



Eurodiaconia Social Trends 2019

***Report On the State of Implementation Of
the European Pillar of Social Rights***

Mission

Eurodiaconia is a network of churches and Christian organizations that provide social and health care services and advocate for social justice. Together we work for just and transformative social change across Europe, leaving no-one behind.

Vision

Driven by our Christian faith, our vision is of a Europe where each person is valued for their inherent God-given worth and dignity and where our societies guarantee social justice for all people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized.

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POLICY SNAPSHOT



Eurodiaconia has 51 members in 31 countries. Founded in the Christian faith we work to ensure that our societies provide opportunities for all people to live in dignity and realize their fullest potential.



Our members tell us that there are positive and negative developments. Access to housing is a major concern as is in-work poverty. Availability of key services is good but concerns are expressed about the sustainability of funding.



In 2019 we had focused on active support to employment, healthcare and the inclusion of people with disabilities. Our members told us that for some particularly vulnerable groups, such as migrants, the situation was not positive.



The European Pillar of Social Rights is an opportunity to embed social justice and wellbeing at the heart of our societies and our policies. Proclaimed in 2017 it should guide Member States in their decision making. Since 2018 we have been asking our members if the Pillar is making a difference at national level and what trends are they seeing in social wellbeing.



We can say that the social situation in Europe is stagnant with no particular changes being seen as a result of the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Some areas of the EPSR need urgent action such as in-work poverty and housing and others need long term strategies to ensure the sustainability of provision such as social and health care services.

About this publication



On 17 November 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) was jointly proclaimed by all three EU institutions, and hence also by all EU Member States, during the Social Summit in Gothenburg. The joint proclamation is a political commitment by all EU institutions and Member States to implement the 20 principles of the EPSR and ensure that every EU citizen can enjoy his or her social rights. Two years after this joint proclamation, Eurodiaconia wishes to present its members perspective on the state of implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in seven Member States.

Eurodiaconia is a network of 51 organizations in 32 European countries providing social services and working for social justice. Founded in the Christian tradition, we work to ensure that our societies provide opportunities for all people to live in dignity and realize their full potential. Thanks to the wide range of services that our members offer and their specific attention to quality and helping the most vulnerable, they are already contributing to the implementation of several principles of the EPSR. Their experience in their respective countries or regions also gives them a privileged position to evaluate the current state of social policies.

"With the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU stands up for the rights of its citizens in a fast-changing world." President Jean Claude Juncker .

This report is based on the responses from 8 member organisations in 7 countries to a detailed questionnaire, which has been structured in two sections. In 2018 we received 10 responses from 11 countries. The first section of the questionnaire is a survey exercise that aims at gaining a basic overview of the state of play of some

key principles that are of interest to our network. The second part is an in-depth questionnaire on three principles that are Eurodiaconia's focus for this year: Principle 4 on the Active support to employment, Principle 16 on Healthcare and Principle 17 on Inclusion of people with disabilities. In addition, the answers provided by our members through the questionnaire have also been complemented by other documents and input provided by our members throughout the year.

The following report, therefore, is structured in two sections. The first section will give an overview of the state of play of certain principles across Member States and will highlight areas that need more attention in the years to come. The second chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the situation in Member States with regard to the three focus areas; Active support to Employment, Healthcare and Inclusion of people with disabilities. Some best practice examples will also illustrate our member's practical work in those areas and how they already contribute through their daily work to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Building up a picture - a brief comparison between 2018 and 2019

Since 2018 Eurodiaconia has been evaluating the state of play in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. We want to be able to compare from year to year and see if implementation is taking place and if it is leading to improvements for people.

The picture we have found is mixed. For instance the quality of child education has improved in some member states. France moved from having bad quality of education in 2018 to sufficient and improving in 2019.

However, inclusion of vulnerable groups like migrants saw a decline in some countries.(DK). The question on Principle 3: equal opportunities, reveals a crucial concern on the inclusion of migrants in the labour markets. The situation has however, slightly improved in some countries. (UKR, LV and AT).

Active support to employment seems to have improved in some countries a slow improvement in some countries but when it comes to wages, we saw a general decline in the situation since last year. In 2018, Eurodiaconia members reported wages in most countries were sufficient to allow a decent living standard. (AT, FI, DK and HU). In 2019, they told us there had been a decline in the sufficiency of wages in some member states (FR, FI and AT). Overall it seems that minimum wages are still inadequate and can not prevent in-work poverty across the countries represented in this report.

Also, social protection schemes stayed the same, sufficient but declining. Which means in the near future workers in most EU countries would likely fall into poverty if nothing is done to improve social protection schemes in the EU or address the (in)adequacy of wages.

When looking at the adequacy of unemployment benefits, only one member organisation evaluates the situation as 'bad' in their country (UKR) as opposed to three member organisations in 2018. Two countries experienced an improvement in the activation support, (FI, FR).

As regards to childcare and support to children, early childhood education has stayed the same in some countries, meanwhile protection of children from poverty and social exclusion is deteriorating across some member states. This will have to be addressed in any future Child Guarantee.

Accessibility, affordability and quality of healthcare across the various countries represented by Eurodiaconia members reveal a decline.



In the area of long-term care, Eurodiaconia members still maintain that the level of provision is acceptable, however measures have to be taken in some countries to ensure that levels do not deteriorate.

Concerning housing and assistance for the homeless, some member organisations noted a slight improvement in their countries when looking at the quality of social housing for everyone in need (AT, DK). Meanwhile there was a decline in good quality housing assistance for everyone in need (UKR, FI, FR).

As regards to access to essential services, our member organisations gave a positive evaluation - everyone has access to water and sanitation. However, persons in need of to access essential services still do not receive support, as the scoreboard shows a decline. (UKR, AT, FI, CZ).



Why this publication

The 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights cover most aspects of social policies in one way or another. It should therefore be no surprise that Eurodiaconia member organisations, as social service providers and organisations who work with the most vulnerable members of our society, have a genuine interest and experience in relation to many those principles. This section provides a general overview of the situation in the 7 Member States who participated in our survey on 12 selected principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Those 12 principles were selected based on the experience of Eurodiaconia members as providers of social and health care services.

As a network, we strongly welcome that the definition of the single principles of the EPSR generally include qualitative criteria, such as quality, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of the different policies and services to which EU citizens should have a right to. For example, everyone has the right not only to education, but to “**quality** and **inclusive** education”, as well as to “**adequate** minimum income” and “**affordable** long-term care”. This goes an important step further than most existing frameworks and provides a basis for high social standards, if implemented correctly. For our members those qualitative criteria are essential, as the concern around quality, adequacy, accessibility and affordability are key to their everyday work as social service providers.

Eurodiaconia deeply regrets that the social scoreboard does not cover all principles of the EPSR equally.

Regretfully, the social scoreboard which has been created by the European Commission to monitor the implementation of the EPSR across the EU does not measure those criteria and therefore misses out on an important part of the EPSR. Furthermore, Eurodiaconia deeply regrets that the social scoreboard does not cover all principles of the EPSR equally and covers very little of the third chapter on social inclusion.

With this report Eurodiaconia hopes to contribute to closing those gaps by including most principles of the third chapter in the survey and by deliberately focusing the questions for its members on the qualitative criteria of social policies or services in their country.

As in 2018, members were asked to evaluate the current situation, but also the evolution they see, whether the situation is improving, staying the same or deteriorating. Members had the possibility to qualify a situation as very good (1), good (2), ok (3), bad (4) and to say whether the situation was improving ↗, not changing =, or deteriorating ↘.



EPSR Principles

Principle 1 Education, Training and Life Long Learning

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

Concerning education, our members were asked to give their impression on the following specific aspects of the principles: quality of children's education, quality of vocational training, inclusion of migrants in education and vocational training, inclusion of Roma in education and vocational training and support given to disadvantaged young people during their education and to enter the labour market.

The outcome of the survey regarding education is still very mixed. Most member organisations evaluated the quality of education and vocational training to be acceptable, but not changing (AT, FI, CZ, LV). However, some respondents indicated "OK but deteriorating" in the quality of education. (UKR, DK) Some members feel there is no divide between migrants and non-migrants and that both have access to quality education (CZ), while some say the inclusion of migrants and Roma in education is improving (FI, LV).

- It is evident that efforts are needed still in most countries represented in this survey to maintain good levels of education and improve further the inclusion of migrants and Roma in education and vocational training. Also, measures should be taken to improve levels of support to Roma and other disadvantaged people.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Quality of education	3 ↘	2 =	3 ↘	3 =	2 =	3 =	3 ↗
Quality of vocational training	4 =	3 ↗	2 ↘	2 ↘		3 ↗	4 ↗
Incl. of migrants in education	4 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↗	4 =	3 ↗	4 =
Incl. of migrants in vocational training	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↗	2 =	3 ↗	4 ↘
Incl. of Roma in education	4 =		3 =	4 ↗	2 ↘	3 ↗	4 =
Support to disadvantaged young people	4 =	2 ↘	3 =	4 ↗		4 ↗	4 =

Principle 3: Equal opportunities

Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public. Equal opportunities of under-represented groups shall be fostered.

In the field of equal opportunities, Eurodiaconia member organisations were asked to evaluate the situation of two specific groups - migrants and Roma - in the labour market, in accessing social services, in accessing social security and healthcare and in accessing adequate housing.

The results of the survey show very strikingly that equal opportunities are not a reality for migrants or for Roma across the Member States that have responded. Only our members in Denmark and Czech Republic give some slightly more positive evaluations concerning equal opportunities for migrants and a similar situation can be observed in Finland concerning equal opportunities of Roma.

As regards equal opportunities for migrants, it is alarming that some members observe deterioration in situations which are already evaluated as being bad. This is particularly the case in Austria and France

- Equal opportunities with regards to Roma and migrants is still of key concern in some Member States. There is a need for more measures to counter discrimination, foster inclusion and ensure everyone can fully participate in society. The EU will be stronger if everyone has the same opportunities regardless of racial or ethnic origin.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Migrants on the labour market	3 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↗	4 =
Migrants accessing social services	3 =	4 ↘	4 =	3 =	3 =	2 ↘	4 =
Migrants accessing social security and healthcare	3 =	4 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↗	4 ↘
Migrants accessing adequate housing	3 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	3 =	3 =	3 ↘	4 ↘
Roma on the labour market	4 =		3 =	4 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↗	4 =
Roma accessing social services	4 =		3 =			2 ↘	4 ↗
Roma accessing social security and healthcare	4 =		3 =	4 ↗	2 =	2 ↗	4 ↗
Roma accessing adequate housing	4 =		3 =	3 =	2 =	2 ↘	4 ↘

Principle 4: Active support to employment

Everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. Everyone has the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions.

Young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

People unemployed have the right to personalised, continuous and consistent support. The long-term unemployed have the right to an in-depth individual assessment at the latest at 18 months of unemployment.

Regarding active support to employment, member organisations were asked whether they consider that support is provided in a timely and personalised manner, whether long-term unemployed persons receive an in-depth individual assessment and if support includes possibilities of training or gaining new qualifications.

As regards active support to employment, two groups of countries emerge from the results: those evaluated as “ok” (DK, FI, LV) (Support is ‘ok’ and not changing) and those evaluated as “bad and not changing”. It should be noted, however, that within the more positive group, our members feel that the situation in Austria and Finland is deteriorating and therefore risk joining the other group in the future. At the other end, our members in France feel that the support to employment although ‘bad’ it is improving. *“the efforts focused on individual monitoring are starting to bear fruit, at the same time that unemployment is declining a little.”*

- ▶ Active support based on in-depth individual assessments should be strengthened and improved. The quicker long-term unemployed can be supported to gainful employment, the better for the general growth of the economy. Also, there is need to ensure that countries already have a strong tradition in this area should maintain and improve their levels of support.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Support is timely	4 =	2 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↗	3 =	4 ↗
Support is personalised	4 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 =	4 ↗
In-depth individual assessment	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 =	3 ↗	4 ↘	4 ↗
Training or requalification	4 =	3 ↗	4 ↗	3 =	3 ↗	3 =	4 ↗

Principle 6: Wages

Workers have the right to fair wages that provide for a decent standard of living.

Adequate minimum wages shall be ensured, in a way that provide for the satisfaction of the needs of the worker and his/her family in the light of national economic and social conditions, whilst safeguarding access to employment and incentives to seek work. In-work poverty shall be prevented.

All wages shall be set in a transparent and predictable way according to national practices and respecting the autonomy of the social partners.

Concerning wages, it was asked whether wages provide for a decent standard of living and if minimum wages are adequate and prevent in-work poverty.

Some respondents report that, in their country, wages do not allow a decent living standard (FR, LV, UKR, AT, DK, FI) and minimum wages are not preventing in-work poverty (FR, LV, UKR).

Denmark sticks out this year, experiencing a decline in wages partially due to social dumping through the importation of cheap labour from other countries undermining the Danish labour market agreement on wages and security. It should also be noted that in two countries our members consider that the adequacy and capacity of preventing poverty of minimum wages is decreasing (FI, FR), while only two members believe that it is improving (CZ, FI).

- There is a need for a mechanism to be put in place to discourage social dumping. Also, there should be increase in wages that will ensure decent living standard for all workers. Member states should adopt adequate minimum wages that are accessible for all that need them. This will enable people to live decent lives and support their full participation in the society.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Wages allow a decent living standard	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↗	4 ↘	3 ↘
Minimum wages are adequate and prevent in-work poverty	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↗	4 =	4 ↘	3 ↘

Principle 11: Childcare and support to children

Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.

Children have the right to protection from poverty. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities.

As regards childcare and the support to children, members were asked to evaluate the affordability and quality of early childhood education, as well as the support to

children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the protection of children from poverty.

Overall, Eurodiaconia member organisations agree that early childhood education in their countries is affordable and of good quality, except for our Austrian and Latvian members who both consider that affordability is an issue.

Nevertheless, the protection of children from poverty seems to be an issue of concern in most countries. Two members out of eight evaluate it as being bad while two members observe improvements (FR, LV). As regards the support to disadvantaged children, several members consider that the situation is not good (AT, FR, IT, LV). Most of them, however, consider that the situation is improving. Denmark, for instance, experienced a decline in the number of children living in poverty.

- Specific focus should be given to protecting children from poverty and social exclusion. This could be through ensuring every child has access to free early childhood education. This implies investment in childhood education and care should be of priority to the EU.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Early childhood education is affordable	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 ↗
Early childhood education is of good quality	3 ↗	2 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↗	3 =	3 ↗
Children from disadvantaged backgrounds receive support	4 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	4 =	3 ↗
Children are protected from poverty and social exclusion	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 =	4 ↗	4 =	3 ↘

Principle 12: Social Protection

Regardless of the type and duration of their employment relationship, workers and, under comparable conditions, the self-employed, have the right to adequate social protection.

Concerning social protection, member organisations were asked whether they consider that social protection sufficiently protects all types of workers effectively from poverty. There were two opposing positions. While half of members said that their country is sufficient but deteriorating, (AT, DK, FI, FR), the other half holds that social protection schemes in their country cannot sufficiently protect all workers with the most affected being citizens that fall into the ‘middle-poor’ category. (UKR, LV).

- ▶ All workers should be protected from poverty and, as such, social protection schemes should be adapted and improved to effectively support all workers. The existing social protection schemes should be strengthened to avoid a situation of deterioration.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Protection from poverty for all workers	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↗	4 =	3 ↘

Principle 13: Unemployment benefits

The unemployed have the right to adequate activation support from public employment services to (re)integrate in the labour market and adequate unemployment benefits of reasonable duration, in line with their contributions and national eligibility rules. Such benefits shall not constitute a disincentive for a quick return to employment.

Member organisations were asked whether they consider that the unemployed receive adequate unemployment benefits and activation support.

Broadly said, Eurodiaconia members indicate unemployment benefits are adequate. Four members out of eight evaluate the adequacy as acceptable (DK, FI, LV, FR) while two consider it as good. (AT, CZ) Furthermore, two members observe a deterioration in the adequacy of benefits (DK, FR). The situation is similar regarding adequate activation measures. One member observes a deterioration (DK), while two observe some improvement. (FI, FR)

- Unemployment benefits and activation support should be conceived in such a way that it supports people to return to work, while protecting them from poverty.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Unemployment benefits are adequate	4 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↗	2 =	3 =	3 ↘
Adequate activation support	4 =	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↗	2 =	4 =	3 ↗

Principle 14: Minimum Income

Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.

As regards minimum income, Eurodiaconia asked its members to evaluate whether minimum income benefits are adequate and can ensure a life in dignity.

A significant majority of members agree that minimum income benefits are not adequate and do not lead to a life in dignity. Of the five members evaluating the situation as “bad”, one (UKR) even note a deterioration in the situation while one witnessed some improvements (DK). Both members evaluating the current situation as acceptable also observe a deterioration (FR, FI).

► Further efforts need to be made to ensure that minimum income benefits are adequate and ensuring a life in dignity. There also needs to be attention that the adequacy of income benefits is not decreasing in certain countries.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Minimum income benefits are adequate and can ensure a life in dignity	4 ↘	4 =	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	3 ↘

Principle 16: Healthcare

Everyone has the right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality.

On healthcare, Eurodiaconia asked its members if they feel that good quality healthcare is accessible and affordable to everyone.

Most Eurodiaconia members are relatively satisfied with the healthcare provided in their countries, although only Austria Finland and France score “good” in some of the questions. It is, however, striking that several members consider that the situation is deteriorating in some or even all aspects (DK, FI, FR). Two members (LV, UKR) even considers that the provision of healthcare is currently generally bad, and also observes deterioration in the current provision.

► There is need for mechanisms to be put in place to ensure everyone has access to affordable and quality healthcare services. More effort is also required to improve the provision of healthcare services in certain countries.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Accessible good quality healthcare	4 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↘	2 ↘
Healthcare is affordable	4 ↘	2 ↘	3 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	2 ↘
Healthcare is of good quality	4 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	2 =

Principle 18: Long-term care

Everyone has the right to affordable long-term care services of good quality, in particular home-care and community-based services.

In the area of long-term care, Eurodiaconia member organisations have been asked for an evaluation of accessibility, affordability and quality of long-term care services. In addition, they have also been asked about the provision of quality homecare and quality community care services in their countries.

While most Eurodiaconia members feel that the provision of long-term care is acceptable, this is not the case across the board. The situation is evaluated as bad in all areas of the questionnaire concerning long-term care in Ukraine. On the other hand, the situation in the Czech Republic is evaluated as good, although deteriorating. France noted a decrease in funding which may affect the provision of long-term care over time. Our Finnish members have expressed concern regarding reduction in funding for service provision, thereby increasing pressure on them.

Furthermore, some areas seem to be of higher concern, such as affordability of services, as well as the provision of homecare and community care which score lower than the other aspects. It is also noticeable that generally many members feel that the provision of long-term care or aspects of it are deteriorating.

- Measures need to be put in place to improve the quality and affordability of long-term care services with a focus on home-based care. There is also need for more funding in some countries to ensure the consistent good quality provision of long-term care.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Everyone can access good quality long-term care services	4 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 ↘	2 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘
LTC services are affordable	4 ↘	3 ↗	3 =	3 ↘	2 =	3 ↘	2 ↘
LTC services are of good quality	4 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↗	4 =	2 ↘
Quality homecare for everyone	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↗
Quality community care for everyone	4 ↘	3 ↘		4 ↘	4 ↗	4 =	4 =

Principle 19: Housing and assistance for the homeless

Access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need. Vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction. Adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.

In the area of housing and assistance to the homeless, member organisations were asked to evaluate several services. They were asked whether there is good quality social housing and housing assistance for everyone in need. Furthermore, it was asked whether vulnerable people receive appropriate assistance and if they are protected against forced evictions. Finally, members were asked if homeless people have access to adequate shelter and if they receive support for social inclusion.

The housing situation is evaluated as being bad but improving by seven of the respondents to the survey. Only two countries are evaluated as “ok” in most

aspects but also deteriorating. Although members feel migrants suffer most with little or no access to official shelter. and in two of those countries Eurodiaconia members observe deteriorations of the situation. Our members in France describe access to social housing assistance for migrants as catastrophic. Moreover, the protection against force eviction, is still an area of concern to members, and only Finland scores “ok” as far as the general population is concerned, and all countries score “bad” when Roma are concerned.

► Housing is of enormous concern and palpable efforts need to be done to ensure vulnerable people can have access to quality social housing. Measures need to be put in place to also adequately assist people in need.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Good quality social housing for everyone in need	4 ↘	3 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↘
Good quality housing assistance for everyone in need	4 ↘	3 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↘
Vulnerable people receive adequate assistance	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↘
Vulnerable people are protected against forced eviction	4 ↘	4 =	4 =	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 =
Roma are protected against forced evictions	4 ↘		3 =	4 ↗	4 =	3 =	4 =
Homeless people have access to adequate shelter	4 ↘	3 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	4 =
Homeless people receive adequate support for social inclusion	4 ↘	4 ↘	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	4 =

Principle 20: Access to essential services

“Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available for those in need.”

Concerning access to essential services, Eurodiaconia member organisations were asked to evaluate if everyone in their country has access to water, sanitation and energy, if essential services are of good quality, accessible and affordable and if persons in need receive support to access essential services.

Respondents are comparably positive as regards the provision of essential services, although there are also some exceptions. Eurodiaconia's French member is particularly concerned about the provision of essential services, which it evaluates as bad. In addition to this, several other members evaluate their essential services as ok, but deteriorating at least in some areas (DK). The only exception is to be found in Austria, where our members evaluate the situation as good and not changing.

Eight respondents indicate everyone has access to energy, water, sanitation and essential services. The support to persons in need to access essential services should be of particular concern, as it received the worst evaluations with three members evaluating the situation as “bad” (FR).



- There is need for improvement, mechanisms need to be adapted to ensure access to essential services is not deteriorating. Furthermore, support to persons in need to access essential services should be further developed.

	UKR	AT	DK	FI	CZ	LV	FR
Everyone has access to water and sanitation	2 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	4 ↗
Everyone has access to energy	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =
Essential services are of good quality	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 ↘
Essential services are accessible	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 ↘
Essential services are affordable	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↘
Persons in need receive support to access essential services	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	4 =

depth individual assessment at the latest at 18 months of unemployment.

Long-term unemployment is still a key challenge to achieving inclusive labour markets across EU. In the third quarter of 2018, there were still 1 million more long-term unemployed (LTU) (people who have been unable to find a job for more than a year) in the European Union (EU) than at the pre-crisis trough in 2008 (Q3) 1. Despite signs of a gradual recovery from the 2008 economic crisis, there is a disparity in unemployment rates across the EU. Some groups of persons remain unduly exposed to unemployment and inactivity. Young people, persons with disabilities and migrants are usually faced with greater difficulties finding work. There is also a rise in involuntary part-time and reduced employment protection. Unemployment is exposing large numbers of EU citizens to increased risks of hardship, poverty and social exclusion, which are only more likely to become chronic as the length of unemployment increases. Unemployment not only has an impact on individuals but also on their families and ultimately local communities. Local communities with high unemployment levels may be prone to additional social challenges and a lack of social cohesion.

However, looking at the current unemployment trend in Europe, we clearly see an all time low of 6.6 % at the end of 2018. Yet despite the decline in unemployment, the survey among Eurodiaconia member organisations reveal it could be better with a more active support of LTU to employment.

The Eurodiaconia Network therefore strongly welcomes principle 4 of the European Pillar of Social Rights(EPSR) on active support to employment. Everyone should have the right to support for job search, training and requalification. We believe labour markets should be fully inclusive, promoting equal opportunities and support for all. Specific consistent individualised attention should be given to under represented persons to boost their employability. This would not only yield positive social outcomes but also subsequent economic growth.

Czech Republic

Eurodiaconia member organisation Slezska Diakonie reports an overall 'ok' and improving active support to employment. The unemployed receive personalised in-depth assessment , with possibilities of training or gaining

new qualifications. Due to the cooperation between job offices and NGO's providing support in access to labour market, Czech Republic has seen a remarkable low level of unemployment. There is also an individual development planning in support of people who are facing LTU. Also, the long-term unemployed support projects were realised with the use of ESF. Active employment policy offered possibilities for the unemployed to get into internships, trainings and jobs. Our members also noted measures to support mothers get back to employment.

Slezska Diakonie however, note that support to unemployed persons with disability is still bad and deteriorating.

Therefore, our members call for adequate legislative reforms in support of people with disabilities on the labour market, increase in support for sheltered job placements. The unemployed persons with disability are disadvantaged on two fronts and should therefore be given more support to employment.

Moreso, our members say specific actions should also be undertaken to boost the development of social enterprises, which are often the best framework to ease the integration of people for whom access to mainstream labour markets is restricted. The visibility, recognition and promotion of the social economy, with a particular emphasis on its access to funding, should be seen as a priority action to bring people back to work.

Diaconia ECCB on their part, reveal a restrictive government policy in the Czech Republic. Employment is strongly supported by projects co-financed by national and European funds, labor offices provide commuting allowance since 2016 so people can also apply for a one-time contribution of 50,000 crowns for moving to work. Emphasis on direct contact with employers, monitoring their needs. The current development is an impulse for introducing new approaches to support the employability of various target groups.

The Labour Office also informs employers about current offer of services, they obtain information about the expected development of employment in the regions, i. e about the planned recruitment or dismissal of employees.

The main plus of the monitoring activity is that all information gets directly to individual employer.

Our member notes however that employment policy costs are insufficient and resources are lacking. There is lack of a long-term unemployment strategy because of political representation changes and their focuses on strategic goals. Support of public employment service workers to work directly with a specific case of unemployed persons, effective Active policy of employment, in particular retraining, community service and socially useful jobs. The share of unemployed persons at the end of December 2018 reached the level of 3.8%. From the perspective of a further decline in unemployment, the labor market is starting to hit its natural limits. Companies in some regions find it difficult to find new employees. Companies lack skilled craftsmen, they demand workers' professions, but also professionals in information technology. Employers have an interest in new employees, mainly in technical and manual fields. In connection with this, the high number of jobs in industry, the number of unemployed men decreased. At the same time, the employers prefer the possibility to employ foreigners in a number of positions.

Activating to change - the first step to work (Slezska Diakonie Czech Republic)

Aim of the project: The aim of the project is to actively seek out and address people from the target group, to motivate them to engage in project activities during periods when they are out of work and through individual support to encourage project participants to take responsibility for their own lives. and inclusion in the regular labor market.

Ukraine

Eurodiaconia member, Living Hope in Ukraine evaluates active support to employment as being bad overall and not changing. Ukraine has an official unemployment number of 9%, but there is a huge number of persons in precarious employment, underpaid jobs with insufficient income to cater for their families. There is a good cases of people in inwork poverty who are also in need of social protection and assistance.

Also, The long-term unemployed are not given support nor individual assessment and non-existent possibilities of training or gaining new qualifications. They do not get adequate personalised support nor adequate monetary support. Our members however note that the new government has made it one of its priority areas in the coming year so they anticipate change.

France

Eurodiaconia's French member, Fédération de l'entraide protestante (FEP) regrets the bad situation of support to the long-term unemployed. Our members report that the notion of "you have to fend for yourself" is becoming more and more important compared to the minimum assistance which must be devoted to people who are unemployed. There is no mechanism in place to provide assistance to unemployed seniors, there is however insufficient support to young people but none for Roma and migrants.

FEP calls for measures to prevent young people from leaving the school system without training; focus on the mastery of the language and promote learning. Also, there should be adequate support to promote the employment of seniors, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.

Latvia

Eurodiaconia member the Diaconia Center of ELCL in Latvia, evaluates the active support to employment as being 'ok' and not changing. They explain support is provided at institutional level, but it is not personalised as such it often doesn't meet the different needs of individuals.

Therefore, our members strongly call on their government to provide the unemployed with in-depth individual assessment and tailor support according to their needs.

Finland

Eurodiaconia member Caritas Foundation (Caritaslaiset) reports an overall bad active and timely support to employment in Finland. However, the long-term unemployed do receive some in-depth individual assessment and some possibilities of training and gaining new skills and qualifications.

As such, Caritaslaiset calls on the government to adopt measures that will provide better support for the Long-term unemployed.

Denmark

Eurodiaconia member Kirkens Korshær, says active support to employment for the LTU in Denmark is bad and not improving. The LTU do not receive neither an in-depth individual assessment nor support that includes possibilities of training or gaining new qualifications. They observe that too many unemployed are mentally or psysically ill and unable to work on normal conditions. Therefore our members call for the two different systems - employment and health system to cooperate more to help the unemployed with mental or physical disability.

Austria

Diakonie Austria stated that personalised timely active support to empoyment is okay but deteriorating. Two years ago our members say an effective programme was abandoned together with wage subsidies ("Aktion 20.000) which led to more unemployed persons.

As such, our member strongly asserts that raising awareness for strengths of older co-workers and diverse teams would be a great assert to the LTU. They also call for more financial support to organisations engaged in actively supporting the umemployed to secure gainful employment. And also a guarantee on basic wage income scheme.

b. Principle 16: Health Care

Everyone has the right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality.

The European Pillar of Social Rights principle on health care expressed on of the core areas of Eurodiaconia's work, we believe everyone in Europe should have access to affordable and quality health care. Two years after the adoption the Pillar, health inequalities is still a challenge in the EU. Health inequality is closely related to social injustice and discrimination faced by certain groups of persons; people without homes, ethnic

minorities, undocumented migrants, Roma, the unemployed and persons with disabilities. Roma communities are disadvantaged on several fronts, poor housing conditions deeply impact health conditions. In some of their settlements, the health environment is disastrous and without any access to basic sanitation, they easily find themselves in poor health conditions. Levels of wealth in Europe have increased in the last decade but its distribution has proven to be unequal - 22,4% of the population of the European Union live in risk of poverty, reducing their capacity to afford medical care and maintain good health. According to EU estimates, 24.9 % of Europe's children are at risk of economic deprivation, unequally affecting single parent households (health inequalities a public health challenge for European policy makers)

Ukraine

Eurodiaconia member organisation Living Hope reports an overall low access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality. Basis health is reportedly bad and deteriorating due to some changes in legislation. Initially by law everyone in Ukraine was guaranteed free medical treatment, now every Ukrainian has to have a family doctor. This creates disparities between those who can afford and those who cannot afford a doctor.

Our member therefore calls for a more people- centred health policy that will enable more vulnerable persons gain access to quality, preventive and affordable health care.

Austria

According to Diaconie Austria, 'everyone' has good access to quality and affordable healthcare in Austria. However, this only applies to persons with an insurance cover.

Denmark

Eurodiaconia member Kirkens Korshær say the provision of health care in Denmark is good. Most people have access to quality and affordable health care. They noted however that the quality and accessibility in their country

is deteriorating. As such, they recommend a closer cooperation between regional and the local health systems.

Finland

Our Finnish member Caritas Foundation state that the accessibility, affordability and quality of health care in Finland is good. But demographic changes plague the quality and provision of services. The population is ageing and the sector is faced with increased shortages of nurses especially in the long-term care and home care. As such, our members say it is increasingly challenging to take care of the elderly.

Caritas Foundation therefore calls for an increase incentives for care workers and more efficient policies to facilitate home care services.

Czech Republic

Eurodiaconia's member Slezská diakonie, evaluates the provision of health care in Czech Republic as good but deteriorating. People have sufficient access to quality and affordable health care. But the sector is facing challenges with shortages of health care staff - both doctors and nurses, especially in some particular parts of health care (psychiatric care, care for elderly people and child care). Diaconia ECCB, another Eurodiaconia member in Czech Republic report that Health care is provided free of charge in the Czech Republic. All persons with permanent residence (and persons without permanent residence while having an employer based in the Czech Republic) are compulsorily insured for health insurance. Health insurance is paid by both the employee and his employer. The employee has a gross wage as the basis for assessment for the payment of health insurance. The proportion of insured persons for whom health insurance is paid by the state is more than half. The state pays health insurance from the state budget to the following groups: People in disability pension, retired people, dependent children, persons on parental leave, persons registered by the Labor Office etc. Health care is currently provided in state, regional, municipal or private facilities. However there are currently localities in the Czech Republic where access to care is insufficient (insufficient in capacity).

However, the sector also suffers from staff shortages to care for the ageing population.

Our members therefore call for more funding to be channelled towards the training of more health care workers.

Latvia

Diaconia Center of ELCL, a member of Eurodiaconia states that accessibility to quality health care in Latvia is bad and deteriorating. The quality may be good and not changing, but not everyone can afford. Diaconia Center therefore calls for increase Government subsidisation of basic health care. No one should be left behind in the health sector.

France

Fédération de l'entraide protestante (FEP) Eurodiaconia's French member organisation reports the provision of health care in France to be quite good. They however call for a restriction on the 'liberal' provision of medicine in France.

c. Principle 17: Inclusion of people with disabilities

People with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society, and a work environment adapted to their needs.

Ukraine

Living Hope NGO Eurodiaconia's member in Ukraine says inclusion of persons with disabilities is slow but improving. The new government is still elaborating regulations in this field. Since 2018, Ukraine has witness an increase in the number of schools providing inclusive education. The legislation around inclusion of persons with disabilities is still weak in the implementation. With about 2,6 million people with disabilities living in Ukraine, our members call on the Government to adopt measures that push for a more inclusive labour market.

Austria

Diaconie Austria says inclusion of persons with disabilities in Austria still has a long way to go. Schools and the labour market are still not inclusive

Denmark

Eurodiaconia's member Kirkens Korshær say although the Danish labour market is doing well, only one in three persons living with disabilities are employed. Prejudices still exist on the contributions people with disabilities can. As such, in the fall of 2018, the betting pool parties agreed to allocate DKK 128.4 million to help people with disabilities in employment. One of the initiatives is a recurring job week for companies and people with disabilities, where good experiences with hiring people with disabilities are highlighted.

There is still need for continuous sensitisation of employers and other stakeholders on inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market.

Finland

Caritas Foundation, Eurodiaconia say there is a willingness for more inclusion in the labour market, but the implementation is still difficult. In 2018 the Finnish Government issued a reform to improve equal social services to people with disabilities, self-determination and participation. Its implementation is still in process.

Caritas Foundation therefore calls for measures to be taken to make sure disabled people in work should have the proper salaries they deserve.

Czech Republic

Slezská diakonie, Eurodiaconia member in Czech Republic report a good inclusion of Persons with disabilities (PWD). Czech Republic has a lot of initiatives towards employment of PWD. There have also been some improvement in the education sector, PWD within mainstream schools and special schools for people with serious disabilities. There has equally been good efforts in transformation of psychiatric care towards the community based system of support for people with mental health issues.

Our member however call for more support of social enterprises as an incentive for employment of PWD on the open labour market.

Also there should more support for people with autism, their families and informal carers.

Diaconia ECCB, another member of Eurodiaconia, also report a relatively good inclusion of PWD in Czech Republic. For instance, people with disabilities are provided with increased protection in the labor market. As part of the creation of PWD jobs, labour office supports people with disabilities in mostly positions for production, auxiliary workers, craftsmen, workers in personal and cleaning services, administration, trade, sales and security, call center operators.

Furthermore in Czech Republic, the employment of disabled persons is regulated by law. Employers with more than 25 employees are obliged to employ persons with disabilities of 4% of their total number of employees. Czech legislation has started to motivate employers more to regulate working conditions for people with disabilities, to allow part-time or flexible jobs by tools of Economic aspect (tax relief), better company image for employees, penalties for non-compliance with PWD quotas.

Our members however call for measures to offer training to human resources officers and recruiters on employing people with disabilities.

Also, financial incentives should given employers to motivate them to recruit people with disabilities Companies need to invest huge amounts of money in new employees, and especially in the case of people with disabilities, in order to educate them, retrain them.

Latvia

According to Eurodiaconia's member Diaconia Center of ELCL inclusion of persons with disabilities in Latvia is improving. However there is still lot of people with disabilities with no adequate support and accessibility to different a range of services.

France

Fédération de l'entraide protestante, Eurodiaconia's member organisation in France, says inclusion of PWD is bad overall. Employment of persons with disabilities is low, workspaces is still not very accessible to disable people.

As such Fédération de l'entraide protestante, calls for more inclusive measures to be adopted and implemented by the French Government.

Conclusions

Through this follow up report, Eurodiaconia aimed at gathering information on the the state of play of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Two years after the proclamation of the EPSR, Our results demonstrate that there is still a great need for improvement of social policies and the provision of social services across the EU. Although some areas have experienced an improvement, other members still report deterioration such as social protection schemes.

Furthermore, workers across the EU should find that wages mean they are sufficiently protected from risk of poverty, but our members tell us they are not and overall the responses from our members in 2018 and 2019 show that efforts on all levels are needed to stop this evolution of low paid work. More employed persons are still faced with the risk of poverty.

Our members emphasise that adequate minimum wages will tackle in-work poverty and also ensure a descent living for everyone.

Equal opportunities is still a relatively slow process when it comes to the inclusion of migrants and Roma in the labour markets.

As such, Eurodiaconia calls on the European Commission to adopt measures that will encourage and stimulate employers to recruit and retain migrants and Roma.

Also, the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market is another area of concern to our member organisations. Our members therefore call for more support of social enterprises as an incentive for employment of persons with disabilities.

Another area that has witness a decay according to our members is adequate housing. Our French member report a 'catastrophic' situation partially due to the inflow of migrants who end up on the streets sometimes with no accommodation.

Our members working on long-term care also expressed concerns that affect the provision of social services. Most members felt that the lack of funding for service provision was adding increasing pressure on them. Furthermore, the demand for a 20% co-financing rate on Commission funding opportunities is seen to be too high for some smaller organisations to be able to participate. Many felt that the difficulty of completing applications due to the complexity and the time required was also a deterrent.

The Eurodiaconia Network hopes that this report would make a contribution to the monitoring of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and that it will encourage the European Commission and Member States to increase their efforts to make sure social services serve its purpose.

CONCLUSIONS AT A GLANCE (1)

More work is needed to move the European Pillar of Social Rights from aspiration to actions. The forthcoming Action Plan is an opportunity to guide Member States towards real change in social policies.

Effective monitoring of the social situation in line with the principles of the EPSR is still not complete. The Social Scoreboard should be extended to cover all principles in the EPSR. From this, more effective reforms and actions can be taken and measured.

Homelessness and access to housing remains a concern with some members describing the situation as catastrophic. Although unacceptable across all in society there is a particular concern for migrants who struggle to access affordable housing.

In work poverty is becoming more evident with our members seeing more low paid work driving people into poverty. Work on minimum wages needs to protect people from poverty and allow them to thrive, not just survive.

CONCLUSIONS AT A GLANCE (2)

Not everyone has equal opportunity on the labour market. Roma people still face substantial exclusion and measures are needed to encourage employers to recruit and retain Roma employees. Migrants and people with disabilities also face barriers to their labour market participation which must be removed.

Adequate social protection needs to accompany adequate minimum wages if we are to fully address poverty and social exclusion and meet the ambition of the EPSR. Our members report some deterioration in social protection schemes and fear that this will increase.

Social Services are available but not always affordable and accessible to all. Ensuring quality is a top priority for our members but they need adequate funding to do so.

Healthcare services are generally available but some groups such as migrants find that their access is limited. As with social services, concerns were raised about sustainability of funding and the resulting impact on quality.

It is not clear if the EPSR is really making a difference in Member States. However the development of the Action Plan has the potential to give more tools and impetus to Member States to make significant positive changes.



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