

European Semester Quarterly

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Editorial

Autumn represents often a very industrious month for many organisations. At Eurodiaconia, October it's the month hosting our yearly thematic network meeting, where, more than in other times, we get a touch of our members' work and projects on a very wide range of topics, which helps shaping next year's activities. For many ones, it is also a period to take stock of the achievements and facts happened during the closing year, in order to reflect on these and prepare themselves for the next challenges.

As the 2016 cycle of the European Semester turns to an end, this season opens to preparing the next ones. While the European Parliament is voting and evaluating how the European Semester matched the 2016 priorities, towards the end of November the European Commission will release its "November European Semester package", which will include **the 2017 Annual Growth Survey**, preparing the upcoming priorities at the EU level to help Member States support growth, reinforcing economic convergence, creating jobs and strengthening social fairness.

It is crucial to ensure that this primary document outlines key social priorities of the European Union and prove a proactive attitude in supporting member states more actively in addressing poverty, investing in inclusion and integration policies and supporting social service providers. Moreover, it is extremely important that adequate social protection is not conditioned to fiscal sustainability: the European Semester indeed can't help in reaching Europe2020 poverty goal if the emphasis on the need for social investment is counterbalanced with a tight fiscal austerity.

It is for this reason that **this Monday, 17 October Eurodiaconia has issued a letter to the European Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis for social dialogue, advocating for a socially ambitious and feasible Annual Growth Survey**, check it out on Eurodiaconia's website, and read more about this step towards the next cycle of the European Semester **at page 11**.

Meanwhile, we prepared some other interesting content to learn more about the EU cycle of budgetary coordination. At **page 6** you will find the experiences of Eurodiaconia's Danish members in the Semester consultation processes, with some good tips and insights from someone who have had a long term experience in this policy. **On page 9** you will meet the **Country Desk Officer**, who participates in preparing the Country Reports from the European Commission in early autumn: it is just the right time to send to your Country Desk Officers your analysis and data on your country's social situation!

Please, feel free to give us your feedback on your engagement and also on this publication – we want to hear your views, experiences and ideas for future editions.

Wishing you a good reading,

Eurodiaconia's Semester policy team

If you have any questions, suggestions or experiences to share, please do not hesitate to contact stephan.burger@eurodiaconia.org, giacomo.manca@eurodiaconia.org or Clotilde.clark-foulquier@eurodiaconia.org

Thematic feature: The European Semester and the Healthy Aging and Long Term Care policies

The context

The **demographic challenge** that Europe is facing makes issues such as healthy ageing, disease prevention and most of all, an affordable and equitable health care provision for all European citizens, a priority for the European Union. Quoting the 2015 Ageing Report of the European Commission, as a result of different demographic trends among age-groups, the demographic old-age dependency ratio (people aged 65 or above relative to those aged 15-64) is expected to increase from 27.8% to 50.1% in the EU as a whole over the period 2013 – 2060. This implies that the EU would move from having four working-age people for every person aged over 65 years to about two working-age persons¹ for every person over 65.

HALTC in the Annual Growth Survey 2016

This demographic change implies a huge budgetary challenge in terms of financial sustainability for Europe: for this reason, the European Commission tends to recommend sustainability-oriented reforms in health social care systems. In the 2016 Annual Growth Survey, pension reforms occupy the main focus in terms of the “demographic challenge”; however, the document also mentions that “responsible policies are needed to ensure that pension, healthcare and long-term care systems are financially sustainable and can provide adequate protection to all”. Reforms of health

care and long term care systems “need to continue to enhance their cost-effectiveness and to ensure adequate access”. In this statement, the need for union-wide access to health and social care seems to be counterbalanced by its fiscal sustainability, moreover it is accompanied by the argument that “a healthier population will also improve labour market participation and labour productivity”². Unfortunately, the definition of **health as a productive factor and not as a value per-se fails to consider a significant part of the population which is not in active employment, but requires high levels of care. Equally remarkable is the lack of attention paid to the fact that this adequate access needs to be accompanied by an adequate quality of the services.**

No reference is made to the importance of better integration between health care and social care, nor to the participation of elderly people in public life: rehabilitation services, health care and long term care are repeatedly mentioned as an example of investing in human capital but with the aim to “strengthen people’s current and future capacities to engage in the labour market and adapt”. On the other hand, it is alarming that **informal care**, which represents an important pillar for mastering the rapidly growing demands related to the future of care systems in Europe, was not mentioned, as also pointed out by the European Parliament’s report on the Employment and Social Aspects in the AGS 2016³.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2015/pdf/ee3_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_annual_growth_survey.pdf

³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONGML%2bREPORT%2bA8-2016-0031%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

A focus on Resiliency and sustainability

Even though a more inclusive system of health and long term care is not defined explicitly as a target of the **Europe 2020 strategy**, it still can be considered a priority due to the fact that it can prevent a large and vulnerable part of the EU population from experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

In the thematic document which the European Commission prepared on **Health and Health systems**⁴ for the European Semester, published in May 2016, the Commission acknowledges that improving the performances of the Health Systems is primarily a task for the Member States. It outlines a number of recommendations for making the health systems more resilient (and therefore financially sustainable), more easily accessible by effective primary health care services, better in terms of public procurement and more cost-effective with regards to medicines.

However, the persistent focus on **budgetary sustainability** limits the positive aspects coming from these recommendations, which go in the

direction of a more efficient system of care through a better governance and technological innovation. A further positive note on investing in health system regards the staff: among the areas where improvements could increase cost-effectiveness is the prompt balanced mix of staff skills, preparing for potential staff needs due to ageing.

Health Care in 2016's Country Specific Recommendations

EU countries' health systems and their spending in social care and long term care are very diverse, ranging from the best performing systems in the world to very ineffective ones which grant uneven access to health treatments: this is not only due to budgetary problems, but often also due to an underperforming system, where health care service provision relies on informal patient payments. In certain cases, indeed, citizens have to pay illegally service providers in order to access services which should be granted to them, due to the lack of quality services. Nine member states (BG, CY, CZ, FL, LT, LV, PO, SL, RO) have received



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http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/2016/health_health_systems_201605.pdf

Country Specific Recommendations on health and long term care, but the approaches are very different. In some cases, the recommendations are aimed at better cost effectiveness and not at service quality. For other countries, more investment in health care is suggested, but recommendations are often counterbalanced by an emphasis on budgetary performances.

In general, the focus on the demographic challenge is the leitmotiv of the Commission's prescriptions regarding health systems. In spite of a general attention to fiscal performances, it is encouraging that in some cases the CSRs provided through the European Semester process acknowledges the need for an action to empower the Long Term Care systems of some countries, and provide a wider access to it.

Among the nine countries, **Bulgaria, Finland, Latvia** and **Romania** had already received recommendations on health services in 2015: in the case of both **Romania** and **Bulgaria**, the health systems were criticised for low accessibility, but also for their low funding. It is encouraging that the Commission acknowledges success in these countries, which have started addressing this issue by using resources more efficiently, although the poor quality and a lack of funds for current services remain problematic.

In **Romania's** case, the Commission has praised the government's efforts to address the low funding of its health system and condemns the informal payments reducing access to healthcare for people with low income.

Another positive case concerns the recommendation to **Latvia**, where the Commission urges the government towards "improving the accessibility, quality and cost-effectiveness of the healthcare system", whilst also criticizing the low public financing of a healthcare system relying mainly on out-of-pocket payments by citizens. This recommendation is moreover coherent with last

year's one, recognizing a true problem in accessibility to Latvia's health care and suggesting an increase of outpatient care.

Czech Republic and **Lithuania** have been asked to invest into outpatient services and care services as a more efficient and cost-saving alternative to hospitalisation.

Several health systems are highly criticised in term of sustainability and financing, while reforms are required to improve efficiency. The lack of mention to quality is concerning.

More specifically, **Slovenia** and **Finland** received recommendations linked to the long-term sustainability of their health systems, with a focus on demographic change and the need to make the health system more "cost effective". Although no mention to cuts in expenditures is made, the Commission does not address service quality.

Overall, the stress of budgetary constraints and the recall of the pact of growth and stability in almost all the recommendations, moves the criterion for quality of service provision to the background. **Long Term Care** is hardly mentioned in the recommendations, except in the case of **Finland** and **Slovenia**, which received recommendations on this topic in 2015. In both cases, the recommendations question the system's sustainability but do not prioritise quality, even though Slovenia is criticised for the lack of integrated long-term care and home care, which is not only cost saving but can also have a positive impact on the life quality of elderly people.

Concluding, the current EU trend appears to address the challenge of the aging society almost exclusively in terms of limiting the increase of expenses towards sustainability, while less attention is devoted to the adequacy of long term care provision and healthy aging.

The 2016 European Semester: a Danish perspective

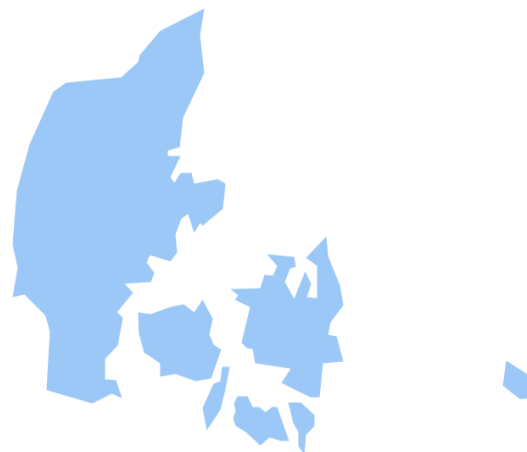
Eurodiaconia's Danish members, Kirkens Korshaer and the Kofoeds Skole have been involved in the European Semester process from the beginning, taking part in the broader coalition of Danish Civil Society organisation represented by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) in Denmark. We have asked a few questions to **Ole Meldgaard**, former international director at Kofoeds Skole and still very engaged in the coalition, to share some insights from his experience in European Semester's Consultations.

How long have you been involved in the European Semester?

I have personally been involved in the process since the beginning of the 2020 strategy as a member of a Contact Committee. As part of the Danish implementation of the strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for involving Danish organisations. This is done through a Contact Committee on the Europe 2020 strategy, which includes about 30 organisations with an interest in the growth and jobs agenda. The Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will meet four times a year and is consulted in the preparation of the National Reform Program.



Ole Meldgaard, previously International Director of Kofoeds Skole is currently part of the supervisory board of the European Anti-Poverty Network in Denmark.



Would you rate your involvement in the European Semester process for 2016 so far?

We are quite active trying to get as much as possible within the structures of involvement in Denmark in meetings with civil servants and occasionally with the Minister of Social Affairs in The Contact Committee.

The Danish EAPN Network is a member of the Contact Committee. About 10 NGOs, including Kofoeds Skole and Kirkens Korshaer, participate in the semester through the EAPN, which coordinates inputs and responses to the National Reform Programme.

This year, as all the previous ones, we have sent our recommendation and feedbacks for the National Reform Programme through this Contact Committee.

Do you feel that key social issues of your country are adequately reflected in the Country Report and the Country Specific Recommendations published by the European Commission?

No, as there is a certain inconsistency between these two documents. The report states in general that the Danish inclusion targets are far from being reached. There should be further measures with a view to a more effective integration of marginalised groups in the labour

market but there was no recommendation on the social issues.

Looking at your opportunities for engagement, have there been any positive developments over the last years?

There are no new opportunities for engagement. It has been the same procedure since the beginning.

Are you in contact with the European Semester Officer at the Representation of the European Commission in Copenhagen? If yes, did you participate in events and consultations organised by them?

Yes, we are in contact and have participated in meetings and consultations.

Would you have tips for other NGOs who want to make their voices heard in the Semester?

I would suggest to NGOs who have not been involved in the European Semester consultations to start doing it approaching a network of other NGOs interested in the Europe 2020. However, I have to say that in our experiences it has been difficult to influence the National Reform Programme as it reflects the policy of the government that has already been approved in the Parliament.

If you want to influence the NRP you need to influence the political and legislative process before drafting the NRP.

- Involved with the European Semester since 2010
- **Contact with the European Semester Officer:** Yes. Ole has participated in consultation organised on NRP and CSRs.
- Main focus: NRP, CSRs.



Kofoeds Skole and Kirkens Korshaer are Eurodiaconia member organisations participating in the Semester process through the coalition of EAPN Denmark.

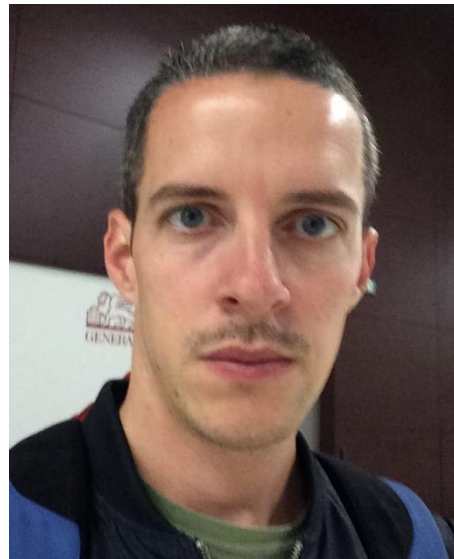
European Semester Stakeholders:

A conversation with a Country Desk Officer

As a complex process followed by several different stakeholders inside and outside the EU institutions, the European Semester policy making relies on monitoring and analysing of several European Commission officers, who work on member states data. Country Desk Officers work analysing specific themes of specific countries. You can contact your Country Desk Officer from DG EMPL at the European Commission, if you want to share studies, data or information which could be useful in picturing your country's Country Report. We asked to **Martin Orth**, country desk officer for Slovakia, to tell us a bit more about his job and his involvement in the European Semester.

How are you involved in the European Semester? What is your specific role as a Country Desk officer?

As a policy officer for social inclusion and poverty reduction at the Slovak desk in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, I am responsible for analysing the state of social affairs, monitoring of progress, assessing impact of adopted reforms and identifying gaps and future challenges in view of meeting the Europe 2020 target to decrease the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. I always base my input on evidence as this is important for the sound analysis to be widely credible and for the potential reforms to be effective and efficient. I am also involved in an intensive interaction with the stakeholders who provide useful feedback on the developments in the member states. My task is also to contribute to drafting and comment the consolidated drafts of the country report.



Martin Orth works at the European Commission's DG EMPL as a Country Desk Officer, focusing on social affairs and the Europe 2020 Poverty target in Slovakia.

Could you briefly explain the drafting process of the Country Reports? What are your primary sources of information and which actors are involved in the drafting and finalizing of the document?

A country report is a collaborative process involving all key Commission's departments (Directorate-Generals - DG). DG Employment, Social, Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL) is the lead department for employment and poverty reduction issues and a draft country report is compiled by the DG Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN). DG EMPL also coordinates inputs on education and health matters received from other services and contributes on public administration. The overall coordination, including finalisation of the country reports, is vested with the Secretariat General (SG). In DG EMPL, draft input is provided by the responsible policy officers from the geographical units as well as horizontal policy units. It is consolidated by our horizontal European Semester unit which is steering the whole process to ensure consistent and timely provision of our contribution to DG ECFIN and SG. The draft texts are thoroughly

discussed and commented by the working groups within DG EMPL and are eventually approved by the senior management.

The primary sources of information are the Member States' documents such as national reform programmes, new legislation and their impact assessment, Eurostat's data, Commission's Annual Growth Survey, reports from other international organisations such as OECD, policy studies, analysis or shadow reports from stakeholders, including civil society organisations. A lot of information is also acquired during personal interaction with the stakeholders at various seminars, workshops or fact-finding meetings.

How can our national member organisations, and civil society organisations in general, support your work on the European Semester?

What would be the optimal timeframe for providing input, and what kind of information would be the most interesting for you (quantitative data, personal testimonies from service users, qualitative observations from local level-service providers, etc.)?

Indeed, the responsibility for action does not stop with the Commission and the Member States'

governments. Everyone is needed to achieve the Europe 2020 goals: businesses, trade unions, civil society (non-governmental organisations), academia, think-tanks as well as individual citizens. Exchange of good practices, benchmarking and networking has proven useful in creating ownership and dynamism around the need for reform. A number of civil society organisations have adopted the Europe 2020 goals as their own and they help push for implementation and reform at European and national level. We engage with them on various forums such as seminars, conferences, technical fact-finding meetings, etc. Their analysis, evaluations or shadow reports are a wealthy source of information. Most useful are analysis that are supported by evidence because policy recommendations and policy-making based on evidence is important for the reform success. Ideally country specific expertise should be presented in a cross-country perspective to give indications about a magnitude of a challenge. Input can be provided any time but it is most needed at the launch of the European Semester, e.g. in early autumn when the work on country reports takes place.

Institutional Developments

The European Semester 2016 is slowly coming to an end, with the ongoing preparation of the European Commission 2017 work programme, and the preparation of the Annual Growth Survey 2017 that will kick start the European Semester 2017 in November. This European Semester Quarterly section on institutional development will look at the perspectives for the 2017 semester.

Influencing the Annual Growth Survey 2017

The Annual Growth Survey (AGS) is a document issued every year by the European Commission, taking stock of the economic and social situation in Europe and setting out the policy priorities for the year to come. It sets out what the Commission believes must be the EU's priorities for the coming 12 months in terms of economic and budgetary policies and reforms to boost growth and employment. In doing so it provides Member States with policy guidance for the following year.

The priorities outlined in the AGS 2016 were an update of the 2015 priorities, taking into account the progress made and new challenges emerging: re-launching investment, pursuing structural reforms, and responsible fiscal policies.

There is no obvious and direct way to influence the AGS, but it is important to try to impact it as it is such a key step in influencing the following year's policy direction. Eurodiaconia members can contact the economic adviser to the president of the European Commission, Mr. Luc Tholoniati (luc.tholoniati@ec.europa.eu), also responsible for both social affairs and the European Semester. It is also possible to contact the European Commission desk officer (list [here](#)). The idea is to contact those who prepare the Annual Growth Survey and insist on the need for the European Union to support member states more actively in addressing poverty, investing in inclusion and integration policies and supporting social services providers.

The State of the Union: a bare declaratory exercise?

The "State of the Union" speech is an annual speech by the president of the European Commission to the European Parliament, following on the model of the USA's president speech to the congress. In this speech, the president of the European commission sets out the Union's priorities for the year ahead. It is followed by a debate with the members of the European Parliament.

The 14th September speech brought a notably positive element, emphasising on the need to **'implement the Stability and Growth Pact with common sense'**, calling for greater budget flexibility to encourage ongoing reform efforts – which could include concrete initiatives in the area of social investment.

However, all in all the speech sadly displayed a lack of awareness of key persisting challenges, a narrow scope and a muddled sense of direction. It referred to high unemployment and social inequality, but lacked any mentioning of the issue of **poverty**, which has been on the rise in recent years – in spite of the introduction of an EU-level poverty reduction target, still operational until 2020. The speech referred to the need to promote social justice and a fair playing field, but it concentrated on corporate taxation and workers' rights. The need to empower citizens

Upcoming steps in the European Semester cycle

***Early November:** The European Commission issues the Annual Growth Survey 2017, outlining the priorities for the following planning period.*

***November:** the Commission issues its opinion on the Draft Budgetary Plans*

***December/January:** The Council adopts its conclusion on the Annual Growth Survey, which at the same time is discussed at the Parliament.*

was mentioned, but in this context referred only to young persons, job seekers and start-ups.

Mr Juncker finally stressed the need for greater solidarity but applying it only to the situation of **refugees**, complemented by an ambivalent statement that “tolerance cannot come at the price of our security”.

The state of the Union did not build on past commitments and initiatives such as the aim for the European Union to grow toward a ‘**Social Triple A**’ status. The **European Pillar of Social Rights was only briefly mentioned**, while it has been announced so far as the main achievement to look forward for social Europe.

The state of the Union leaves social actors with a feeling of more empty commitments and no genuine vision for a social Europe. It pretends to achieve a lot, while it would be better placed proposing and providing support to member states to reach their common goals.

Publication focus

The European Parliament’s Policy Department A on Economic and Scientific Policy published in July 2016 an interesting briefing on ‘Economic Inequality’, following on the joint hearing between the Employment and Social affairs committee and the Economic and Monetary Affairs committee in June 2016.

The document reminds that inequalities have grown over the last decades not between countries but within countries. It also highlights the negative impact for inequalities for society as a whole.

To read the briefing please go [here](#)

The State of the Union speech takes generally place in the first half of September, and has been instituted by the Lisbon Treaty.

In this speech, the president of the European Commission takes stock of the ongoing challenges in front of the European Parliament, and sets out the Union’s priorities for the year ahead.



The European Pillar of Social Rights: what role for the European Semester?

In March 2016, the European Commission launched a consultation on a new key initiative in the social field: the 'European Pillar of Social Rights'. Until the end of the year, individual citizens, trade unions and civil society organisations will be given the chance to respond to the consultation, sharing their perspective on the most pressing challenges for Europe and on the essential components of an effective solution. In doing so, they will help give shape to the fabric of a future 'pillar of social rights'.

The European Pillar of Social Rights is a new, but not a first attempt to take comprehensive European action against poverty, social exclusion and unemployment. In 2010, the Commission launched the Europe2020 Strategy, promoting 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' across the EU by aiming to increase employment levels, boost school attendance and reduce poverty. The European Semester was originally envisaged to become the key instrument to attain the Europe2020 targets; however, whilst it remains a key aspect of the dialogue between Commission and Member States until this day, its connection to Europe2020 has become increasingly unclear.

What will the introduction of a European Pillar of Social Rights mean for the European Semester? With the consultation process still ongoing, the final shape of the Pillar and its connection to the Semester cycle are mostly still shrouded in mystery, but some preliminary insights can already be formulated.

Why introduce a European Pillar of Social Rights?

The economic and financial crisis has had an adverse effect on many domains of European society. Unemployment has risen, poverty has increased, public finances have been stretched and xenophobia and populism have increased across the continent. Fiscal consolidation measures have resulted in public budget cuts and made essential healthcare and social services less affordable, available and/or accessible.

From the European Commission's perspective, the crisis has exposed and deepened the cracks in existing welfare systems, and created a real need for "upward social convergence" between EU Member States. In other words, social protection systems should be reformed across Europe in order to reduce national differences; the aim is to allow all national welfare systems to reach similarly high standards across Europe.

This is where the European Pillar of Social Rights comes into play. However, compared to preceding initiatives like Europe2020, it is more limited in geographical scope. Whilst the Pillar is an initiative which welcomes the involvement of all 28 EU Member States, it is an obligatory measure only for the 19 members of the Eurozone.

What will the Pillar contain?

The draft version of the Social Pillar lists 20 principles which outline the minimum standards that Eurozone members should grant to their citizens in order to improve labour market access, equal opportunities and social inclusion. The 20 principles are grouped into three main axes or chapters:

- Equal opportunities and access to the Labour Market
- Fair working conditions
- Adequate and Sustainable Social Protection

The third chapter is the most comprehensive one, outlining 10 principles which touch on different aspects of social protection, including 'adequate minimum income', 'quality and affordable long term care services', and 'integrated social services and social protection benefits'.

How will the Pillar be implemented?

The unclear legal nature of the European Pillar of Social Rights is likely to become its Achilles' heel. Employment and social policies are not a

direct competence for the European Union, relying on national legislation instead. At the moment, the final outline of the Pillar is likely to become a Commission Recommendation, which means that no EU Member State **will be legally obliged to implement its list of principles**. Therefore, it is difficult to foresee to what extent the Pillar's principles, promising as they may sound, will actually be translated into concrete social policy reforms.

What about the European Semester?

So how can it be avoided that the European Pillar of Social Rights will meet the same fate as the Europe2020 Strategy, upheld on paper but ineffective in practice? In theory, the European Semester could become a core tool to prevent this from happening. In its current form, the European Pillar of Social Rights can be understood as a reference framework, an umbrella of principles for generating 'upward social convergence' within (and hopefully also beyond) the Eurozone. However, by itself, it cannot guarantee adequate monitoring and implementation (just like Europe2020).

The European Semester could complement the Pillar very well by providing the guidance and pressure mechanisms which the Pillar lacks. The Annual Growth Survey could outline key priorities and clarify the connection between adequacy and fiscal sustainability of social protection. Country Reports could monitor the situation in national contexts. Apart from Country-Specific Recommendations to individual Member States, the European Semester's new, separate set of CSRs for the Eurozone could drive upward social convergence in a more coherent and comprehensive manner.

In theory, therefore, the connection between the Pillar and the European Semester is obvious. However, over the course of the past years, the European Semester has become an instrument driving macroeconomic and fiscal consolidation measures rather than poverty reduction and social inclusion. The European Semester would need to undergo serious revision in order to be able to deliver on the implementation of improved social rights.



On September 27th, Eurodiaconia and the Member of the European Parliament **Dennis De Jong** organised the meeting *"Shaping adequate social protection through the Social Pillar"*, throwing a fruitful debate between members of the European Parliament, civil society stakeholders and the Commission's advisor for the Pillar **Allan Larsson**. **Lena Kumlin**, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and **Annette von Pogrell** from Diakonie Niedersachsen brought the experience of two Eurodiaconia's members and their expectations from this policy tool.

Would you like to know more on the Social Pillar? Check Eurodiaconia's policy briefing on the [rationale of the Pillar of Social Rights \(1\)](#) and on its [structure \(2\)](#).

Firstly, social and economic objectives within the European Semester would have to be rebalanced. Secondly, the space for meaningful civil society involvement in the Semester process would need to be increased, as NGOs and service providers are at the forefront of supporting individuals at the margins of society.

Looking ahead

It remains to be seen what final shape the Social Pillar will take, and what its connection will be to existing instruments such as the European Semester. Following the consultation process, the European Commission will publish a proposal on the Pillar and a White Paper on Completing the Economic and Monetary Union in 2017. In the meantime, Eurodiaconia will continue pushing for a renewed, balanced and democratically inclusive European Semester process in the context of a future European Pillar of Social Rights.

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