



SPWI 2015

TOOLKIT FOR NATIONAL EU STRATEGY GROUPS

1. Definition - What is the SPWI?

The **Social Progress Watch Initiative** is a tool to monitor progress made towards a more cohesive and social Europe.

The monitoring tool is based on six benchmarks corresponding to the fronts along which we think progress should be made in order to achieve social cohesion as well as fight poverty and social exclusion:

- Fighting unemployment (and in particular youth unemployment) through the promotion of inclusive and quality employment as well as fair mobility.
- Improving access to healthcare and social services for all as well as quality employment in the healthcare and social sector.
- Promoting access to and participation in lifelong learning, with a particular focus on non-formal and informal learning.
- Promoting, reinforcing and supporting the social economy model
- Strengthening active citizenship and volunteering for social cohesion
- Fighting discrimination and social exclusion

2. Background - Why the SPWI?

SOLIDAR's main objective in the field of Social Affairs is to improve progress towards a more social Europe. Against the background of our European social fabric which has been seriously damaged by the economic crisis and by the effects of one-sided austerity policies, SOLIDAR advocates for a policy change that puts social consolidation back at the heart of EU policies.

To strengthen our cause we work together with civil society to turn the **Europe 2020 strategy** into a more coherent and better integrated framework for social policies, taking a comprehensive approach to prevention and adjustment in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. In the framework of the **European Semester** – set up by the European Commission to foster economic growth and prevent excessive macro-economic imbalances – we call for due attention to be given to employment and social developments (the so called “social dimension”) in order to make concrete steps towards achieving social cohesion, preventing increasing disparities and long-term exclusion as well as promoting a new growth pattern based on social, sustainable and inclusive investment.

In order to...

- increase shared knowledge about social realities;
- improve our network's capacity to monitor and assess progress made at national level in implementing EU policies addressing the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives as well as implementing the Social Investment Package;
- evaluate the adequacy and social impact of the country specific recommendations in the framework of the European Semester;

...we set up the **Social Progress Watch Initiative**, a tool to monitor and evaluate progress made towards a more social and cohesive Europe.

3. Process step by step - How does it work?

The Social Progress Watch Initiative 2015 is carried out in at least 16 European countries by SOLIDAR and ad hoc **national EU strategy groups** composed of professional staff working in the social service and social entrepreneurship sectors, end-users and volunteers, experts in social services and the social economy, and social partners, including representatives of the trade union movement. The national EU Strategy groups have been set up with the support of SOLIDAR members and partners.

SPWI step by step:



1. SPWI National Monitoring Tables

When?

By the end of December 2014.

What?

The SOLIDAR Secretariat prepares and sends the SPWI national monitoring tables to the national EU strategy groups. These tables include data and statements extracted from the most recent EU institutions key documents on the topics covered by the six benchmarks. Examples of documents consulted are: *the European Semester EU Staff Working Document, the EU Annual Growth Survey, the EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Report, the annual EU Draft Joint Employment Report, the annual EU Education and Training Monitor report.*

The national EU strategy groups are asked to provide feedback and comments on the developments within their country.

Outcome expected

National monitoring tables

Please find below an examples taken from the 2014 monitoring table for Portugal.

Benchmark	European Commission Reports 2013	Feedback (comments, analysis, feedback)
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<p>1. Reduce unemployment (and in particular youth unemployment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According the EU Staff Working Document 2013, the unemployment rate reached 17.5% of the labour force in the first quarter of 2013 and continues to increase (1). • Youth unemployment remains of a particular concern as its rate increased to 38.2% in the first quarter of 2013 (1). The percentage of young people aged 15-24 neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) has also been increasing and reached 14.1% in the last quarter of 2012. • Significant steps have been taken over the past couple of years to make the labour market more dynamic and efficient—including the reform of the Employment Protection Legislation, the reform of unemployment benefits and the reform of the wage-setting mechanism. A new reform of severance pay also entered into force more recently (October 1 Structural Benchmark). • In light of the recent Constitutional Court ruling against legislative provisions that made it easier for firms to lay off employees in case of redundancy or unsuitability, the government's immediate priority will be to find alternative reform options that respect the ruling (2).
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2. First meeting of the national EU strategy groups

When?

By March 2015.

What?

In order to prepare their inputs into the SPWI national monitoring table, the national EU strategy groups hold a first meeting which focuses on:

- Identifying data gaps and national data which are not included in the existing statistics to supplement and react to the information provided in the monitoring tables
- Providing a critical interpretation of existing data (i.e. civil society based explanation of social phenomena, data gaps, and identification of elements not taken into account in official statistics)
- Monitoring the efficacy, sustainability and adequacy of Member States' performances in undertaking initiatives to implement EU policies. Please note that the discussion will be built around the benchmarks and sub-indicators specified in the last chapter of this document.

Outcome expected

As an outcome of this meeting, the national EU strategy groups send back to SOLIDAR the SPWI monitoring tables filled in.

Please find below two examples of feedback provided by the national EU strategy groups in 2014.

Benchmark	European Commission Reports 2013	Feedback (comments, analysis, feedback)
<p>5. Fight discrimination and social exclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employment rate of non-EU immigrants (44.2%) remains far below the EU average (53.7%), and even further below the Swedish national average. This shows that a large part of the population with a migrant background, and especially women, are excluded from the labour market. • The at risk- of-poverty rate among older women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To live on social benefits and being an immigrant is a life that draws you closer to poverty. If you in addition to this are older and a woman you are even more in danger of poverty. • Older women do face lower pensions due to the fact that they on an average compared to men earn less in a life span and have lower negotiated supplementary pension and that the state pension is connected to costs- and living indexes - the final fact is that the state pensions have also been cut down as it has been for many tax related

	<p>(aged 65+) measured as the share of the group with an income below 60% of the national median income, is above the EU average and increased by more than 10 percentage points between 2005 and 2011, from 13.1% to 24.7%. This contrasts with the corresponding rate for older men (9.8%) and the EU average (13.7%). Although indicators of absolute poverty do not show any deterioration or a gender gap, the at-risk-of-poverty indicator suggests that older women are getting poorer.</p>	<p>benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is quite clear that Sweden is facing severe problems regarding youth unemployment. Some of the explanations are already described above. There have been studies made on Somali immigrants comparing their employment situation in different countries e.g. in Canada and UK. The biggest difference is that in Canada and the UK the Somali have been able to develop small businesses with their local market in focus. So one can say that they are primarily covering local demands.
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Benchmark	European Commission Reports 2013	Feedback (comments, analysis, feedback)
<p>2. Improve access to and quality of healthcare and social services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the latest long-term projections, public healthcare spending in Spain will increase by 1.3 percentage points of GDP by 2060. Crisis-related expenditure cuts have helped contain the growth in spending. Public healthcare expenditure decreased from 7.1% of GDP in 2010 to 6.7% in 2011. In 2010 and 2011 savings originated from cuts in the wage bill and pharmaceutical expenditure. In 2012, measures specifying the common basket of healthcare benefits and an extension of co-payments on pharmaceutical products were adopted. The National Competition Authority refers to numerous competition problems at regional level (especially restrictive regulation) and local level (protection of incumbents in the area of public services). 	<p>We refer to the measures adopted in the year 2012 by the Spanish Government through the Law 16/2012 on urgent measures to ensure the sustainability of the National Health System and improve the quality and safety of its performance, and the Royal Decree 1192/2012 on regulates the status of insured and beneficiary for purposes of health care in Spain, financed by public funds, through the National Health System.</p> <p>These reforms violate the right to health contained in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and eliminate the concept of Universal access to public health in the Spanish Constitution. These measures increase the vulnerability of different collectives, especially illegal immigrants. In this case, just right to free emergency health care, except in the case of pregnant women and minors who is recognize the Right.</p> <p>This situation is not only questionable in terms of cost savings for various reasons (emergency care is more expensive than outpatient care, disease processes are extended or turn them into chronic by a late diagnosis, prolonged income...), but we believe that it is a discriminatory situation, eliminates basic rights to the most vulnerable groups, endangers health and damages public health among other consequences.</p>

3. Development of SPWI desk studies

When?

By September 2015

What?

On the basis of the feedback received from the national EU strategy groups on the monitoring tables, the SOLIDAR Secretariat produces national desk studies

Outcome expected

Desk studies

4. Second meeting of the national EU strategy groups

When?

By November 2015.

What?

Using as a basis the desk studies produced by SOLIDAR Secretariat, the second meeting focuses on:

- Evaluating the results of the monitoring exercise by identifying specific challenges, including in comparison with the situation in the other countries;

- Providing national recommendations on social policy innovations/reforms needed to achieve a more social Europe in the policy areas covered by each benchmark. The recommendations should be based on critical interpretation of existing data and refer to the recommendations provided by the EU institutions (e.g. in the European Semester Country Specific Recommendations)
- Contributing to the overall SOLIDAR policy orientation covering structural reforms in the economic and employment sector taking into account the national situation as well as the situation in the other countries participating in the SOLIDAR Social Progress Watch Initiative.

Outcome expected

As an outcome of this meeting, the national EU strategy groups develop specific recommendations.

5. SPWI 2015 wrap -up

When?

By the end of 2015

What?

The national recommendations developed by the national EU strategy groups are put together by the SOLIDAR Secretariat and translated into unique political messages (“unique selling propositions”) to define a SOLIDAR narrative on how to achieve a social Europe

Outcome expected

Presenting result in a public event in Brussels.

4. Benchmarks & sub-indicators

As a follow-up to the brainstorming meeting held in Amsterdam on 4 June, the SPWI national monitoring tables 2015 will focus on the sub-indicators presented below.

Benchmark 1 - Fighting unemployment

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of an inclusive labour market providing quality employment and equal opportunities for all

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Long-term unemployment
- Youth unemployment (e.g. feedback on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee) and quality of the employment opportunities for youth (e.g. part-time jobs, temporary contracts)
- In-work poverty
- Equal opportunities and quality employment for people with a migrant background
- Gender (pay) gap
- Job opportunities for early school leavers
- Job opportunities for people with health problems
- Data on part-time employment and low wages (quality vs. quantity analysis)
- Transition from education to work

Benchmark 2 - Improving access to healthcare and quality of social services

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of a society in which every individual has access to high quality social services improving his/her participation and chances in life.

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Affordability of social services (e.g; household expenditure for health care and its distribution)
- Geographical accessibility (investment in supply structures in rural regions)
- Access to social and healthcare services for people with a migrant background

Benchmark 3 - Promoting access to and participation in lifelong learning

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of learning societies and learning workplaces, promoting the validation of skills, competences and knowledge acquired through non-formal and informal learning within society and at the workplace.

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Early school leaving
- Access to and participation in lifelong learning
- Investment in education
- Adult education
- Validation of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning

Benchmark 4 - Fighting discrimination and social exclusion

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of a more cohesive society in which every individual can fully participate realising her/his own potential and contributing to the well-being of their communities.

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Income poverty
- Material poverty
- Redistribution of wealth
- Discrimination in access to justice
- Feedback on access to social, economic and cultural rights for minorities
- Feedback on Member States' use of social funds to fight poverty and social exclusion and on the engagement of CSOs in the partnership principle

Benchmark 5 - Promoting active citizenship and volunteering for social cohesion

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of a society founded on a rights-based approach aimed at removing obstacles to vulnerable, excluded and marginalised people accessing their rights as well as enjoying equal opportunities and equal treatment.

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Feedback on the existence and the quality of civic education programmes in the formal education curricula
- Feedback on the existence of initiatives promoting volunteering and civic engagement at Member State level
- Business(case) for sustainable investment in volunteering;
- Measurement of the impact of volunteering-practices; civic education in the formal education system

Benchmark 6 – Promoting a social economy

Objective (expected scenario): Creation of the necessary environment to support social economy actors in delivering quality services and creating inclusive job opportunities

Identified gaps (corresponding to our sub-indicators)

- Feedback on the transposition of the EU directive on public procurement
- Feedback on differences in legal status or organisational structure compared to private businesses (e.g.: voluntary work, member based, value based)
- Percentage of private for-profit actors in the social service sector
- Quality criteria on procured services?

Together for



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Should you have further questions/remarks please do not hesitate to contact **Elsa Laino** at SOLIDAR Secretariat.
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