EHIS and SHARE. In 2024, the report focused on the employment situation of persons with disabilities, while the 2025 edition examined their housing conditions, covering general housing characteristics, affordability and quality-related aspects, energy efficiency and the physical accessibility of housing. Moreover, in 2026, we supported the European Commission by analysing the results of the 2025 EU Public Consultation on 'Strengthening the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030' and preparing the corresponding Factual Summary and Synopsis reports. The reports consolidated stakeholder views, identified implementation gaps to be addressed and priorities for strengthening the Strategy, and contributed to the development of the enhanced EU Disability Strategy adopted in May 2026.

In June 2026, we started a new project on the use of Distributional Impact Assessment and social checks in EU Member States. The analysis involves a structured identification of best practices, requiring case-based evidence of success, cross-country transferability of methods, tools, and processes and a longitudinal trend analysis. Furthermore, we implemented the project "Analysis of persons not covered by health insurance in Austria" in 2026, a follow-up to our studies in 2003 and 2015, which aims to provide a quantitative and qualitative reassessment of people not covered by health insurance in Austria. It focuses on estimating the number of people affected, their socio-demographic characteristics, the causes of non-coverage and their coping behaviour in the event of illness.

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. In 2026, we finalised the ECHOFunds project, which aimed to enhance the human rights conditionality of EU funds by raising awareness of Charter rights and their implications, and by contributing to a common understanding of the roles of different stakeholders in EU funding at all stages of the funding period. The SPI team also played a key role in implementing the European Centre's Bridge Building function over the past year by holding BBinars, delivering the BB Policy review on "Supporting the provision of affordable and high-quality professional home care for later life" (at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, 25-26 February 2026, online) and completing tasks related to the EESPN – the Eastern European Social Policy network, initiated by the European Centre. Furthermore, the SPI team contributed to high-level academic and policy conferences, including the 9th International Workshop on the Socio-Economics of Ageing (IWSEA), the 2026 Summer course organised by the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM) in cooperation with IMSERSO in Spain, and the 8th ESPAnet Austria Research Conference on Social Policy. Research results and policy recommendations were also presented to policymakers and other stakeholders in Brussels at the European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar with the European Commission and at the European Dissemination event of the ECHOFunds project.

THE SPI TEAM IN A NUTSHELL

The members of the **Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI)** team bring complementary academic backgrounds, research interests, policy expertise, and methodological skills, providing a broad and interdisciplinary perspective on social protection and inclusion.

The team's expertise focuses on integrated policies that strengthen social protection systems and promote the full participation of marginalised and vulnerable groups in society.

EXPERTISE
Family and Child Policies, Persons with Disabilities, Poverty and Inequality, Social Support Services

STRONG RESEARCH COMPETENCIES
Statistical analysis, Policy analysis, Tax/benefit-microsimulation with EUROMOD/SORESI

DEVELOPING EXPERTISE
Anti-discrimination, Child Poverty, Socially just futures

THE SPI TEAM
The Social Protection and Inclusion team consists of 6 team members: Magdi Birtha (Team Lead), David Conforti, Michael Fuchs, Sabina Gjylsheni, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth and Eszter Zólyomi.

OUR SHARED APPROACH
Across all three teams, we are committed to high-quality comparative research and policy consultancy, combining quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches.

Our clients and project partners

The team's projects are grounded on international cooperation and partnership networks, particularly those in the EU and beyond. Our clients in 2026 included, among others, the European Commission (e.g. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Justice and Consumers, Joint Research Centre), national ministries (e.g. the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection,), and NGOs (e.g. the Austrian Poverty Network).

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

Reflection & brief outlook

The Social Protection and Inclusion team will continue to build on its members' strengths to acquire and implement projects that address the role and impact of social security instruments in poverty reduction and the social inclusion of groups in vulnerable situations. Well-established cooperation networks, such as the European Disability Expertise, and tools like the tax-benefit microsimulation model EUROMOD and the related European

research network, will be maintained and further expanded to deliver better research results that address current societal challenges. In 2025/2026, 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 resulted in shifting priorities across the EU and beyond, including increased spending on defence and security.

At the same time, persistent equality gaps remain, and EU countries are far from meeting their social targets (e.g. the social headline target under the European Pillar of Social Rights by 2030, UN Agenda SDG targets, etc). Although the new EU Multi-Annual Financial Framework does not earmark specific funds for social inclusion as policy priorities have changed, social policy research and evidence-based policymaking remain crucial. The SPI team will continue to study the underlying causes of inequalities and recommend innovative and viable policy solutions. Following the successful acquisition of a new Horizon Europe project, we will commence work in September 2026 as part of an international consortium. The four-year project examines alternative socio-economic paradigms and governance frameworks to generate evidence supporting biodiversity-positive and socially just futures. Through its participation, the team will contribute its expertise in social research, policy analysis, and comparative data analysis to the project's transdisciplinary research and stakeholder engagement activities. At the same time, the project will provide an opportunity to expand the team's research and inter-disciplinary knowledge, enhancing its capacity to provide evidence-based policy solutions to address interconnected societal challenges and global mega-trends such as climate change and social inequalities.

Ongoing acquisitions will help shape our strategic direction and should support us in diving even deeper into existing challenges, including reducing child poverty, addressing inequalities for persons with disabilities, and mitigating the impact of climate change on marginalised groups.

Bridging Function of the European Centre

Highlights

In 2025/26, the European Centre continued to work to further strengthen the strategic goal of bridging the gap between knowledge and policy evidence in social policy research across countries in the UN European region. We believe that fostering cooperation between Western and Eastern partners is key to consolidating democracy and facilitating European integration. Our activities in the region focus on evidence-based policymaking in social welfare.

All Bridge Building (BB) projects implemented during the past year aimed at further strengthening social welfare policies in the BB countries.

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, 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 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 the end of August 2026, we have renewed, or are in the process of renewing, memoranda of understanding with the respective authorities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, with eight MoUs being active. Three MoUs were signed at the beginning of March 2026: Kosovo, Montenegro and Uzbekistan, with Kosovo being renewed.

We facilitate exchange on equal terms and build on shared needs across this 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. For example, we continued to collaborate within the BB Mutual Learning activities such as BB Peer/

Policy reviews and BBinars. Our work in the BB region led to increased dissemination of our research project findings, primarily through the Eastern European Policy Network (EESPN).

Projects in/with the Bridge Building region

During the past 12 months, the European Centre implemented two projects funded by third parties in or with 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 and are served by the European Centre based on a framework contract from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. The project aims to provide guidance and services to support integrated policies and solutions that are based on the needs of the respective countries. In 2026, we have been following up on the work accomplished in 2025, where we conducted an evaluation of the Employment Strategy of Montenegro in the form of a policy document review, assessing its status quo. In 2026, we provided analytical and advisory support to the relevant Montenegrin Ministry regarding the development of the National Employment Strategy of Montenegro 2026–2030. To share insights, we followed up by implementing a BBinar together with the relevant Montenegrin Ministry, where current approaches to labour market development and the future direction of employment strategies across the six Western Balkan economies were explored with a wider audience (see below).

The projects implemented in the BB region in 2026 were (co-)funded by the European Commission or the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

- **Sustainable and socially just transnational sectoral labour markets** (11/2023 – 10/2025): The JUSTMIG project combined 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. Three candidate countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine) thereby served as source countries for workers. Starting with the development and application of an innovative participatory methodology, the project addressed and involved social partners and labour market institutions throughout the project. Activities were evenly designed to have both

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

BB Policy review

As part of its BB function, 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 mutual learning event was held during the past year, based on request from a BB country.

Supporting the provision of affordable and high-quality professional home care for later life has been explored during a mutual learning event.

- **BB Policy Review on Social Welfare: Supporting the provision of affordable and high-quality professional home care for later life (upon request from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, 25-26 February 2026, online):** The aim of the policy review was to share practical information on social housing provision with a focus on BB countries, reflect on different strategies and measures to support access to social housing and their effectiveness in tackling housing needs, and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation in Armenia, Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. In this policy review, insights were gained on common challenges among BB countries in addressing the substantial gap between demand for affordable homes and the limited supply of social housing, including aligning legal frameworks, ensuring effective coordination among stakeholders, and securing sustained investment to support the expansion and maintenance of social housing programs.

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, civil society and international organisations, as well as reflec-

tions from relevant regional actors and European Centre staff, followed by a moderated discussion with the audience. In 2025/26, we brought together researchers, policymakers and NGOs from across the region to discuss two key issues:

- **Employment Policy in the Western Balkans: the way forward (12th BBinar):** The 12th BBinar explored current approaches to labour market development and the future direction of employment strategies across the six Western Balkan economies. Attention was given to skills development, the green and digital transitions, labour market resilience, and the employment-related aspects of the EU accession process. Furthermore, the discussion focussed on the process of designing new employment strategies for the future, especially consultation processes and any related challenges. The BBinar examined how evidence-based policymaking and long-term strategic frameworks can support inclusive growth, improve workforce adaptability, and address demographic and structural challenges across the region. By bringing together policymakers, researchers, social partners, and civil society representatives, dialogue was fostered during the event, regional experiences and good practices were shared, and priorities for building more sustainable, competitive, and inclusive labour markets in the Western Balkans were discussed.

The BBinars of the past year built upon key expertise areas of the European Centre: Developments in employment policies in the BB countries were explored and shared with a wider audience.

- **Job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans (11th BBinar):** The 11th BBinar focused on job quality and working conditions in the six Western Balkan countries. The Foundation for the Advancement of Economics (FREN) in Serbia and the European Centre conducted a comparative analysis on job quality and working conditions and drew recommendations for their improvement in the region based on The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)'s 2021 European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS), which for the first time included the six Western Balkan countries. The BBinar was based on findings from the Eurofound report on the comparative analysis. Participants included partners from the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) and other EU countries. We exchanged experiences specifically on (1) labour markets and working population in the Western Balkans and beyond, (2) job quality in the Western Balkans, (3) quality of working life and (4) gender equality.

Eastern European Social Policy Network (EESPN)

In addition to implementing these activities, we organised regular dissemination activities or participated in our partners' activities. We also maintained our successful cooperation with the Central European University (CEU) as part of our BB activities. The activities 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 regular EESPN newsletters and continued to develop the European Centre's EESPN website (https://eespn.euro.centre.org/).

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.

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.

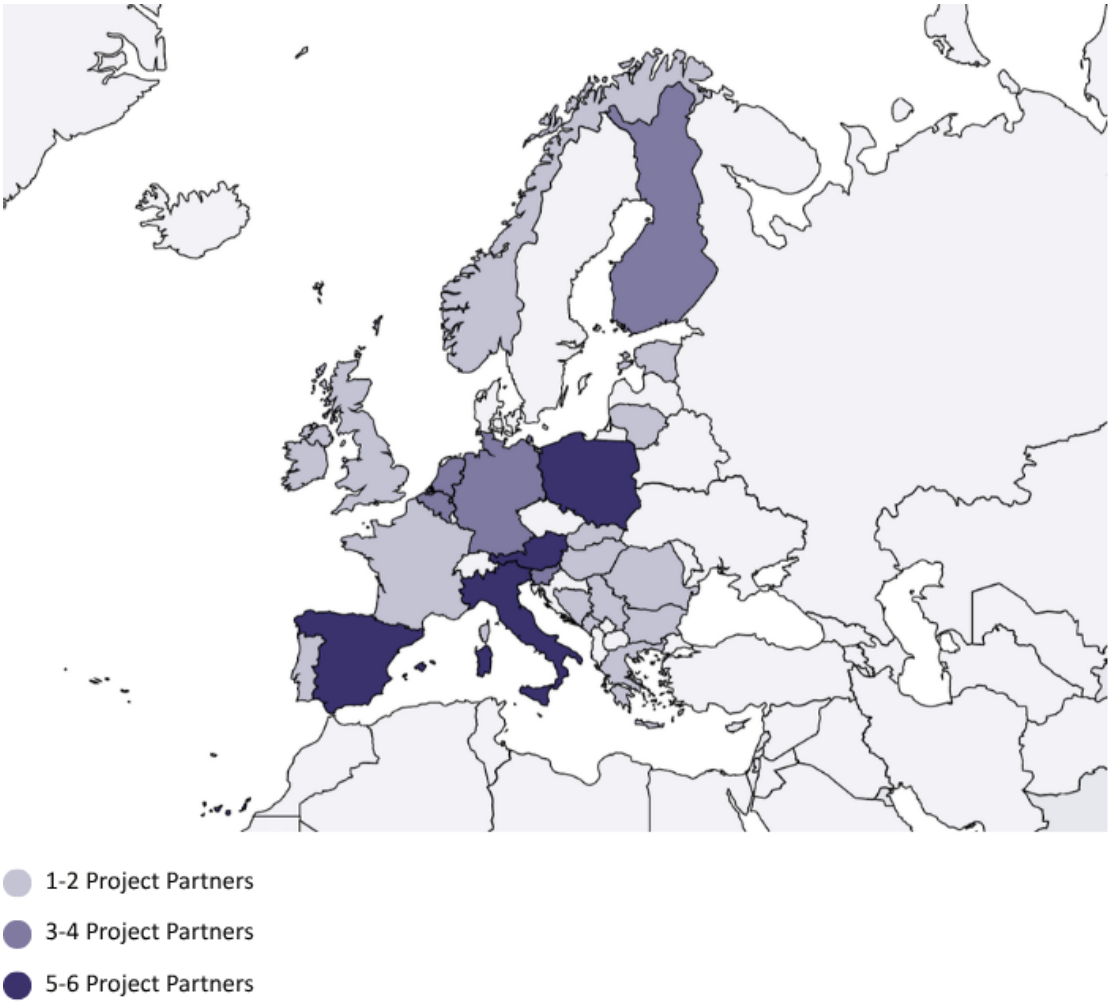
In the upcoming year, we will continue our work in the BB region by implementing BB Peer reviews and BB Policy reviews as well as BBinars, conducting research and providing policy advice within our BB projects and promoting these activities via EESPN. We also aim to continue including our BB partners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

The European Centre aims at implementing a BB Policy review on challenges faced by BB countries regarding the development of national action plans for reducing child poverty and implementing of the European Child Guarantee (December 2026). We will include our BB partners when applying for calls (e.g. DG EMPL calls, Horizon calls, etc.) and continue working on the implementation of BBinars for broader exchange on topics of our partners' interest.

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

Projects

During the past year, we have worked with 68 project partners across 24 countries.



Sustainable and Socially Just Transnational Sectoral Labour Markets (JUSTMIG)

Duration	11/2023 – 10/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot, Anette Scoppetta, Nikko Bilitza, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
Project Lead and Project Partners	CELSI - Central European Labour Studies Institute (Slovakia), European Centre (Austria), 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), University of Belgrade Faculty of Economics (Serbia), JYU - University of Jyväskylä (Finland), UTARTU - University of Tartu (Estonia)
Funded by	European Commission, ESF+ - European Social Fund Plus, SocPL - Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines

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 actors struggle with problems of declining regulatory influence and deteriorating organisational capacities. Additionally, they find it extremely challenging to regulate sectoral labour markets in which precarity and transnationalised vulnerability have been increasing.

The JUSTMIG project combined innovative research and data collection on labour market dynamics across both the service and manufacturing sub-sectors. The data were collected from six EU Member States where fixed-term contracting of migrant workers occurs and from three EU candidate countries as migrant labour source countries. Starting with the development and application of innovative participatory methodology, the project actively engaged social partners and labour market institutions throughout its duration. Activities were 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 thus showed how industrial relations structures were adjusting to the increased presence of temporary migrant workers from other EU countries and candidate countries. The project strengthened social partner capacities and supported policies for just and sustainable labour market outcomes.

Good Practices in Supporting Informal Carers (InfoCare)

Duration	02/2025 – 12/2025
Status	Completed
Project Team	Mirjam Pot, Niki Kalavrezou, Selma Kadi, Selam Woldemariam, Kai Leichsenring
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Sweden)

Informal carers provide essential support to relatives or friends who are old, ill, or disabled, playing a crucial role in the health and care system. While caregiving can be rewarding, it often comes with significant challenges.

The situation of informal carers varies depending on the availability of formal long-term care (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 offered the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs an overview of the challenges faced by informal carers and the policies implemented to support them in countries with well-developed formal LTC systems, i.e. countries comparable to Sweden in this regard. The findings, including good practice from Finland, Germany, Lithuania, and the Netherlands, helped to inform targeted and effective support measures for informal carers in Sweden. These need to, first of all, address the persistent underutilisation of available benefits and services by expanding information and counselling. Moreover, eligibility and benefit levels should be broadened, including by ensuring national coherence. Finally, new forms of support and amendments to existing measures need to acknowledge the diversity of informal carers by tailoring policies to their varied need.

Analysis of Persons Not Covered by Health Insurance in Austria (NKV 2025)

Duration	04/2025 – 01/2026
Status	Completed
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), Diakonie (Austria)
Funded by	ÖGK - Austrian Health Insurance Fund (Austria)

The project – as a follow-up to the earlier studies in 2003 and 2015 – aimed to conduct a quantitative and qualitative reassessment of people in Austria who were not covered by health insurance. The key objectives were 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 the event of illness.

For the quantitative part of the study, we used register data from the umbrella organisation of the health insurance fund and Statistics Austria (data on the resident population, insured persons, cross-border commuters, specific groups such as chamber-related professionals, etc.). For the qualitative part, we conducted a survey on patients in outpatient facilities that also admitted people not covered by health insurance.

Over the past 15 years, various policies have been introduced in Austria to promote inclusion in health insurance. The most important aspect is the inclusion of minimum income benefit recipients in health insurance. The measure significantly reduced the problem of uninsured status among Austrian citizens and migrants with a qualifying period of stay. However, for several reasons, non-take-up of the minimum income benefit is still an issue. An ongoing challenge concerns the coverage of persons from both EU Member States and third countries who are unemployed and not entitled to monetary benefits in Austria due to non-qualifying residential status. However, this problem can probably only be solved in an international context, not by Austria alone.

The NKV 2025 study thus monitored trends in any remaining gaps related to the objectives described above.

Social Reform Microsimulation Austria (SORESI)

Duration	09/2012 - 02/2026
Status	Completed
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), BRZ - Austrian Federal Computing Centre (Austria)
Funded by	BMASGPK - Austrian 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. The web-based tool was developed for policymakers and the broader public to simulate policy reforms and analyse their social impact, particularly 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 to social insurance contributions.

Policymakers and the broader public can thus immediately evaluate the social and financial impact of policy measures at the household and individual levels.

In 2026, SORESI was updated to 2026 policy rules (including the adaptation for bracket creep, housing contribution Vienna, etc.) using the latest (uprated) input data (SILC 2024 with incomes for 2023). Currently, EUROMOD/SORESI is also used by researchers at the European Centre to simulate the fiscal effects of potentially higher employment rates among persons aged 55-64 as part of the project Older Workers: Labour Market and Pension System.

Enhancing Charter Compliance of EU Funds (ECHOFunds)

Duration	03/2024 – 02/2026
Status	Completed
Project Team	Elif Naz Kayran, Magdi Birtha, Anette Scoppetta, Sabina Gjylsheni, Sandra Scharf
Project Lead and Project Partners	LBI-GMR – Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights (Austria), European Centre (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, 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 aimed to enhance the human rights conditionality of EU funds by raising awareness about Charter rights and their implications. Moreover, it aimed to contribute to a common understanding of the roles of different stakeholders in EU funding in all stages of the funding period.

Project activities included 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 could 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	Completed
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Leonard Geyer, Nikko Bilitza, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf
Project Lead and Project Partners	HIVA – Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium), European Centre (Austria), 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)
Funded by	European Commission, ESF+ - European Social Fund Plus, ESF Project Grants (ESF-PJG)

This project brought together a research consortium of 14 partners, mostly research institutes and universities, along with one affiliated and four associated partners representing social partners and a public authority from the main sending and receiving EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain). Building on Posting.STAT 1.0, Posting.STAT 2.0 aimed to strengthen the level of empirical evidence on intra-EU posting.

The main objective of the project was 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 EU Member States, and to provide a better view of the enforcement of the posting rules based on data from national labour inspectorates. Based on this data, the project stimulated discussion about intra-EU posting. Moreover, the dissemination of results (data collection) enhanced the knowledge base on the posting of workers within the EU.

The project also explored new questions, including data on third-country national postings, temporary work agency assignments, subcontracting chains, and monitoring and infringements.

Socioeconomic Determinants of the Drug Phenomenon: Labour and Drug Policies (EUDA)

Duration	09/2025 – 09/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta, Eszter Zólyomi, Niki Kalavrezou, Cornelius (Cees) Goos
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	EUDA - European Union Drugs Agency

The European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) has launched a project titled "Socioeconomic Determinants of the Drug Phenomenon." At the meeting “Socioeconomic determinants of drug use, drug and labour policies”, which took place in Lisbon 9-10 September 2024, a focus was placed on the interplay of labour and drug policies. Mapping the interaction between labour and drug policies for unemployed persons who use drugs in Europe, identifying data sources, policies, key stakeholders, and defining areas for future development thus was regarded important.

By offering services to the EUDA, the European Centre aims to provide evidence-based insights into the interplay between Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and drug and health policies implemented in EU Member States. The European Centre provides guidance and services to EUDA on its pathway to improve understanding of how these policies can be better linked. This should support EU Member States in addressing emerging issues in monitoring, preparedness, and competence development to improve policy interventions.

The European Centre assists the Agency in providing services that anticipate new challenges in the drug sector, alert stakeholders to emerging risks and drug-related threats, respond to identified needs, and support the sharing of knowledge and best practices among professionals, policymakers, and citizens. The tasks include literature review, development of a conceptual framework, mapping of international datasets, design of a questionnaire, compilation, coding, and analysis of questionnaire responses, creating a policy database and reporting.

Older Persons Affected by Violence and Abuse (Gewalt_Older Persons)

Duration	10/2024 – 09/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Kai Leichsenring, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot, Niki Kalavrezou, Selam Woldemariam
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), Austrian Interdisciplinary Platform on Ageing (ÖPIA), Institut für Konfliktforschung IKF (Austria)
Funded by	BMASGPK - Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria)

Violence and abuse of older persons have partially emerged from their taboo area in recent years, which has resulted in increased debates about the definition of violence. "Elder abuse, neglect and maltreatment" has often been used as a comprehensive term in the discourse about violence affecting older persons, but as a research area it remains characterised by a dearth of interest and restricted data. The risk of experiencing at least one of the different forms of violence is likely to increase with age in specific settings, but also with regard to gender, dependency and other intersectional factors. This may be a pragmatic reason why surveys are often limited to specific target groups, e.g. older women, settings or forms of violence. The challenge, therefore, remains to operationalise a comprehensive concept of violence for a representative sample of society, drawing on international theoretical models and examples from practice to implement such surveys in a meaningful way.

Drawing on national and international literature and considering global discourses (structures, experiences), this project systematically analyses the topic of "violence against older people" to clarify and explore questions regarding a comprehensive definition and its operationalisation in Austria. Current efforts include identifying, summarising, and critically analysing existing data collection tools and data gathered in Austria and internationally (including data gaps). Based on the analysis of literature and expert interviews, survey methods and instruments for both quantitative and qualitative primary data collection in various settings were developed. In particular, a screening tool was constructed and tested in the field. This was complemented by an in-depth questionnaire to be applied with identified victims of violence. Moreover, a questionnaire to investigate on violence in residential care settings was proposed, building on research in the Czech Republic and other countries. In collaboration with selected national and international experts and stakeholders, we will then discuss the requirements for systematic primary data collection from methodological, economic, and (social) policy perspectives for systematic primary 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, Kai Leichsenring, Magdi Birtha, Eszter Zólyomi, Leonard Geyer, Elif Naz Kayran, Michael Fuchs, Sonila Danaj, Mirjam Pot, Selam Woldemariam, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, Nikko Bilitza, Sabina Gjylsheni
Project Lead and Project Partners	ICF International (Belgium & United Kingdom), European Centre (Austria), Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (Italy)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

ICF, in collaboration with the European Centre and IRS, have been awarded a framework contract with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) to organise and provide content for peer reviews and mutual learning activities for another four years (2022-2026). Under 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 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 and skills, including digital skills, vocational education and training, adult learning, and other policy fields relevant to the social economy.

Over the past year, the European Centre supported the organisation of five 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.

Access to Justice for Posted Third-Country Workers (FRA TCN Justice)

Duration	12/2025 – 10/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Judith Schreiber
Project Lead and Project Partners	Milieu Consulting SRL (Belgium), European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

There is limited information on how and to what extent posted third-country (TCN) workers access justice. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has contracted Milieu Consulting SRL and the European Centre to conduct a study to collect empirical evidence on access to justice, the remedies available, and their practical accessibility for posted TCN workers in the European Union. The study will include interviews with workers as well as with representatives of labour inspectorates, trade unions, or civil society organisations that support them in their claims from three sending EU Member States and with workers in at least three receiving EU Member States with prominent flows of TCN posting.

The research focuses on the experiences of the main ethnic groups of posted TCN workers, as well as those of workers belonging to less established TCN groups, who may be less likely to access justice. The study concentrates on workers who have filed a complaint with public authorities, other support organisations (e.g. trade unions, NGOs), or private lawyers. The study will also cover at least three sectors (including construction and international road transport) and will include both male and female TCN workers.

Older Workers: Labour Market and Pension System (Ältere ArbeitnehmerInnen)

Duration	03/2026 – 12/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	AK Oberösterreich - Chamber of Labour Upper Austria (Austria)

The fiscal impact of a higher employment rate among older people - particularly with regard to additional tax and social security revenue and potential additional expenditure in the pension system - will be quantified primarily using the EUROMOD tax/benefit microsimulation model.

The main aim is to show the extent to which a higher employment rate among older workers contributes to the financing of social security systems for Austria as a whole. An additional module will enable a comparison of the individual federal states. Certain increases in the employment rate by x percentage points, along with their fiscal effects, are simulated. However, the potential employment effects of individual-specific measures will not be quantified.

EUROMOD covers all key features of social security contributions, income tax, and cash benefits, as well as indirect taxes (value added tax and excise duties), and enables the calculation of the effects of changes in labour market status and related incomes (as well as of policy changes) on the eligibility for (other) policies and on the resulting household incomes as well as fiscal revenue or expenditure. The latest EU-SILC data (EU-SILC 2024) linked to data from the 2019/20 household budget survey are used as input data.

All calculations (tax revenues, social insurance contributions, benefit payments, and additional pension expenditure) refer to the calendar year 2026.

Cyberbullying and Policies to Address Violence Against Children and Adolescents in Digital Spaces (CYBER-B)

Duration	01/2026 – 12/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Niki Kalavrezou, Selam Woldemariam, Sabina Gjylsheni
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Sweden)

The rise of digital technology has transformed how children communicate and interact, but it has also created new avenues for violence, including cyberbullying and general online harassment. Violence in digital spaces is nowadays recognised as a public health issue, with associations to mental health problems, social exclusion, and poor school performance. Many European countries, including Sweden, face emerging policy challenges in this area and require evidence-based insights to inform prevention strategies.

The project will run for 12 months (January – December 2026) and has three complementary objectives:

- summarising international research on cyberbullying against children and adolescents, identifying risk and protective factors, as well as trends and gaps;
- analysing the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) international survey data to estimate prevalence and examine risk factors for both victimisation and perpetration of cyberbullying, including international comparisons;
- and conducting a policy scan of selected EU countries, highlighting best-practice approaches and emerging strategies addressing cyberbullying and technology-facilitated violence among children and adolescents that may inform policies in Sweden and other European countries.

Fair Labour Mobility EU: Counselling Network and Research for Mobile Migrant Labour (FELM - Fair Labour Mobility)

Duration 01/2026 – 12/2026

Status Ongoing

Project Team Sonila Danaj, Elif Naz Kayran, Eszter Zólyomi, Nikko Bilitza, Lisa Marie Hanzl, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf

Project Lead and Project Partners IQ CONSULT - IQ CONSULT Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft für Weltoffenheit, Toleranz und Vielfalt MBH (Germany), European Centre (Austria), BNS - Blocul National Sindical (Romania); CITUB - Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (Bulgaria), ÖGB - Austrian Trade Union Federation (Austria), OPZZ - Ogolnopolskie Porozumienie Zwiazkow Zawodowych (Poland), VASAS - VASAS Szakszervezeti Szovetseg (Hungary), SSSS - Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (Serbia), ZSSS - Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Slovenia)

Funded by European Commission, PPPA - Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions

Cross-border labour mobility within the European Union has increased significantly over the past decade. Mobile and migrant workers play a vital role in filling labour shortages, particularly in labour-intensive and low-wage sectors such as construction, international road transport, seasonal agriculture, and the hospitality sector (hotels, restaurants, catering). However, this growing reliance on mobile migrant labour is not matched by adequate structures to ensure their protection. The general objective of this project is therefore to enhance the protection of mobile and migrant workers by:

- expanding and consolidating a transnational counselling network,
- developing tailored counselling and support services,
- and generating robust, evidence-based recommendations for a permanent, EU-wide support structure.

The project therefore integrates counselling services with empirical research. The first component is that of a Transnational Counselling Network operating in seven countries that draws on existing structures (e.g. Faire Mobilität) and expands their reach through new partnerships, language skills, and target group specialisation. The project is carrying out a comparative study, including mapping of existing counselling services in the EU and selected neighbouring countries, identification of risks, gaps and best practices in current support systems, collection of practice-based insights from counselling centres via a questionnaire distributed in 12 countries and stakeholder and counsellor interviews, and the development of recommendations for the establishment of a permanent EU-wide counselling structure.

European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP)

Duration	10/2021 – 12/2026
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), Leda Stott
Funded by	European Commission, DG REGIO - Regional and Urban Policy

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 (until the end of June) and Anette Scoppetta act as experts for the European Commission for the ECoPP.

The Fifth Plenary meeting of ECoPP took place in Brussels on the 3rd of February 2026. In 2026, the network will work in the following groups: 1) ECCP Group – to raise awareness and develop ideas and activities for sharing information on the partnership principle and the ECCP; 2) Partnership Advocacy Group – informed by the work of the ECCP group, members will act as liaison points between the ECoPP and the Managing Authorities in their respective member states, and with EU institutions; and 3) Webinar Groups – these groups will plan and develop content for webinars in 2026.

Technical support for the development and update of EUROMOD (EUROMOD update 2025-2027)

Duration	01/2021 – 02/2027
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, David Conforti, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth
Project Lead and Project Partner	JRC – Joint Research Centre Seville (Spain), European Centre (Austria)
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 EU Member States. The European Centre participates as the Austrian expert team and contributes an annual update of policy parameters, Austrian input data (EU-SILC national data) for the model, and validation. This update is published in the Austrian EUROMOD country report.

In 2026, the Austrian part of EUROMOD is updated to 2026 policy rules (incl. adjustments for bracket creep, housing contribution Vienna, etc.) using the latest (uprated) input data (SILC 2025 with incomes for 2024). Work on the ITT-tool (simulation of indirect taxes using merged SILC/HBS-data as input), including tables on VAT rates for detailed commodities, excise taxes, and specific prices in Austria, will continue.

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

Study on the Use of Distributional Impact Assessment and Social Checks in EU Member States (DIA)

Duration	06/2026 – 06/2027
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Michael Fuchs, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, David Conforti
Project Lead and Project Partners	CSIL - Centre for Industrial Studies (Italy), European Centre (Austria), FBK-IRVAPP - Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies-Fondazione Bruno Kessler (Italy), ESRI - Economic and Social Research Institute (Ireland), CenEA - Centre for Economic Analysis (Poland)
Funded by	European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Beyond mapping the use of distributional impact assessments (DIA) in Draft Budgetary Plans for Euro Area Member States, the study expands its scope to all 27 EU Member States, requiring comprehensive mapping and analysis of DIA practices since 2021, and extending the timeline through 2025. The analysis also involves a structured identification of best practices, demanding case-based evidence of success and cross-country transferability of methods, tools, and processes, as well as a longitudinal trend analysis. The current call also adds a dedicated assessment of how each Member State has transposed and implemented the amended Article 9(2)(d) of Directive 2011/85/EU, integrating DIA into the new economic governance framework and national medium-term fiscal structural plans. This includes evaluating the quality, consistency, and governance of DIA practices, as well as identifying challenges and best practices in the transposition and operationalisation of EU requirements. A major innovation is the introduction of a dedicated workstream on social checks, which goes beyond DIA.

At the start of the study, the team will conduct a round of 5–6 scoping interviews with representatives from DG EMPL, the JRC, the OECD, and other relevant EU stakeholders to calibrate the work plan and to delineate the scope and definition of DIA applications to be examined. This will be followed by systematic interviews with national DIA teams in social and finance ministries across all Member States to be carried out by national experts. The methodology also includes an online validation seminar designed to review and refine the preliminary recommendations for the EU's support to Member States on the use of DIA.

Supporting the Implementation of Slovenia's Long-Term Care Reform (LTC_Slovenia_TSI)

Duration	10/2025 – 10/2027
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Kai Leichsenring, Selma Kadi, Niki Kalavrezou, Selam Woldemariam
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), IRSSV - Social Protection Institute of Slovenia (Slovenia)
Funded by	European Commission, SG Reform

On 1 July 2025, the Slovenian LTC Act-1, adopted in July 2023, entered into force with provisions guaranteeing citizens' rights to home care. Additional rights for family carers have already taken effect earlier, and regulations concerning long-term care (LTC) institutions and cash benefits came into effect on 1 December 2025. Slovenia is thus amid a long-debated LTC reform, implemented through gradual steps over the past decade. It is therefore necessary to now shape the multi-level governance framework of this reform, involving several ministries (Ministry of Demography, Family and Social Affairs, formerly the Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future, etc.), the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia, the municipalities, the providers of social services, the Centres for Social Work, primary care centres, as well as the users and carers themselves.

The project aims to strengthen the structural basis for ensuring equal access to the LTC system (including cash benefits, services and residential care facilities) in Slovenia, reduce the existing gaps in LTC service provision and ensure the legally granted rights for citizens in need of LTC and their carers, and create a solid infrastructure for needs assessment, supported by sufficient personnel and the necessary skills to link individual needs assessments with local care management.

During the first year of the project, the scene was set through a Theory of Change process involving the most relevant stakeholders to define objectives and indicators of success. This was underpinned by a solid situational analysis and inputs regarding the further development of individual needs assessment and local care planning. An organisational development process with the 16 Entry Points has been launched to sharpen the profile and identity of LTC advisors and experts responsible for the organisation of individual needs assessments throughout the project. Finally, Policy Labs were initiated in four social zones to enhance service provision in more than 20 municipalities. The project's results will influence LTC development in Slovenia and enable knowledge exchange with EU countries facing similar challenges and pursuing reforms.

European Disability Expertise II (EDE II)

Duration	03/2024 – 03/2028
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Magdi Birtha, Eszter Zólyomi, Felix Groß-Wohlgemuth, Sabina Gjylsheni, David Conforti, Niki Kalavrezou
Project Lead and Project Partners	Human European Consultancy (The Netherlands), European Centre (Austria)
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). It is managed by the Human European Consultancy and is supported and coordinated by a team of international senior experts on disability law, statistics and policy, working together with 30 country teams of independent experts. Under this contract, as with ANED, data on disability across the EU are assessed to support EU policymaking. The European Centre team is part of the central team of experts in the EDE network and is responsible for the annual European Semester task and the development of statistical reports, linked to the annual thematic and ad-hoc reports.

The general purpose of the 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 are 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).

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, Eszter Zólyomi, Nikko Bilitza, Kai Leichsenring, Anette Scoppetta, Judith Schreiber, Leonard Geyer
Project Lead and Project Partners	ECORYS -Ecorys Europe (Belgium), European Centre (Austria), HIVA - Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven (Belgium), Milieu Consulting SRL (Belgium)
Funded by	ELA - European Labour Authority

The European Centre is partnering in a consortium to provide analytical and methodological support related to qualitative analysis, mapping and mixed methods to the European Labour Authority (ELA). The 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.

Over the past year, the European Centre contributed to this programme by providing an Austrian country report, analytical expertise on challenges and recurring problems in the labour market of the long-term care sector, research on the identification and mapping of support mechanisms in cases of return mobility, and an EU-level comparative study on labour mobility in the manufacturing sector.

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 EU Member States in tackling undeclared work and communication.

Navigating the Next Normal (NEXT-UP)

Duration 01/2025 – 06/2028

Status Ongoing

Project Team Anette Scoppetta, Sabina Gjylsheni, Leonard Geyer, Lisa Marie Hanzl, Sandra Scharf, Judith Schreiber

Project Lead and Project Partners TAU – Tampere University (Finland), European Centre (Austria), 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 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. First, a typology for such policies in the EU was developed, while in a next step a systematic literature review of academic and policy articles will offer an overview of their effectiveness. 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, Kai Leichsenring, Selma Kadi, Mirjam Pot, Sonila Danaj, Nikko Bilitza, Lisa Marie Hanzl, Leonard Geyer, Anette Scoppetta, Judith Schreiber, Sandra Scharf

Project Lead and Project Partners JYU – University of Jyväskylä (Finland), European Centre (Austria), UNIPR – University of Parma (Italy), UiO – University of Oslo (Norway), CU – Cardiff University (United Kingdom), UWr – University of Wroclaw (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 Europe

There is a clear need for better adaptation of social dialogue institutions given the systemic labour market transformations, such as digitalisation and the 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 national and EU-level institutions can navigate workforce challenges, support economic transitions, and protect workers amid increasing precarity and nonstandard employment.

The European Centre is involved in conducting a national case study through qualitative fieldwork in Austria, mixed-method analysis and comparative research to contribute to the diverse picture of extant social dialogue institutions, economic characteristics, and the impact of the twin transition (green and digital) in automotive and energy production, energy, long-term 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 for workers and employers, 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
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria), Montenegrin Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (Montenegro), Ministries and other stakeholders from the BB countries
Funded by	BMASGPK - Austrian 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 jointly developed by the Commission together with the Danube Region countries and stakeholders to address common challenges. Generally speaking, and compared to EU countries, the challenges the five accession 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 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, the European Centre evaluated the National Employment Strategy of Montenegro 2020-2025 in the form of a policy document review for the Ministry of Labour and Social Dialogue of Montenegro (assessment of its status quo). In 2026, the European Centre provided analytical and advisory support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Dialogue of Montenegro regarding the development of the National Employment Strategy of Montenegro 2026–2030.

Accompanying Evaluation – Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market (Eval_RomaEmp)

Duration	08/2025 - 06/2031
Status	Ongoing
Project Team	Anette Scoppetta, David Conforti, Lisa Marie Hanzl, Leonard Geyer
Project Lead and Project Partners	European Centre (Austria)
Funded by	BMASGPK - Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria)

In 2022, the Austrian Ministry for Employment and the Economy published the special directive Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market 2022-2030 to finance measures to combat (long-term) unemployment among Roma and Romnja and to combat the perpetuation of unfavourable living conditions due to a lack of integration and inclusion in the labour market. The directive implements the labour market component of the national Roma strategy (Strategy to continue the Inclusion of Roma in Austria) in the context of the EU's Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation.

With a budget of 10€ million over eight years, the directive finances up to 10 projects each over four two-year periods: 2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030. Eligible projects must present and implement clear, feasible concepts to improve labour market integration. These include career counselling, boosting self-confidence, job application support, training motivation, and legal guidance. Projects may also offer childcare support, cooperation with authorities, public awareness activities, and educational or anti-discrimination workshops.

The accompanying evaluation monitors the implementation of the special directive and the individual projects funded through it. It ensures the continuous collection of evaluation data and the timely communication of results to the funding authority.

Publications

Books and Chapters in Books

Martin, S. B., Veiga, J. P., Galhera, K. M., & Bilitza, N. (Eds.). (2026). *Unpacking global Amazon: Labour, work, and community in e-commerce warehousing and distribution.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Rodrigues, R., Simmons, C., Ilinca, S., & Zólyomi, E. (2025). "Who will still need me, who will still feed me, when I'm 64?" Inequalities in long-term care. C. Ranci & T. Rostgaard (Eds.), *Research handbook on social care policy* (pp. 502–516). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Scoppetta, A., & Olsson, A. (forthcoming). Towards fairer late working lives: A call for policy transformation. In A. Motel-Klingebiel & A.-S. Parent (Eds.), *Exclusion and inequality in late working life.* Edward Elgar Publishing.

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

Stott, L., & Scoppetta, A. (forthcoming). Revisiting SDG 17: Navigating the pitfalls of partnership. *The Elgar companion to leadership beyond the sustainable development goals.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Journal Articles

Abudayya, A., Temur, B. N., Ilgaz, A., Bohn, L., Yeniğün, S. C., Byrne, S., Kadi, S., Jordao, M., Karabiyik, I. H., Ekiz, P., Özen, N., Asaduzzaman, M., & Aoudi, E. C. (2026). Mapping participatory approaches in health care provision for older immigrants in Europe: A scoping review. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health.* Published online. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-026-01923-x

Zólyomi, E., Simmons, C., Rodrigues, R., Vafaei, A., Rehnberg, J., Phillips, S. P., Ilinca, S., Kadi, S., & Fors, S. (2026). Differences in informal care to parents between women and men: The role of individual gender role attitudes and national contexts. *Social Policy and Society.* Published online. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746426101377

Policy Briefs

Pot, M., Kadi, S., & Kalavrezou, N. (2026). *Informal carer policy in well-developed LTC systems: Good practices and remaining challenges.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5396

Reports and other Publications

Eurofound (written by Arandarenko, M., Danaj, S., Risteska, M., Anić, A., Aleksić, D., Radivojević, A.) (2026). *Job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans, Working conditions and sustainable work.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/job-quality-and-working-conditions-western-balkans

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, & ICF (R. Rodrigues; written by Kadi, S. & Woldemariam, S., Reporters). (2026). *Mutual learning workshop on "Enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based practices in long-term care":* Thematic discussion paper and workshop proceedings. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. (not publicly available).

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, & ICF (written by Kadi, S. and Sienkiewicz, A.). (2026). Peer review on *"Improving coverage of long-term care in Greece: Addressing regional disparities and expanding care services":* Summary report. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. (not publicly available).

European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (written by Kalavrezou, N., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Zólyomi, E., & Birtha, M.) (2026). *European Semester 2025 mainstreaming disability equality.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/8641612

European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (written by Zólyomi, E.) (2026). *Housing conditions of persons with disabilities — statistics:* 2023 data. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/9656879

European Labour Authority (written by Cantalupi, M., D'Occhio, M., Domonkos, S., Franzini, B., Andriescu, M., Meszner, D., Nicosia, D., Buckingham, S., Paron Trivellato, M., Dodescu, D.C. and Zisimopoulou, C., & Leichsenring, K.) (2026). *The long-term care sector: Labour mobility and enforcement challenges, ELA Strategic Analysis.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Fuchs, M., Conforti, D., & Schenk, M. (2026). *Analyse der nicht krankenversicherten Personen in Österreich: Endbericht im Auftrag der ÖGK.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/3243

Fuchs, M., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., & Conforti, D. (2026). *EUROMOD country report — Austria 2022–2025.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://euromod-web.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/Y16_CR_AT.pdf

Kadi, S., & Woldemariam, S. (2026). *Bridge Building policy review report: Supporting the provision of affordable and high-quality professional home care for later life.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5430

Kayran, E. N., Bilitza, N., Pot, M., Danaj, S., & Leichsenring, K. (2026). *EGRUiEN historical background and case study report — Austria.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5407

Pot, M., Kadi, S., & Kalavrezou, N. (2026). *Good practices and remaining challenges in supporting informal carers.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5394

Conforti, D., & Zólyomi, E. (2025). *Bridge Building policy review report: Social housing policies to support access to adequate and affordable housing.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5365

Geyer, L., Bilitza, N., & Danaj, S. (2025). *Posted workers from and to Austria: Facts and figures.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5373

Gjylsheni, S. (2025). *Evaluation of the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025 of Montenegro.* Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/5378

Working Papers and Blogs

Kayran, E. N., & Bilitza, N. (2026, 29 January). F*rom integration to re-opening: Social dialogue after the Uber reform in Vienna's taxi sector. EGRUiEN Blog.* https://egruien.eu/en/readings/blogs/blog-posts-wp2

Berntsen, L., Danaj, S., de Beer, P., & Bilitza, N. (2025). S*ourcing in or sourcing out? Diverging migrant labour regimes and use of temporary labour in the Dutch and Austrian food industries* (CELSI Discussion Paper No. 76). Bratislava: Central European Labour Studies Institute. https://www.celsi.sk/en/publications/discussion-papers/detail/219/sourcing-in-or-sourcing-out-diverging-migrant-labour-regimes-and-use-of-temporary-labour-in-the-dutch-and-austrian-food-industries/

Danaj, S., Gjylsheni, S., & Arandarenko, M. (2025). *Greening of jobs and working conditions in the Western Balkans: Three scenarios* (Eurofound Working Paper). Dublin: Eurofound. https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/greening-of-jobs-and-working-conditions-in-the-western-balkans-three-scenarios

Ndomo, Q., Kayran, E. N., Bontenbal, I., Brunnerová, S., Tornberg, S., Pot, M., Kadi, S., & Kahanec, M. (2025). *Care on the margins: Migrant labour regimes and the reproduction of segmented long-term care work in the EU* (CELSI Discussion Paper No. 74). Bratislava: Central European Labour Studies Institute. https://www.celsi.sk/en/publications/discussion-papers/detail/217/care-on-the-margins-migrant-labour-regimes-and-the-reproduction-of-segmented-long-term-care-work-in-the-eu/

Conference Papers and Presentations

Kadi, S. (2026). *Policies to support person-centred care in the community: An international perspective. Avances para una sociedad longeva: Investigación e innovación en envejecimiento,* Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, Santander, Spain, 27 August.

Leichsenring, K. (with Kalavrezou, N., & Woldemariam, S.). (2026). *Prevalence of elder abuse and neglect: State of the art and methodological suggestions.* Symposium *Understanding elder abuse and neglect: Evidence, methods and prevention,* 23rd World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 8 July.

Leichsenring, K. (2026). *A research agenda to promote gerontological knowledge to policymaking. Symposium Promoting a research agenda on ageing and social policy,* 23rd World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 7 July.

Leichsenring, K. (2026). *The ongoing Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) process: Bringing gerontology to the table.* 23rd World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 7 July.

Kaspar, H., Chance, E., Ekiz, P., Griffin, A., Kadi, S., Seddon, D., Staudacher, S., Tournier, I., Urbaniak, A., Volanska, L., & Yellon, T. (2026). *Impact of participatory approaches involving older adults on ageism: A scoping review study protocol.* 23rd World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 5–8 July.

Kadi, S. (2026). *The response of services: The challenge of integrating health and social care in long-term care. Ageing and care demand in Central and Eastern Europe: Determinants, challenges and possible responses over the next ten years,* University of Rome Tor Vergata and Fondazione Età Grande, Rome, Italy, 22 June.

Kadi, S. (2026). *Altern in der Fremde [Ageing in a foreign land]. Universitätslehrgang Transkulturelle Medizin und Diversity Care [University course Transcultural Medicine and Diversity Care],* Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, 30 May.

Scoppetta, A. (2026). *Championing policy transformation for fairer late working lives. (eng)aging! Conference,* Prague, Czech Republic, 14 May.

Stott, L. & Scoppetta, A. (2026). *Measuring the application of the partnership principle.* ECoPP Workshop, *Advocacy Strategy for better implementation of the partnership principle,* Brussels, Belgium, 23 April.

Fuchs, M., Conforti, D., & Schenk, M. (2026). *Analysis of persons not covered by health insurance in Austria. 8. Forschungskonferenz Sozialpolitik ESPAnet Austria,* Vienna, Austria, 9–10 April.

Danaj, S. (2026). *Third-country nationals posting: An overview of data, characteristics, recruitment, vulnerabilities and risks.* Final Conference ECMIN V – *Tools for information and support for mobile construction workers,* Bratislava, Slovakia, 16–17 March.

Danaj, S. (2026). *Panel session 1: Posting of third-country nationals.* Posting.STAT 2.0 Final Conference, Leuven, Belgium, 3 March.

Danaj, S., Geyer, L., & Bilitza, N. (2026). *TCN postings to Austria: Current data and potential improvements. Posting of third-country nationals in the EU: Identifying and potentially closing data gaps to better inform policymaking,* OECD Conference Centre, Paris, France, 25 February.

Kalavrezou, N. (2026). *Mainstreaming disability equality – Trends and policies relevant to disability: Key findings of the European Semester 2025. European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar,* European Commission, Brussels, Belgium, 13 February.

Zólyomi, E. (2026). *Housing conditions of persons with disabilities: Key findings of the Thematic Statistical Report on Housing. European Disability Expertise Annual Seminar,* European Commission, Brussels, Belgium, 13 February.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Inclusive and sustainable care for older persons.* 2nd Joint CEB–Council of Europe Conference *Policy framework and financing solutions in an ageing Europe,* Strasbourg, France, 9 December.

Gjylsheni, S. (2025). *Enhancing Charter compliance of EU funds: Methodology and main findings from the desktop research.* Final dissemination event of the ECHOFunds project, Brussels, Belgium, 3 December.

Danaj, S. (2025). *International subcontracting chains in the European construction sector.* Workshop for the EFBWW Standing Committees Building & Wood, *Rethinking organising in construction and woodworking: From fragmentation to unity – Boosting trade union representation in our sectors,* St. Julian's, Malta, 2–3 December.

Kadi, S. (2025). *Supporting person-centred, diversity-sensitive care through education. New competencies and skills for healthcare professionals in integrated long-term care,* LAUREL project, online, 26 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Pflege(ver)sicherung in Europa. 50 Jahre Sozialautonomie – Pflegesicherung,* Bolzano, Italy, 25 November.

Danaj, S. (2025). *Third-country nationals in the cross-border labour supply chain: Recruitment channels and actors.* SCEUS Workshop on European Union Labour Migration Policies, Salzburg, Austria, 20–21 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Developing preventive strategies within integrated long-term care systems: Towards person-centred support in the community.* Support Centre for the Elderly Living Alone International Forum *Revisiting concepts of long-term care for older persons,* Seoul, South Korea, 20 November.

Leichsenring, K. (2025). *Monitoring the quality of social services provided in the mixed economy of welfare.* Networking Forum of the Albanian Ministry of Health and Social Protection *Innovating social services: Pathways to inclusion and sustainability,* Tirana, Albania, 17–18 November.

Danaj, S. (2025). *Greening of jobs and working conditions in the Western Balkans: Three scenarios.* RSA Regional Futures Conference 2025, London, United Kingdom, 13 November.

Fuchs, M., Geyer, L., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Scoppetta, A., & Zolyomi, E. (2025). *The buffering effect of the Austrian tax/benefit system on child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic.* EUROMOD Research Workshop 2025, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 25–26 September.

European Centre events

European Centre (2026). *12th BBinar: Employment policy in the Western Balkans: The way forward.* BBinar Series (online), 2 July.

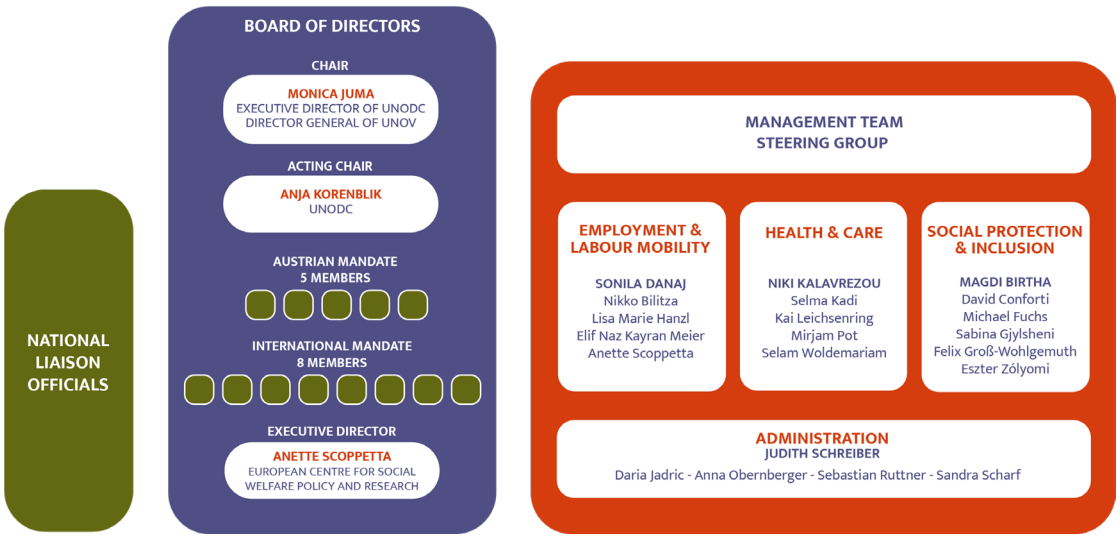
European Centre (2026). *Thematic Seminar: Monitoring child poverty* (online), 30 June.

European Centre (2026). *Supporting the provision of affordable and high-quality professional home care for later life.* Bridge Building (BB) Policy Reviews in Social Welfare (online), 25-26 February.

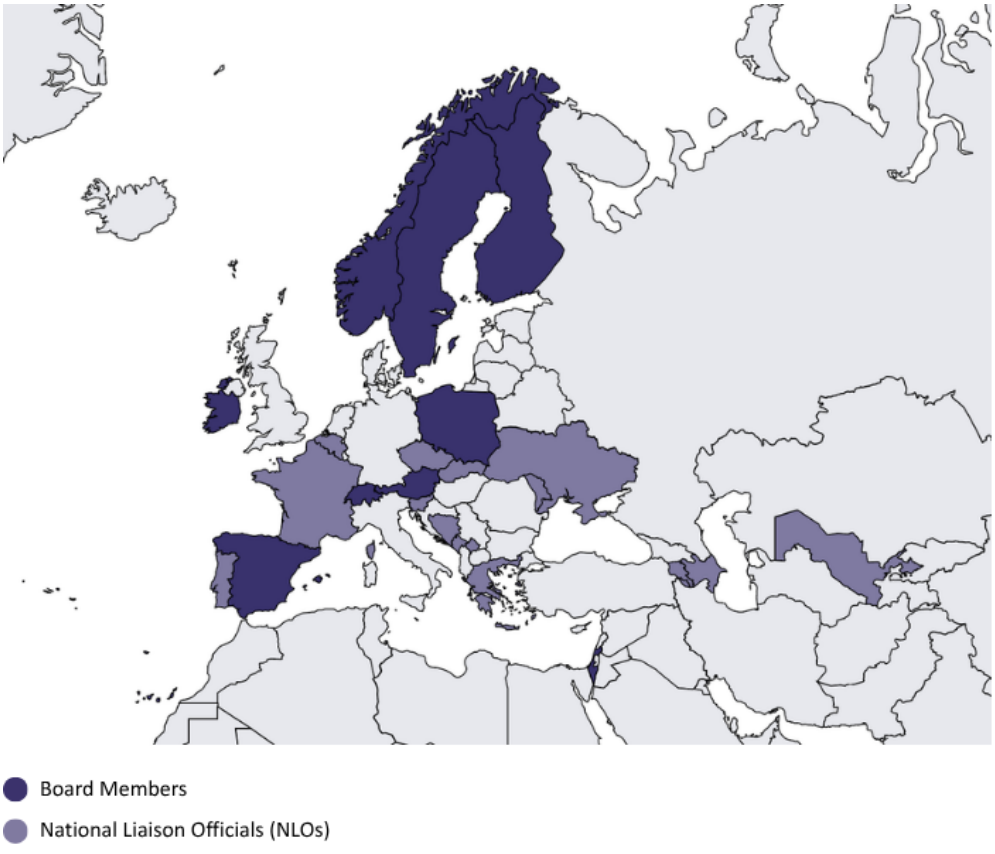
European Centre (2026). *11th BBinar: Job quality and working conditions in the Western Balkans.* BBinar Series, online, 14 January.

European Centre (2025). *General Assembly Meeting,* UNOV. 22-23 October.

Organisation



The European Centre has Board Members and National Liaison Officials (NLOs) in 24 countries.



Management and Staff

Management

Anette Scoppetta, Executive Director
Sonila Danaj, 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
Lisa Marie Hanzl
Selma Kadi
Niki Kalavrezou
Elif Naz Kayran
Kai Leichsenring
Mirjam Pot
Anette Scoppetta
Selam Woldemariam
Eszter Zólyomi

Administration, Public Relations and IT

Daria Jadric
Anna Valerie Obernberger
Sebastian Ruttner
Sandra Scharf
Judith Schreiber

Research Affiliates

Nikolai Botev
Adelina Comas-Herrera
Georg Fischer
Katrin Gasior
Cornelius (Cees) Goos
Giovanni Lamura
Andrea E. Schmidt
Alexandre Sidorenko

Board of Directors

Chair

Monica Juma, Director-General
United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)

Acting Chair

Anja Korenblik, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)

Ex Officio Member

Anette Scoppetta, 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 (envisaged to be replaced by Monika Austaller)
(Alternates: Marc Pointecker, Matija Rutar, 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 Ganal

Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund, ÖGB)

Julia Stroj
(Alternate: David Mum)

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer, WKO)

(on hold)

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)

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

Ilka Steiner
(Alternate: Thomas Vollmer)
Federal Social Insurance Office

Finland (coopted)

Minna-Liisa Luoma
Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)

Ireland (coopted)

Jim Lynch
Department of Social Protection

Norway (coopted)

Thore Hansen
Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

NLOs / National Liaison Officials

Armenia
Yevgine Vardanyan
Welfare Information Systems Enterprise Foundation (WISE foundation)

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
Federal Public Service - Social Security

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 (RILSA)

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

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

Montenegro

Ivana Šućur
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue

Norway

Thore Hansen
Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

Poland

Agnieszka Sowa-Kofta
Institute of Labour and Social Studies

Ewa Chylek
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy

Portugal

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

Slovak Republic

Daniel Gerbery
Institute for Labour and Family Research

Slovenia

Andreja Rafaelic
Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

Spain

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

Sweden

Kristoffer Lundberg
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Switzerland

Ilka Steiner and **Thomas Vollmer**
Federal Social Insurance Office

Ukraine

Vsevolod Shcherbyna
Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine

Uzbekistan

Khurshid Zafari
National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Copyright © 2026 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 european.centre@euro.centre.org
http://www.euro.centre.org
Editor Anette Scoppetta
Copy-Editing & DTP Daria Jadric,
Anna Valerie Obernberger
Design Barbara Waldschütz
Status as of 31 August 2026

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH