



Social Policy in the EU – Reform Barometer 2016

Social Inclusion Monitor Europe

Reform Barometer

assesses the reform dynamics of social policy in the EU member states based on inputs from over 1,000 experts from across Europe

Social Justice Index

assesses the state of social justice in the EU member states based on statistical indicators complemented by expert assessments



<p>N Need for Reforms</p> <p><i>Was there a need to improve the situation concerning the issue?</i></p> <p>0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> no need at all very strong need</p> <p>measure of the need for governmental action</p>	<p>A Reform Activity</p> <p><i>Were any policy reforms introduced that addressed the issue?</i></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>measure of the extent to which governments have addressed the need for reforms</p>	<p>Q Reform Quality</p> <p><i>Do you expect these policy reforms to have a positive or negative effect?</i></p> <p>-2 <input type="checkbox"/> -1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> +1 <input type="checkbox"/> +2 <input type="checkbox"/> strongly negative strongly positive</p> <p>measure of the quality of governmental action</p>
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EXPERT INPUTS

- by policy objective and by country (July 2014 – January 2016)
- quantitative scores
 - qualitative descriptions and comments

AGGREGATION OF SCORES

for each EU member state

N A Q

P

P1	E1	L1	S1	H1
	E2	L2	S2	H2
	E3	L3	S3	H3
	E4		S4	H4
	E5			H5
	E6			H6
				H7
				H8

first level of aggregation – for each policy objective [primary and composite]

N [0-3] Need for Reforms A [0-100%] Reform Activity Q [-2 - +2] Reform Quality

P [=A×Q] Reform Performance [-2 - +2]

Overall Social Policy

for all EU member states combined

N A Q

P

second level of aggregation – for each dimension

P E L S H

N A Q

Need for Reforms Reform Activity Reform Quality

P [=A×Q] Reform Performance

Overall Social Policy

third level of aggregation – for all dimensions combined

N A Q

Need for Reforms Reform Activity Reform Quality

P [=A×Q] Reform Performance

Reform Barometer 2016 dimensions and policy objectives

Poverty Prevention	Equitable Education	Labour Market Access	Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination	Health
P1 Reduce Risk of Poverty ~ Total Population ~ Seniors (>65) ~ Children (0-17) ~ Single Parents ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	E1 Equal Opportunities ~ Early Childhood Ed. ~ Pre-primary Education ~ Primary Education ~ Secondary Education ~ Tertiary Education ~ Lifelong Learning	L1 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment ~ Total Population ~ Seniors (55-64) ~ Youth (15-24) ~ Women ~ Long-term Unemployed ~ Low-skilled ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	S1 Reduce Income and/or Wealth Inequality	H1 Improve Public Health
	E2 Structural Conditions (Finance / Human Resources) ~ sectors as above	L2 Reduce Precarious Work: Involuntary Temporary Contracts	S2 Gender Equality	H2 Quality of Health Care
	E3 Teaching Quality ~ sectors as above	L3 Reduce Precarious Work: In-work Poverty / Low-wage Earners	S3 Integration Policy ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	H3 Health System Efficiency
	E4 Independence of Learning Success from Socioeconomic Background		S4 Reduce Number of NEETs	H4 Sustainable and Fair Financing
	E5 Reduce Rate of Early School Leavers			H5 Health Care Governance
	E6 Integration of Refugees			H6 Outcome Performance
				H7 Accessibility and Range of Services
				H8 Reduce Unmet Medical Needs

Note: The Intergenerational Justice dimension, composed of the policy objectives **I1** Family Policy, **I2** Pension Policy, **I3** R&D Policy, **I4** Environmental Policy and **I5** Government Debt Reduction, was part of the survey, but left out of the analysis due to a very limited number of responses.

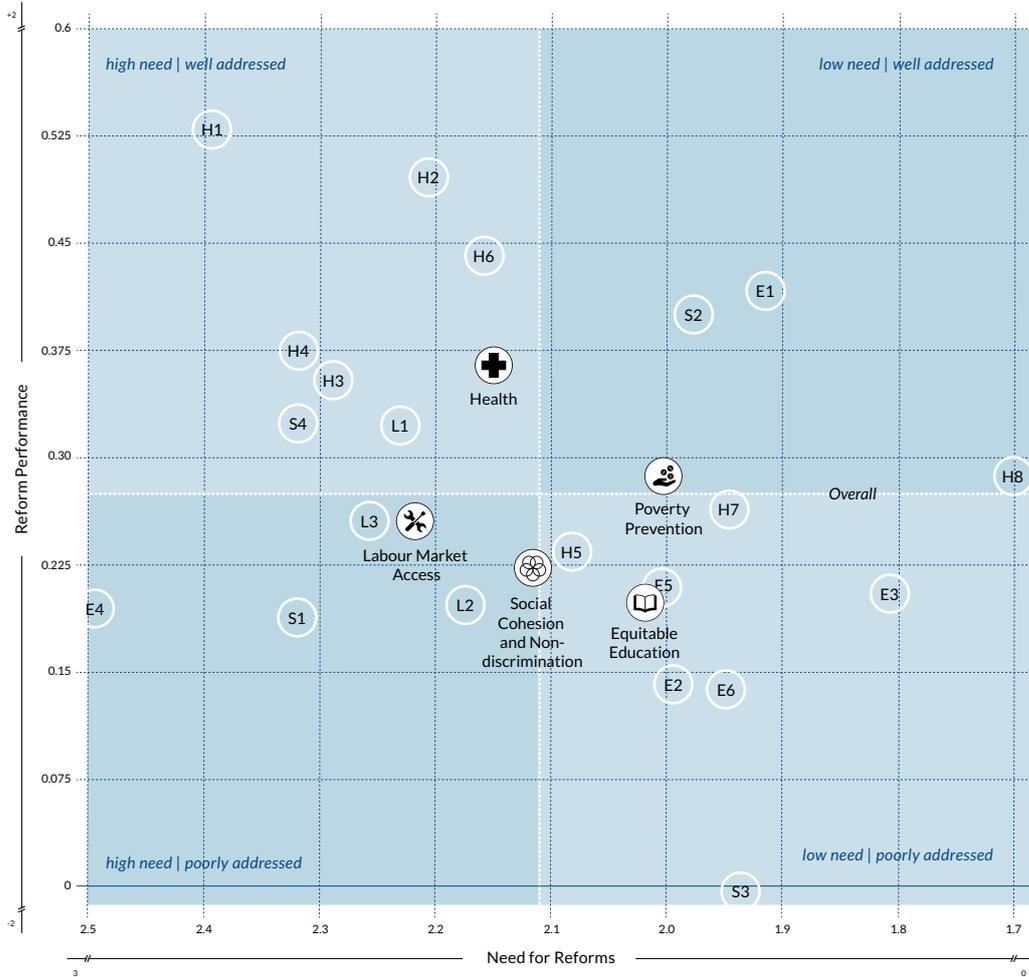
Reading Example:

The Labour Market Access dimension is composed of three policy objectives (with identifiers L1, L2 and L3). The policy objective "L1: ..." in turn is composed of eight 'primary policy objectives' that specify different population groups.

Country abbreviations

AT Austria	EE Estonia	IT Italy	PT Portugal
BE Belgium	FI Finland	LV Latvia	RO Romania
BG Bulgaria	FR France	LT Lithuania	SK Slovakia
HR Croatia	DE Germany	LU Luxembourg	SI Slovenia
CY Cyprus	GR Greece	MT Malta	ES Spain
CZ Czech Republic	HU Hungary	NL Netherlands	SE Sweden
DK Denmark	IE Ireland	PL Poland	UK United Kingdom

Need for reforms versus reform performance for dimensions and policy objectives (EU averages)



Social Policy in the EU – Reform Barometer 2016

Social Inclusion Monitor Europe

Bertelsmann Stiftung, European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna,
Economic Policy Center (WPZ) at the University of St. Gallen

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Executive Summary

The Social Inclusion Monitor Europe (SIM Europe) project invited social policy experts from across Europe to participate in the Reform Barometer 2016 survey and assess the reform need, activity and quality with respect to 55 policy objectives in the 28 member states of the European Union between July 2014 and January 2016. This report presents the analysis of the replies from over 1,000 survey participants in five dimensions: Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, and Health.¹ For each member state, the experts' quantitative assessments have been aggregated to different levels of analysis, yielding a reform need score, an activity rate and a quality score at the levels of policy objectives and of dimensions as well as at the overall level. In addition, the reform performance score is a composite measure that captures each member state's reform activity and quality using a single number. In what follows, we present a summary of the key findings.

1 Governments of EU member states are struggling to meet the most pressing future challenges

– *Educational reforms have been largely neglected*

A good education is a vital prerequisite for individual success, specifically in today's knowledge-based society. Likewise, a well-functioning education system providing high-quality education to all independent of their socioeconomic status is a sine qua non for a country to have a prosperous future. Moreover, for the EU's ageing societies, lifelong learning is gaining in importance.

The Reform Barometer expert survey, however, underlines that governments of the EU member states have hardly made any efforts towards educational reforms, and that only one-third of the reform need has been addressed across the EU on average. Reform activity is reported to be at its lowest in Greece, Lithuania and Spain. The level of reform activity addressing lifelong learning in the survey period was particularly low: For 10 countries, participants unanimously reported that governments had not taken any relevant action aimed at improving the financial or human resources committed to it, and for nine countries, that governments had given no thought at all to improving teaching quality.

The survey participants reported a very strong need for governmental action to weaken the link between students' learning success and their socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, participants reported that no relevant activity at all had taken place in six countries (Croatia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain). This is particularly alarming because a lack of upward achievement in learning reinforces the inheritance of socioeconomic status, and almost certainly leads to a growing social divide.

The situation is at its worse in the United Kingdom, where reform activity in the education sector was reported to be above average but with detrimental effects. As an example, survey participants sharply criticised the

¹ Intergenerational Justice, the sixth dimension included in the survey, was not considered in the analysis owing to limited survey responses.

hugely negative impact of recently introduced university tuition fees on fostering social mobility through education.

The best reform performance in the education sector was ascribed to Malta, followed by Romania. Malta's government was assessed to be the most active in the EU. For instance, it introduced an 'Alternative Learning Programme' to reduce the number of early school leavers as well as free child care centres, improved the training of preschool teachers, and supported the provision of evening and online courses to allow people to study flexibly. Malta also ranks first regarding reform performance in addressing lifelong learning as well as promoting social mobility. Reforms in Romania, on the other hand, were expected to have the most positive effects for ensuring equitable education, especially regarding the guaranteeing of equal opportunities.

– *Governments have failed to address the integration of foreigners properly*

When it comes to integration policies for foreigners, participants in the Reform Barometer expert survey assigned poor marks to national governments. In most surveyed countries, reform activity was either rated as very low or expected to have negative effects. Examples of the latter are Denmark, Spain and Austria. Italy was the only country given a positive score for its initiatives to improve integration of the foreign-born population.

The survey results show that this picture is not the result of the refugee crisis alone. In fact, comparing integration policies for refugees and for the foreign-born population in general, the failure rate in implementing reforms was assessed to be higher and the reform quality to be lower for the latter group. Migration experts generally assume that a government's willingness and capacity to integrate foreign-born people as a whole is a prerequisite for the successful integration of refugees. If this assumption is true, these results are particularly troubling.

Although the influx of millions of refugees into the EU entails a newly emerging need for huge integration efforts, integrating foreigners has already been a challenge for governments ever since the EU was formed. The sudden refugee crisis thus hit the EU at its weakest point concerning social inclusion, as it was already struggling with the integration of foreigners living in its individual member states.

Regarding the country-specific need to integrate refugees and the foreign-born population more generally, the EU is split into two distinct groups. While the perception of need is very strong among respondents from EU-15 countries, it is rather weak among respondents from countries that joined the EU in or after 2004.

The Reform Barometer survey also asked participants to assess the issues of reducing poverty and unemployment amongst the foreign-born population. For both issues, reform activity was reported to be either very low or of low quality in the vast majority of member states.

– *Reducing economic inequality is among the most pressing challenges, yet poorly addressed*

Several scholars have concluded in recent years that the assumption of a 'trickle-down economy', where growth automatically brings prosperity for all, is flawed. Indeed, despite notable growth effects from globalisation recently analysed in the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Globalization Report 2016, real wages have been stagnating in many industrialised countries and in the EU, in particular. Moreover, recent studies by the IMF, the OECD and other sim-

ilar institutions have shown that social inequality can be a major obstacle to economic growth. Likewise, in its Outlook on the Global Agenda 2015 report, the World Economic Forum stated that “deepening income inequality” will be the trend with “the biggest impact on the world in the coming 12 to 18 months.”

Similarly, Reform Barometer survey participants rate the policy objective of reducing income and wealth inequality to be of very high importance. This particularly concerns the five largest EU member states: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. At the same time, responses by governments aimed at addressing this issue were rated to be the second-least effective among all investigated policy objectives (only integration policies rate worse). Participants expected government (in)activity to be most damaging in Greece.

2 **While some have made strong efforts to catch up, others have failed to improve social inclusion**

– *South-eastern member states have invested in quality reforms*

Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania, the latest states to join the EU, take top ranks, with high levels of both reform activity and quality. For these countries, EU membership functions as an effective reform catalyst.

– *The United Kingdom has been failing to improve social inclusion*

The UK comes last in the overall reform performance ranking as well as in the dimension rankings for Poverty Prevention and Equitable Education.

– *The crisis states Greece and Spain continue to lag behind*

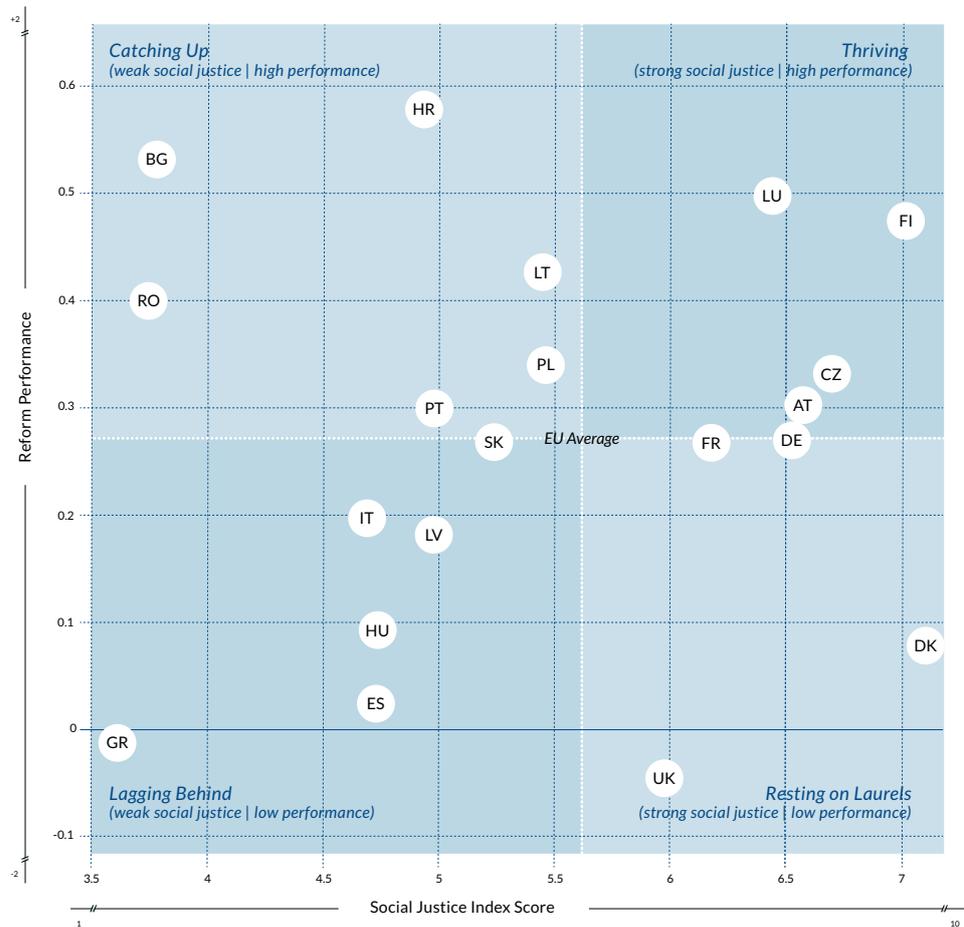
Among the Southern European countries, Greece and Spain have performed poorly across almost all dimensions. These countries suffer most severely from budget squeezes imposed by the EU during the eurozone crisis. Italy has shown mixed results, while Portugal has performed best in this group.

– *Finland has thrived, while Denmark has rested on its laurels*

Finland is an example of a country that scored high marks with respect to the state of social justice within its borders *and* its reform performance. Specifically, survey participants reported that Finland’s government had initiated the most comprehensive and effective health care reforms. By contrast, Denmark, scoring even higher than Finland in the Social Justice Index, ranks fourth-to-last in overall reform performance and even second-to-last in the Poverty Prevention dimension.

Figure 1

State of social justice versus social policy reform performance in EU member states



Not included due to limited data: BE, CY, EE, IE, MT, NL, SI, SE

Social Justice Index 2015; SIM Europe Reform
Barometer expert survey 2016 (reform performance)

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3 EU member states still have a long way to go before achieving a 'social triple-A rating'

"What I want is for Europe to have a social triple-A rating: that is just as important as an economic and financial triple-A rating."

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

– The need for social policy reforms remains strong

The Reform Barometer confirms a strong need for social policy reforms in the EU, as suggested by statistical evidence and by the SIM Europe Social Justice Index, in particular. Specifically, the survey answers reveal three things:

- **A North-South gap:** While the reform need is lower in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, it remains at a very high level in Southern and South-eastern Europe. It is also reported to be high, however, in France and the UK.

- *A strong need to improve the situation for the younger generation:* The reform need is particularly strong for those policy objectives targeting children or youth, i.e. reducing rates of youth unemployment, early school leavers and NEETs; preventing child poverty; and weakening the ties between students' learning success and their socioeconomic background.
- *A strong need for policies to integrate refugees* into the educational system, the labour market and society at large. Survey participants report that the consequences of the refugee crisis have had to be dealt with mainly by the EU-15 countries.

– *Debt level is no excuse for poor reform performance*

There is a slight trend indicating that higher debt ratios correspond with lower reform performance. However, Croatia and the UK, for instance, have roughly the same debt-to-GDP ratio but differ most strongly with respect to reform performance. Consequently, while some countries do suffer from high debts and strict budget limits, the level of a country's debt alone is a poor excuse for poor reform performance.

– *What the EU should do*

If the EU promotes, time and again, an inclusive society, then it can be expected to encourage and exhort countries to follow good social policy practices. It should assist countries by coordinating and supporting their efforts, and by fostering an ongoing dialogue among member states as well as between them and EU institutions.

Three major challenges require special attention by social policy decision-makers in the EU and its member states:

- *Closing the intergenerational gap:* Governments have started to react appropriately to the growing disparities between the older and the younger generations, promoting policy reforms to support disadvantaged young people. However, much more needs to be done at the root of the problem, as governments must invest more in high-quality education which can enable students to succeed independently of their socioeconomic background. The EU should more strongly incentivise member state governments to do so.
- *Increasing efforts to integrate foreign-born people – including, but not only refugees – into society:* At the same time, governments must also make sure that other disadvantaged groups do not feel left behind.
- *Taking measures to reduce unsustainable inequalities:* This applies both between and within countries.

Preface

by Aart De Geus, Christian Keuschnigg, Bernd Marin

Is there a ‘European Social Model’ in Europe?¹ Or is there none? Or just not yet? Or only in a few EU member states? Where are we on the path towards more – or occasionally less – social inclusion? Is Europe, under mutually reinforcing crises, actual or pending, growing together or falling apart? Where do we see converging forces within the eurozone or the EU-28, and where are the diverging ones? Or is Europe actually growing together and falling apart at the same time? And, if so, in which areas of policymaking?

The history of the European Union involves the transition from the coal-and-steel community via a common market (EEC) to the economic union of the single market (SEM), before moving to a currency union (EMU), which is now widely perceived as being incomplete and flawed. This gap has necessitated further steps, now underway, towards a fiscal union. Clearly, the next logical step in the EU’s evolution would be moves towards a ‘social union’, which so far hardly exists as an intellectual concept or even as a political project, let alone as an institutional, legal and procedural blueprint. While some would see evolution towards a social union as desirable and even imperative, others would view it as unsustainable and not even preferable given the sheer heterogeneity of needs and preferences in Europe.

Having a robust public debate about either a new institutional construct or simply the state of social cohesion in Europe is a vital prerequisite for gaining a better overview of reform actions undertaken at the national level. This would identify current trends and best practices, and provide pointers to the design of good European governance, answering such questions as: What should be decided and what implemented at which level of legislature, government or administration? How should the undisputed guiding principle of subsidiarity be redefined under changes in multi-level governance across Europe?

While statistical evidence is readily available, we need to establish a better base for policy coordination while simultaneously learning from each other in backing such convergence measures as the European Semester and other mechanisms for upward convergence. The EU and its members states have been hit by a plethora of crises: the lasting impact of the global financial crash; the chronic but aggravated fiscal crisis in most member states; geopolitical and refugee crises; and, last but not least, the rise of right-wing populism and extremism. If we are to overcome such a deep crisis, we must follow the famous maxim that ‘social justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done’.

Obvious deficiencies in fairness and social justice can be and often are triggers for what are largely political crises. This is supported by current findings that rapidly increasing social inequality and the dissolution of the middle class, which is viewed as embodying successful social inclusion in the postwar period, are seen as the single most important challenges today. Significantly, the salience of this issue is shared widely across the entire political spectrum, from (far) left to (far) right. It is thus high time to refocus on the EU’s social dimension.

¹ For an extensive discussion on the ‘European Social Model’, see Bernd Marin (ed.) (2015). *The Future of Welfare in a Global Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

The prevalent political response to the 2008 crisis in the EU member states has been to implement austerity policies that, in some critical cases, have impaired social inclusion and led to a gradual dismantling of (parts of) the welfare state. This has been accompanied by a general decline in the living standards of the entire population in crisis countries. Several instruments measure the status of social inclusion across Europe, with the Social Justice Index (SJI) being one prominent example. These tools show that the high degree of divergence among the member states goes beyond just levels of average income to also include levels of fairness and justice. Member states also diverge considerably in terms of their capacity to create inclusive societies.

However, information on how and how effectively European governments address social challenges is rather scant and highly fragmented. Available data focuses on either specific aspects of social policy (e.g. welfare provision) or specific policy areas (e.g. labour market policies), and they often also display significant time lags between data collection and publication.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung, the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna, and the Economic Policy Centre (WPZ) of the University of St. Gallen have joined forces and set up this Reform Barometer to fill this gap. It is one of the two pillars of the Social Inclusion Monitor (SIM) Europe, a new instrument for monitoring social policy in the EU-28. Together with the SJI, the Reform Barometer contributes to fostering a truly inclusive society by providing evidence-based analyses. While the SJI report reveals social policy outcomes, the Reform Barometer produces a qualitative evaluation of reform activity in the EU-28.

For this purpose, the Reform Barometer collects, aggregates and evaluates data on the reform need, activity and quality related to social inclusion across the EU. For this year's edition, 3,600 experts from across Europe were invited, and 1,058 of them actively participated in a comprehensive online survey in spring 2016. They were asked to report governmental responses to challenges in six specific areas (or 'dimensions') of social inclusion – Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, Health and Intergenerational Justice – between July 2014 and January 2016, as well as to assess the extent and effectiveness of reform efforts.

The results show that the efforts towards and performance in social inclusion varies widely among the member states, and that there are ample opportunities for laggards to catch up as well as for leading countries to make further progress towards a truly inclusive society. This report is designed to contribute to an evidence-based debate on the future of social inclusion and, by implication, to the future of welfare sustainability and the European Social Model in an outward-looking, global-minded Europe.

Note to readers: This comprehensive report contains such complex 'thick descriptions' and analyses of highly differentiated empirical findings that a simple (or simplistic) overall 'big picture' is a challenge. Europe is simply too diverse. While this is in the very nature of our data-driven, bottom-up and empirically grounded approach, we have still tried to extract a number of recurrent core findings as leitmotiv: government struggles with implementing educational reforms, integrating foreigners and reducing economic inequality; a persistent North-South divide within the EU (i.e. economic divergence mirrored in social divergence); the predominant needs to improve the situation of younger generations and adopt policies to integrate refugees; and the mixed

reform performance of member states, which partly corresponds with, but partly contradicts frequently used a priori assumptions and typologies.

We note, inter alia, the strong efforts of South-eastern countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania) to catch up as well as the more general phenomenon of ‘latecomers’ holding top ranks with high levels of reform activity and quality. EU membership seems to have been a catalyst for reform in these countries. Expert opinion, however, ranks Denmark in the bottom third of the overall reform performance rankings, with the UK surprisingly ranked at the bottom. Ireland has been rated at the top, ahead of countries in Eastern and Central Europe, in efforts to improve its labour market performance since 2008. The reduction of income and wealth inequalities is rated as being the greatest need in the five largest member states.

Social inclusion does not rest on economic development alone. Countries can be poor and inclusive, or rich and divided. Poverty Prevention emerges as the dimension with the highest reform quality, and the Equitable Education one with the lowest reform activity. Malta and Romania, for example, have the best results in the latter dimension, while Bulgaria and Italy have the best reform performance (being a composite measure combining reform activity and reform quality) in the Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination dimension.

The Reform Barometer is a ‘first-of-its-kind’ instrument in that it uses an extensive expert survey to gain a holistic overview of recent social policy reforms in the EU, and to make comparisons possible both between countries and different policy objectives. Moreover, this report presents the first issue of the Reform Barometer with fully fledged data analysis. For forthcoming editions, we intend to continuously improve the quality and coverage of this instrument. We therefore welcome feedback on its usefulness and limitations as well as suggestions on how it can become more valuable.



Aart De Geus



Christian Keuschnigg



Bernd Marin

Editorial Remarks

A short history of the Reform Barometer

The SIM Europe Reform Barometer has evolved over the past three years. It is driven by the idea of complementing the available evidence on social justice with a new instrument which focuses on governmental action related to social policy rather than on outcomes. The project was initiated by Andrej Stuchlik (currently Policy Analyst at the European Parliamentary Research Service) and Henning vom Stein (Head of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Brussels office), with support from Christopher Wratil (currently Research Student at the European Institute, LSE) and under the guidance of Joachim Fritz-Vannahme (Director of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Europe's Future programme). The cornerstone was laid by a pilot study conducted in cooperation with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), with Simona Milio (currently Consulting Director at ICF International and Associate Fellow at the European Institute, LSE) being in charge of coordination at the LSE. It was based on an online survey which invited over 400 social policy experts to participate and which had replies from around 140 of them. In April 2015, Jan Arpe took over responsibility for the project at the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The pilot study was eventually published in October 2015.¹

The Bertelsmann Stiftung then joined forces with an Austria-based team led by Bernd Marin (then at Webster University, currently Director of the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna) and by Christian Keuschnigg (currently Director at the Economic Policy Center (WPZ) at the University of St. Gallen) to set up the second edition of the Reform Barometer presented in this report. Thorsten Hellmann and Doreen Löber joined the team for the Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Stephan Mühlbacher became the counterpart in Vienna in autumn 2015. Patrick Kenis joined the project in autumn 2016.

On this edition

The current edition of the Reform Barometer was started in Vienna in October 2015. The project team agreed to make three major amendments to the previous version of the Reform Barometer:

1. Improve the data coverage by significantly enlarging the pool of experts to be invited to the survey and therefore set the basis for a comprehensive analysis of social policy reforms in the EU.
2. Adjust the survey to better reflect the indicators used by the Social Justice Index, particularly by adding the Intergenerational Justice dimension.
3. Harmonise the survey to allow for a sound comparison of reform need, activity and quality between countries as well as between policy objectives in single countries and in the EU at large.
4. Add a section that presents the findings by country and an overall analysis that distils major trends found in the survey replies.

¹ Arpe, Jan, Simona Milio and Andrej Stuchlik (eds.) (2015). *Social Policy Reforms in the EU: A Cross-national Comparison. Social Inclusion Monitor Europe (SIM) – Reform Barometer*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

By February 2016, when the survey started, we had managed to raise the number of academic researchers invited to take the Reform Barometer survey from 400 to over 3,600, and we were happy to receive contributions from over 1,000 respondents, often accompanied with complementary material and constructive feedback. It is still the case, however, that not all questions received a number of responses sufficient to draw sound conclusions for all countries and policy fields. In particular, we were well aware that adding the Intergenerational Justice dimension to the survey bore the risk of receiving very low response rates owing to the high diversity of topics covered within this dimension (comprising pension, family, environmental, fiscal and R&D policy). In fact, it turned out that our worry proved to be true, and consequently this dimension could not be considered for further analysis.

However, we are proud of having managed to compile such an extensive list of invitees, and we were positively surprised by the response rates in the other dimensions, particularly for the Poverty Prevention dimension, which had over 400 replies alone.

We believe that the Reform Barometer is a great example of a massively collaborative effort to deduce evidence on social policy reforms from the experts' collective knowledge. Indeed, we were particularly struck by how the aggregated data – despite all potential concerns about the soundness of the approach – convincingly replicated patterns found in statistical evidence (e.g. the overall reform need scores confirm those of the Social Justice Index), but also by how the data reflected aspects that are not revealed by statistics but still matters of widespread consensus within the expert community (e.g. France's need for reforms seems to be much larger than the statistics would suggest). That said, it is certainly still too early to judge the Reform Barometer's predictive capacity.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the people who were involved in this project, including: the (co-)authors of the dimension chapters: Torben Anderson, Marius Busemeyer, Ulf Gerdtham, Karin Heitzmann, Christian Keuschnigg and Viktor Steiner; the editors: David Gow and Josh Ward; and the lay-outers and typesetters: Alberto Gobber, Hans-Jörg Pochmann and Jan Schiele at Lucid. Thanks are also owed to Stefan Haigner and Florian Wakolbinger at GAW as well as to Michael Fuchs at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, for their support in setting up the online survey and data analysis; to Sandra Hartmann, for writing several country overviews; to Werner Bregar, for administrative support in Vienna; to the participants at the 'SIM Europe Debates' in Athens, Madrid, London and Rome, for their feedback; to our colleagues at the local partner institutions, who are too numerous to list in person (Eliamep and Ta Nea in Greece, the Fundación Bertelsmann in Spain, Policy Network in the UK, and the Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini in Italy); to the organisers of and participants at presentations in Brussels (ETUI lunchtime seminar) and in Helsingør (meeting of the Danish social policy association); to various researchers at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in Dublin, and the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, for their advice.

Furthermore, we are grateful for all the support from within the Bertelsmann Stiftung. In particular, we would like to thank communication manag-

ers Jürgen Noack (Brussels) and Benjamin Stappenbeck (Gütersloh); Europe's Future program director Joachim Fritz-Vannahme, for his strategic guidance; Head of Brussels office Henning vom Stein as well as Stefani Weiss, for helping us connect with the EU social policy scene; Sabine Feige, for her marvelous administrative support; Stefanie Fraune, for coordinating many meetings in Brussels; Katharina Bilaine, Jan Böcken, Kathrin Bock-Famulla, Stefan Empter, Florian Köbele, Thomas Kostera, Christian Kroll, Christof Schiller, Daniel Schraad-Tischler and Eric Thode, for their valuable feedback.

Above all, we would like to thank those who responded to the Reform Barometer expert survey for their valuable contributions. Indeed, they form the core of the Reform Barometer. Some participants overwhelmed us with their wonderful replies, providing in-depth assessments on specific issues in their countries (e.g. a multiple-page survey of Romanian labour market initiatives in recent years), praising us for launching this initiative, or simply encouraging us to carry on. We truly hope that all survey participants (and also all invited experts who decided not to participate and all those who we neglected to invite) are satisfied with what we have produced on the basis of the replies. We would be grateful for their willingness to support us again in further editions, and we invite all readers to send us feedback to continuously improve the Reform Barometer.

Last but not least, we are grateful for the commitment of the three individuals representing the institutions behind this project: Aart De Geus, Christian Keuschnigg and Bernd Marin. We would like to thank them for their constant support, their patience and the trust they put in us.

Jan Arpe, Thorsten Hellmann, Patrick Kenis,
Doreen Löber, Stephan Mühlbacher

Introduction

The Social Inclusion Monitor Europe – SIM Europe

SIM Europe is a social policy monitoring instrument for the EU-28. It provides data to facilitate improvement of national and European policymaking on social inclusion through information, analysis and evaluation of policies.

SIM Europe entails two pillars of information that are updated on an annual basis:

- The Social Justice Index (SJI) pillar is designed to assess and rank social policy outcomes in the 28 EU member states. It is mainly based on quantitative and some qualitative indicators. Three reports have been published so far (available at www.social-inclusion-monitor.eu).
- The Reform Barometer pillar is designed to assess and rank social policy reforms in the EU member states. It is based on a qualitative expert survey on whether and how EU members are addressing pressing social issues.

Combining data on social policy outcomes (*Social Justice Index* pillar) and social policy reforms (*Reform Barometer* pillar) serves four purposes:

- to provide timely data on social inclusion to counterbalance the predominant macroeconomic rationale in the EU's economic governance;
- to compare the 28 EU member states in terms of social policy performance and social policy reforms in order to learn more about how and why national social policies are different and similar, and to thereby provide EU member states with a wider framework for reflecting on their domestic social policy arrangements;
- to stimulate discussion on the interaction between the EU and national social policy arrangements by reporting on divergences and convergences, references to common (EU-level) objectives and actions, the development of cooperation between member states, the development of benchmarking initiatives, the development of the promotion of best practices etc.; and
- to ultimately contribute, based on the three points above, to the social policy debate on the scope, impact and source of governmental responses to challenges in and across six important and pressing areas: Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, Health and Intergenerational Justice.¹

In alignment with the Social Justice Index, the following six dimensions have been defined in order to provide a comprehensive depiction of social inclusion.

¹ Intergenerational justice, the sixth dimension included in the survey, was not considered in the analysis owing to limited survey responses.

 Poverty Prevention	<p>Under conditions of poverty, social participation and a self-determined life are only possible with great difficulty. Poverty is the strongest determinant of social and economic exclusion.</p>
 Equitable Education	<p>Equal access to good-quality education is an essential factor in providing equitable capabilities and opportunities for advancement (vertical mobility). It is critical to ending hereditary social exclusion, supports integration and includes lifelong learning.</p>
 Labour Market Access	<p>Employment both provides an income and facilitates social participation. The degree of inclusiveness is essential because an individual's status is defined in large part by his or her participation in the workforce. Exclusion from the labour market substantially limits individual opportunities for self-realization, contributes to an increase in the risk of poverty, and can even lead to serious health stresses.</p>
 Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination	<p>This dimension enables the examination of the extent to which trends towards the social polarization of, exclusion of and discrimination against specific groups are successfully countered. Developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity is the aim.</p>
 Health	<p>The conditions in which people live and die are shaped by political, social and economic forces. Social and economic policies have a determining impact on whether a child can grow and develop to his or her full potential and live a flourishing life, or whether his or her life will be blighted. This is why access to health care ensures that young people can be active in society.</p>
 Intergenerational Justice	<p>The issue at stake here is the need for contemporary generations to lead lives they value without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Sharing social burdens among young and old, while providing for future generations, is the goal.</p>

The Reform Barometer

The financial and economic crisis and its political perception have forced many EU member states to implement severe austerity policies. In some cases, these reforms have impaired social inclusion and may lead to a dismantling of the welfare state in the medium term. In order to be informed about, to analyse and to evaluate this situation, we need systematic, standardised and comparative data on how and how much individual member states have changed their social policies.

In order to detect social inclusion trends early on, to understand them and to provide information about the related state of affairs, it is essential to have data available on social policy reforms in the EU member states. The Reform Barometer was developed to fill this gap. It is an unparalleled effort to collect, assess and rank data on policy reforms affecting social inclusion. The project evaluates governmental initiatives as well as governments' political agenda-setting with regard to social issues for each of the 28 EU member states, with the ultimate goal of becoming the go-to reference source for cross-country and longitudinal data on changes in social inclusion policies in these states.

The dataset serves several purposes:

- to inform the European public debate on the reform efforts of individual member states, and to provide comparisons of member states' efforts in addressing social inclusion;

- to provide a rich dataset to all parties involved in and affected by the development of social inclusion policies (e.g. the European Commission, NGOs, think tanks) in order to identify early desirable and undesirable trends in the development of social inclusion policies within member states; and
- to enable academic researchers to study a wide array of research questions, including the causes and consequences of social policy reforms as well as the issue of what works where and why.

The Reform Barometer is based on an in-depth online expert survey to analyse the multidimensional nature of social inclusion. It collects, analyses and evaluates data on policy reforms, implementation and activities focused on social inclusion in the EU member states. During spring 2016, 3,600 academic experts from across Europe were invited to take part in an online survey. They were asked to assess the need for reforms in their respective country, to report on related governmental initiatives between July 2014 and January 2016, and to assess the (expected) effectiveness of these reforms (more information on the data and analysis can be found at www.social-inclusion-monitor.eu).

The Reform Barometer project of the Bertelsmann Stiftung is developed and implemented in collaboration with Bernd Marin, from the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna, and Christian Keuschnigg, from the Economic Policy Centre (WPZ) at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). In collaboration with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), a pilot study was produced in the initial stage to present the study's general outline and a first online survey. It is used as the basis for the current and future expert surveys.

Why another dataset?

While the current status of social inclusion provisions in the EU countries is rather well known, there is little information on how and how much their governments address social challenges through reforms. Many datasets focus on welfare provision (e.g. the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset), on specific policy areas (e.g. the European Commission's LABREF database and the fRDB/IZA database) or on institutional comparisons (e.g. the Ifo's DICE database). Recent efforts by the European Commission to introduce a 'social scoreboard' rely on outcome indicators with known time-lagged effects. Hence, we believe that researchers and policymakers need systematic and standardised data on how and how much individual member states have or may reform their social policies. Providing a close look at the causes and consequences of such reform initiatives can reveal trends in the increase in (or erosion of) social inclusion in Europe.

The Reform Barometer 2016

In this publication, we report the findings of the SIM Europe Reform Barometer 2016 (covering social policy reforms between July 2014 and January 2016). The Methodology chapter summarises the methodology of the study in addition to describing the survey, the sample of experts, and how the raw data was transformed into the indices in order to compare EU member states. The 'Overall Findings' chapter presents trends and patterns found in the EU as a whole. The chapters in the 'Findings by Dimension' section were con-

tributed by authors invited to summarise and discuss the results related to a particular dimension of social inclusion. The chapter on Poverty Prevention (p. 40 ff.) was written by economist Karin Heitzmann, professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business's Institute of Social Policy as well as director of its Research Institute for the Economics of Inequality. The chapter on Equitable Education (p. 61 ff.) was contributed by Marius Busemeyer, professor of Political Science at the University of Konstanz (Germany). The chapter on Labour Market Access (p. 83 ff.) was written by Viktor Steiner, professor of Economics at the School of Business & Economics at the Freie Universität Berlin. The chapter on Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (p. 100 ff.) was contributed by Torben Andersen, professor of Economics at Aarhus University (Denmark), together with Christian Keuschnigg, professor of Economics at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). Keuschnigg also co-authored the chapter on Health (p. 124 ff.) with Ulf Gerdtham, who holds a joint professorship in the Departments of Economics and Medicine at Lund University (Sweden). The 'Findings by Country' section of this report provides country-specific findings from the Reform Barometer for the member states. Comprehensive data are provided in the Data Appendix.

We sincerely hope that this report provides a rich base of information for detecting trends regarding how various countries are making different efforts related to social inclusion, and that this information positively shapes and guides the thinking and actions of national as well as European policymakers. These social inclusion arrangements come in different forms, but our historical legacy of social inclusion arrangements is clearly one of the foundations of the economic and social success of the European region. Treating existing social inclusion arrangements carelessly should be observed critically. Especially in times of crisis, if we wish to avoid diminishing the value of citizens and the legitimacy of our systems, we obviously need better rather than fewer social inclusion arrangements. Moreover, social inclusion arrangements which have developed over centuries can be destroyed overnight – and would be very difficult to reconstruct. For this reason, understanding the dynamics of where and what types of social inclusion reforms take place is very important to observe.

It is evident that the EU has an important role to play in both preserving and enhancing these arrangements. In fact, the EU already declared its aim to 'fight against poverty and social exclusion' almost two decades ago in the Amsterdam Treaty. However, the EU lacks legislative power and financial instruments for developing social inclusion arrangements, but it is nevertheless judged by the citizens of EU member states for what it ultimately does accomplish. The SIM Europe report aims to improve this difficult situation. By providing the EU with information on the state of social inclusion and related trends in its member states, it makes the EU much better equipped to influence policymaking, to fix common objectives, to encourage cooperation between specific member states, to benchmark, to promote best practices, to conduct specific evaluations, to request specific and regular progress reports, and to issue recommendations based on insights from the member states. And, thanks to the SIM Europe Reform Barometer, it can do so in a manner that is more contextual while also being less legalistic, instrumentalist and normative.

Methodology

The SIM Europe Reform Barometer is based on data from a comprehensive survey of experts' judgments about the need for social policy reforms and the extent and quality of reforms that have been recently implemented in the EU-28. The survey respondents were selected due to their academic expertise on at least one of the 28 EU member states and at least one of the six dimensions of social inclusion: Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, Health and Intergenerational Justice (for definitions of these dimensions, see the introductory section). While there are good statistical data describing the state of social justice (e.g. the Europe 2020 Strategy indicators by Eurostat, DG EC-FIN's annual macroeconomic database AMECO, and the Social Justice Index), only a few databases contain information on social policy reform efforts. Furthermore, statistical datasets are mostly limited to specific aspects of social policy (e.g. the LABREF labour market and reform database or the Database for Institutional Comparison in Europe (DICE)). It is also evident that they are indicators for what happened in the past rather than indicators for ongoing dynamics in social policy. By contrast, the assessments and opinions of the experts surveyed for the SIM Reform Barometer are 'close' to the present situation, provide a direct evaluation of the reforms the governments have recently implemented, and allow their long-term effectiveness to be estimated on the basis of the experts' expectations.

Board of experts: The participants

Experts from all 28 EU member states were invited to participate in a survey for the SIM Europe Reform Barometer. The invitation list was created using multiple approaches, starting with the pool of experts who participated in the Reform Barometer 2015 pilot study and with the professional network of the project's partner institutions. Additional contacts were collected via extensive web research, from European academic networks (e.g. the European Anti-Poverty Network), by going through the websites of research institutes in all EU countries, and by personal recommendations from trusted contacts. In addition to the invitation emails sent to the pool of experts, the link to the SIM Europe Reform Barometer survey was included in newsletters of academic and professional associations, such as the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), the European Association of Institutes in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the Network of Experts working on the Social Dimension of Education and Training (NESET II).

Overall, 1,058 experts accepted the invitation to participate; 44 percent were women, and 56 percent men; and the average age was 51.5 (SD = 12.4) years.¹ Table 1 shows the number of respondents for each country and dimension of social inclusion. In general, the numbers of experts reporting for each country and dimension were satisfactory. However, there were extremely few responses for the Intergenerational Justice dimension, presumably due

¹ Percentages and means for respondents' gender and age are based on valid cases. The number of missing values was unusually high (55% did not indicate their gender, and 58% their age). The length and complexity of the survey presumably led more than half of the sample to skip the questions on their socio-demographic characteristics at the end of the questionnaire.

Table 1

Number of respondents for each country
and dimension of social inclusion

	Total number of experts	Poverty Prevention	Equitable Education	Labour Market Access	Social Cohesion & Non-discrimination	Health	Inter-generational Justice
AT	64	28	19	16	20	5	8
BE	21	14	1	4	—	2	1
BG	46	24	8	13	7	11	5
HR	32	16	8	1	—	7	3
CY	6	1	2	2	1	1	—
CZ	34	13	7	8	5	7	1
DK	38	12	12	9	10	8	3
EE	8	4	5	2	—	1	—
FI	41	16	11	4	6	6	3
FR	31	14	9	8	8	6	1
DE	63	27	12	15	9	8	7
GR	54	26	8	13	13	6	5
HU	34	17	7	11	8	5	2
IE	22	6	5	4	1	6	2
IT	72	31	19	13	13	8	4
LV	27	8	11	2	4	11	2
LT	46	17	11	8	7	8	3
LU	16	9	4	3	3	5	3
MT	28	12	11	2	3	3	1
NL	27	7	1	8	4	7	2
PO	42	19	9	8	3	11	5
PT	44	19	10	4	4	13	2
RO	45	24	11	7	6	8	2
SK	49	23	9	11	11	15	3
SI	12	4	3	2	0	2	3
ES	71	29	16	15	13	10	4
SE	42	19	8	10	5	3	3
UK	44	24	6	10	6	3	4
Σ	1,058	463	243	213	170	186	82

N = 1,058. As respondents were allowed to complete the survey for more than one country and for more than one dimension, the sums for columns and for rows may exceed the total number of participants.

to its heterogeneous contents, so results on intergenerational justice are omitted in this report. For the remaining five dimensions, 49 percent of the cells include more than 10 experts, and only 14 percent have fewer than 3 respondents. For cells with such low numbers, the results should be interpreted with care.

Participants indicated expertise for the dimensions they selected in the survey. On average, the self-reported expertise on a 4-point scale (0 = no expertise, 3 = strong expertise) was 1.98 (SD = 0.90) for Poverty Prevention, 2.19 (SD = 0.87) for Equitable Education, 2.40 (SD = 0.72) for Labour Market Access, 2.22 (SD = 0.83) for Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, and 2.56 (SD = 0.75) for Health.

Survey: The questions asked

Experts' responses were collected by means of an online questionnaire. The survey was developed by the project team, and the programming of the questionnaire and the collection of data was carried out by the Austrian market research institute Gesellschaft für Angewandte Wirtschaftsforschung (GAW).

After reading a welcoming note, general instructions and a privacy statement, participants indicated their expertise for each of the six dimensions on a 4-point Likert-type scale (as described above). A country from a list of the EU-28 had to be selected by the participants to start the survey about its social policy reforms. Questions were the same for all 28 countries. After completing the items for one country, the survey could be restarted and completed again for an additional country. However, only one person made use of this option and answered the questions for a second country.

The questions about policy reforms and the situation of social inclusion in the respective country were grouped into the six dimensions of social inclusion. Participants were instructed to select at least one of the dimensions they felt competent enough to be surveyed on. On average, participants selected 1.3 (SD = 0.9) dimensions and completed the corresponding questions. Choosing a dimension was followed by a set of questions regarding specific policy objectives in this domain. The number of policy objectives covered by the survey varied between one and eight across dimensions. The policy objectives were defined in alignment with the indicators used in the construction of the Social Justice Index to allow for a comparison of both studies.² However, a one-to-one correspondence was not possible, and consultation with social policy experts resulted in the inclusion of additional objectives. Figure 2 provides an overview of all policy objectives ultimately addressed by the survey.

For each policy objective, a set of questions sharing the same basic structure was presented. All questions referred to the time period between July 2014 and January 2016. In essence, the following questions were asked about the respective objective:

- *Was there a need to improve the situation regarding this issue?* (a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 [no need at all] to 3 [very strong need])
- *Has a policy reform been introduced that addresses this issue?* (0 = no/1 = yes; if participants answered "Yes", they were asked to describe the reform in an open question. If they indicated "No", but stated there would have been need for a reform, they were asked what should have been done)
- *Do you expect this reform to have a positive/negative effect?* (a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from -2 [strong negative effect] to +2 [strong positive effect]; an additional open question was also included to allow the experts to describe why they expected the reform to be successful or not)

² Social Justice Index scores used in this study always refer to the 2015 edition. They are mainly based on statistical data from 2014 and thus describe the state of social justice in the EU member states at the beginning of the period surveyed for this Reform Barometer edition.

After finishing a dimension, participants had an opportunity to leave a general comment about issues that were not covered by the survey’s questions.

The survey concluded by asking participants to provide socio-demographic characteristics, and asking whether they want to be named in the Board of Experts of the SIM Europe website and this report. In addition, experts were asked whether they would allow comments that they had made in the survey to be quoted and, if so, whether they preferred to be quoted by name or anonymously. If the experts wanted to be quoted by name, they were asked for their name, email address and institutional affiliation.

The complete questionnaire can be downloaded at www.social-inclusion-monitor.eu.

Figure 2
Reform Barometer 2016 dimensions and policy objectives

Poverty Prevention	Equitable Education	Labour Market Access	Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination	Health
P1 Reduce Risk of Poverty ~ Total Population ~ Seniors (>65) ~ Children (0-17) ~ Single Parents ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	E1 Equal Opportunities ~ Early Childhood Ed. ~ Pre-primary Education ~ Primary Education ~ Secondary Education ~ Tertiary Education ~ Lifelong Learning	L1 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment ~ Total Population ~ Seniors (55-64) ~ Youth (15-24) ~ Women ~ Long-term Unemployed ~ Low-skilled ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	S1 Reduce Income and/or Wealth Inequality	H1 Improve Public Health
	E2 Structural Conditions (Finance / Human Resources) ~ sectors as above		S2 Gender Equality	H2 Quality of Health Care
	E3 Teaching Quality ~ sectors as above	L2 Reduce Precarious Work: Involuntary Temporary Contracts	S3 Integration Policy ~ Foreign-born Population ~ Refugees	H3 Health System Efficiency
	E4 Independence of Learning Success from Socioeconomic Background	L3 Reduce Precarious Work: In-work Poverty / Low-wage Earners	S4 Reduce NEET Rate	H4 Sustainable and Fair Financing
	E5 Reduce Rate of Early School Leavers			H5 Health Care Governance
	E6 Integration of Refugees			H6 Outcome Performance
				H7 Accessibility and Range of Services
				H8 Reduce Unmet Medical Needs

Note: The Intergenerational Justice dimension, composed of the policy objectives **I1** Family Policy, **I2** Pension Policy, **I3** R&D Policy, **I4** Environmental Policy and **I5** Government Debt Reduction, was part of the survey, but left out of the analysis due to a very limited number of responses.

Reading Example:

The Labour Market Access dimension is composed of three policy objectives (with identifiers L1, L2 and L3). The policy objective "L1: ..." in turn is composed of eight 'primary policy objectives' that specify different population groups.

Evaluation: Aggregating the data and computing the scores

Data aggregation for single countries

– Values for reform need, reform activity and reform quality at different aggregation levels

To enable a comparative analysis across countries as well as across dimensions and policy objectives, the survey answers for each country were aggregated on four levels:

1. At the lowest level, data for primary policy objectives were calculated. With ‘primary policy objectives’, we are referring to the policy objectives as they were defined in the survey and presented to the responding experts. For some objectives, the survey differentiated between different target groups (e.g. children, senior citizens or foreign-born citizens) or between different education segments (e.g. pre-primary or tertiary education). For other policy objectives, the questions were put with regard to the general population without distinguishing between specific groups. Primary policy objectives represent the ‘atoms’ of the questionnaire: Participants rated the reform need (from 0 = no need to 3 = very strong need), activity (yes/no) and quality (‘expected effect’ from -2 = very negative to +2 = very positive) precisely at this level. For each country and each primary policy objective, the following data were calculated based on the answers provided for the country and the primary policy objective under consideration:³
 - a The *need score* is the average of the need scores provided by the participants, so it is a value between 0 and 3. It is a measure of the reform need collectively assessed by the survey participants who indicated a need score for the policy objective and country under consideration. If fewer than three participants provided a need score, the aggregated value is ‘not available’.
 - b The *activity rate* is the sum of the need scores provided by those participants who indicated ‘activity = yes’ divided by the sum of the need scores provided by all participants. The activity rate is thus a measure of the collective assessment of the fraction of reform need (for the primary policy objective in the country under consideration) addressed by the country’s government. An activity rate of 100 percent means that all participants unanimously reported a relevant reform activity; an activity rate of 0 percent means that all participants unanimously reported no reform activity.⁴
 - c The *quality score* is the average of the quality values provided by those participants who indicated ‘activity = yes’ weighted by their respective need scores. In this way, a participant’s quality rating receives a larger weight if the participant also saw a larger need for reform. The quality score is only a measure of the reforms that took place, independent of the specific extent of reforms. If fewer than two participants provided a quality score, the aggregated value is ‘not available’.

³ Missing data and ‘don’t know’ answers were replaced by the group average.

⁴ Note that the activity rate measures reform activity relative to a given reform need. A measure of the absolute extent of reform activity is the product of the need score and the activity rate. Sometimes it is also convenient to consider the (implementation) gap rate, i.e. the fraction of reform need that was not addressed by the government. The gap rate is precisely 100 percent minus the activity rate.

2. At the next level, data for composite policy objectives are calculated. These were derived from the primary policy objectives for which the survey differentiated between specific target groups or education segments. For each country and each composite policy objective, the following data were calculated based on the data for the corresponding primary policy objectives (i.e. targeting specific subpopulations or education segments):⁵
 - a The *need score* is the average of the need scores of the primary policy objectives. It is a measure of the reform need with respect to the composite policy objective under consideration. If data are not available for more than half of the primary policy objectives, then the aggregated value is 'not available'.
 - b The *activity rate* is the average of the primary policy objectives' activity rates weighted by the respective need scores.⁶ At this level, again, the activity rate is a measure of the collective assessment of the fraction of reform need (for the composite policy objective in the country under consideration) addressed by the country's government.
 - c The *quality score* is the average of the primary policy objectives' quality values weighted by the respective absolute extents of reform (i.e. the product of the respective need scores and activity rates). In this way, a primary policy objective's quality score receives a larger weight if its reform need was addressed to a larger absolute extent. If data are not available for more than half of the primary policy objectives, then the aggregated value is 'not available'.
3. Values for policy objectives (both basic and non-basic ones) are then aggregated into dimension values in much the same way as values for primary policy objectives are aggregated into values for composite policy objectives. For each country and dimension, the following variables were calculated based on the data for the policy objectives included in the dimension:⁷
 - a The *need score* is the average of the need scores of the policy objectives. It is a measure of the reform need with respect to the dimension under consideration. If data are not available for more than half of the policy objectives, then the aggregated value is 'not available'.
 - b The *activity rate* is the average of the policy objectives' activity rates weighted by the respective need scores. At this level, once again, the activity rate is a measure of the collective assessment of the fraction of reform need (for the dimension in the country under consideration) addressed by the country's government.
 - c The *quality score* is the average of the policy objectives' quality values weighted by the respective extents of reform (i.e. the products of the respective need scores and activity rates). In this way, a policy objective's quality score receives a larger weight if it was addressed to a larger absolute extent. If data are not available for more than half of the policy objectives, then the aggregated dimension value is 'not available'.

⁵ Those primary policy objectives with no data available (due to receiving fewer than three answers) were substituted by the average of the other answers.

⁶ Alternatively, one can calculate the sum of the absolute extents (i.e. need scores times activity rates) of reform activity for the primary policy objectives and divide by the sum of the need scores.

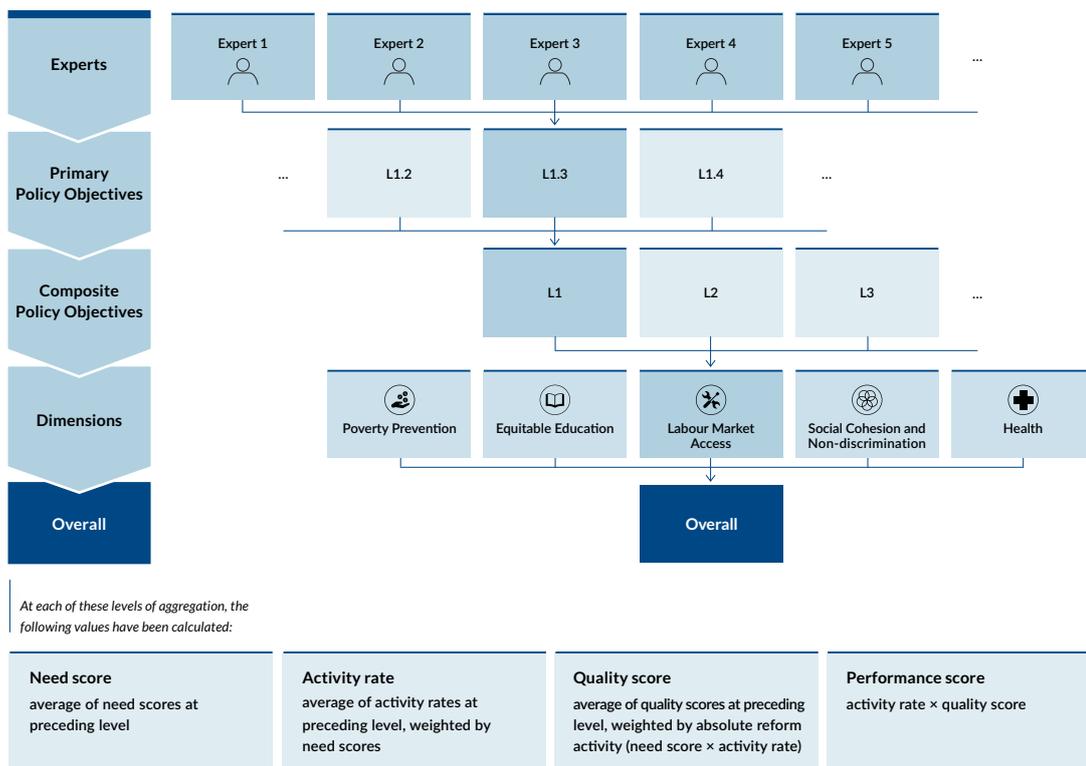
⁷ Those policy objectives with no data available (due to having less than 50% of primary policy objectives or fewer than three answers) were substituted by the average of the other answers.

4. Finally, dimension values were aggregated into overall values. The procedure followed the same pattern as above. For each country, the following variables were calculated based on the data for the five dimensions:⁸
- The *need score* is the average of the need scores of the dimensions. It is a measure of a country's overall reform need with respect to social inclusion. If data are not available for more than half of the dimensions, then the aggregated value is 'not available'.
 - The *activity rate* is the average of the dimensions' activity rates weighted by the respective need scores. The overall activity rate is a measure of the collective assessment of the fraction of overall reform need addressed by the country's government.
 - The *quality score* is the average of the dimensions' quality values weighted by the respective extents of reform (i.e. the products of the respective need scores and activity rates). In this way, a dimension's quality score receives a larger weight if the dimension was addressed to a larger absolute extent.

Figure 3 summarises the data aggregation process for a specific country:⁹

Figure 3

Data aggregation for an individual member state



⁸ Those dimensions with no data available (due to having less than 50% of policy objectives) were not taken into account.

⁹ Remark on chapters in section 'Findings by Dimension': Some authors preferred to work with binary indicators instead of statistical means of multi-valued scores. For instance, they calculated the percentage of experts who indicated a 'strong or very strong need for reforms' or a 'positive or very positive effect' for a specific primary policy objective in a specific country. For the rare occasions when such percentages were aggregated over primary policy objectives to composite policy objectives or dimensions, simple (unweighted) averages were taken.

– *Data aggregation for cross-cutting policies*

With the generic aggregation procedure at hand, it is possible to re-combine arbitrary primary policy objectives. In this report, we have done so for two collections of policy objectives targeting specific population groups: children and young people, and refugees. The cross-cutting policies for children and young people include: P1 Reduce Poverty of Children, E4 Independence of Learning Success from Socioeconomic Background, E5 Reduce Rate of Early School Leavers, L1 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment for Youth and S2 Reduce NEET Rate. The cross-cutting policies for refugees include: P1 Reduce Poverty of Refugees, E6 Integration of Refugees into the Education System, L1 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment for Refugees and S3 Integration Policies for Refugees.

– *Performance scores: An integration of reform extent and reform quality*

To capture both the extent to which a government addressed the reform need and the quality of reforms in a single number, another measure is introduced: the reform performance score. It is defined as the product of the activity rate (i.e. the relative extent to which reform need was addressed) and the quality score, and can in principle be calculated at any of the levels above. Note, however, that data at the policy objective level (and below) very often relies on only a few expert observations. For this reason, we have been very careful when reporting the performance score below the dimension level. The reform performance scores can be considered the quintessential values of the Reform Barometer, as they provide a way of holistically comparing social policy reforms across the European Union.

Data aggregation for the European Union

When aggregating data over countries to obtain single values for the entire European Union (or subsets of countries, e.g. the EU-15), several options are available. In the ‘Overall Findings’ chapter, unweighted averages over all countries (for which data are available) are reported; the ‘Findings by Dimension’ section uses population-weighted averages; and the ‘Findings by Country’ section occasionally reports EU median values.

Note on references to Social Justice Index scores

Throughout this report, we often refer to scores from the Social Justice Index. Although its 2016 edition has lately been published, this report refers to its 2015 edition. The latter one is based on statistical data from 2014 and 2015 and thus reflects the state of social justice in the period assessed by this Reform Barometer edition (July 2014 to January 2016).

Overall Findings

This chapter summarises the overall findings of the Reform Barometer 2016 expert survey. The Executive Summary highlights the EU-28's overall failure to rise to the most pressing future challenges, but points to strong efforts in parts of Europe and inadequate ones in others to catch up in terms of improving social inclusion. Here, we accentuate the positive. We start by considering the geographical distribution of reform performance in the EU, pointing to some surprising high performers, and then go on to provide a detailed assessment of EU average values for reform need, activity and quality.¹ Two key and urgent challenges are subsequently examined: reforms addressing children and young people, and those addressing the integration of refugees.

1 EU as catalyst for reform

Overall country reform rankings: South-eastern European countries are best performers

While older EU member states (e.g. the UK and France) are showing reform fatigue and mounting levels of reform need (see below), newer member states are manifestly being spurred to address gaps or inadequacies in their social provision. Croatia, the youngest EU member, leads the Reform Barometer performance ranking (which reflects both 'reform activity' by governments and its quality). Having addressed 56 percent of its reform need, Croatia shows the third-highest activity rate in the EU. Furthermore, it achieves the highest reform-quality score. Examples of reforms in Croatia include the adoption of a 'Strategy of Education, Science and Technology' and the introduction of various prevention measures in health care.

The other South-eastern countries also display high performance scores: Bulgaria ranks second and Romania sixth in the overall rankings. Interestingly, both countries have introduced a comprehensive 'National Health Strategy 2014-2020'. Another reform reported by experts for Bulgaria is the introduction of mandatory preschool education. Bulgaria does, however, have one slightly negative quality rating (-0.09) for a policy objective in the Labour Market Access dimension: reduction of in-work poverty. The Romanian government has put forward a 'National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction', increasing many social benefits (e.g. allowances for children and families) and pensions, and its 'Every Child in Kindergarten' programme specifically targets disadvantaged families.

In countries which have most recently become member states, the EU seems to be acting as a catalyst for reform, encouraging and enabling national measures to catch up with standards set elsewhere. And their governments are showing a readiness to act.

¹ Specific summaries of the most important findings for the five dimensions can be found in the beginning of each dimension chapter in the 'Findings by Dimension' section of this report. Country-specific results, including qualitative information on country-specific reforms extracted from the survey responses, are described in more detail in the 'Findings by Country' section of this report.

Weakest reform performance in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom takes last place in the overall reform performance ranking. This is due to its quality score of just below zero, indicating that social policy reform efforts were largely ineffective or had adverse effects, according to survey respondents. Indeed, particularly low-quality values were assigned to the UK in the Equitable Education dimension (-0.41, or the lowest value EU-wide) and in the Poverty Prevention dimension (-0.28, or the second-lowest value). Experts cited the introduction of tuition fees in tertiary education as an example of something which has created strong disadvantages for students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds.

Crisis countries (PIIGS): Poor marks for Greece and Spain, better scores for Ireland, Italy and Portugal

Among the Southern European countries, Greece and Spain have performed poorly across almost all dimensions. These countries have as a whole suffered most severely from budget squeezes imposed by the EU in the post-2008 eurozone crisis. Italy has, however, shown mixed results, on the one hand being praised for its reforms targeting social cohesion and, on the other, receiving poor marks when it comes to reducing the rate of early school leavers. Portugal has performed best in this group, while Ireland (for which data coverage is too low to be included in the overall ranking) excelled in the Labour Market Access dimension, according to the experts.

Mixed results in Eastern Europe...

The Eastern European countries, all relative EU newcomers, can be split into three groups: Reform performance is above average in Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic. Notably, however, the Czech Republic scores very low in the Poverty Prevention dimension. Slovakia and Latvia rank mostly in the middle, while Hungary ranks low in all dimensions (except for rank 9 out of 23 in the Health dimension).

...and in Scandinavia

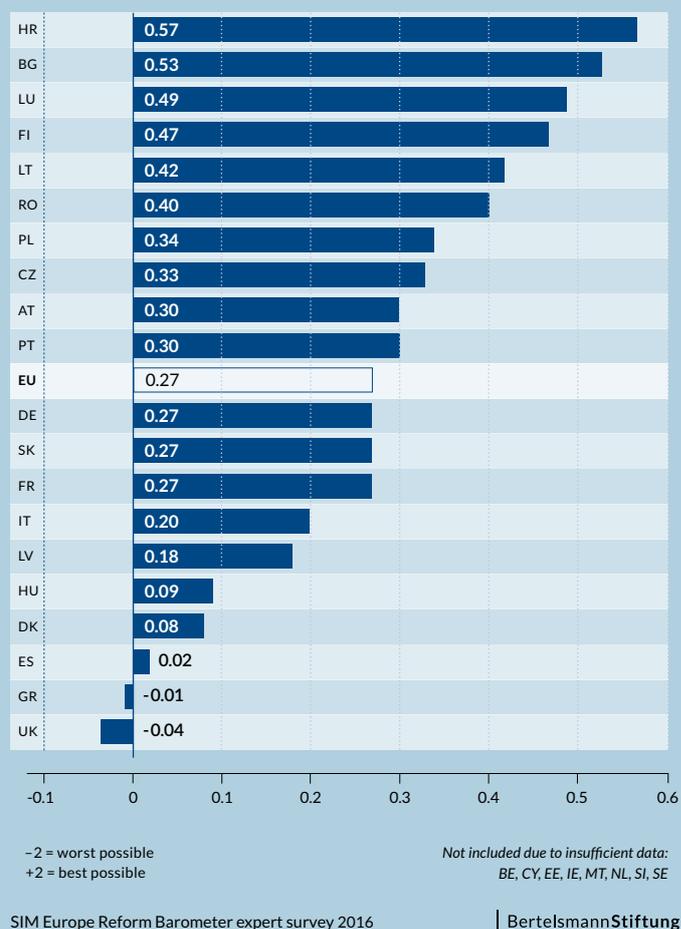
Among the Scandinavian countries, Finland ranks fourth with respect to overall reform performance, whereas Denmark ranks fourth-to-last. Notably, Finland is praised for its efforts to improve the Health system, while Denmark receives the lowest ratings in the entire EU for its Poverty Prevention policies, as the experts point to the reduction of various social benefits.

Germany, France and Austria rank in the middle

Germany scores particularly well in the Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination dimension (actively promoting gender equality), while performing poorly in the Poverty Prevention dimension.

Figure 4

Social policy: Overall reform performance in EU member states



France also performs well in the Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination dimension (where it starts with the highest EU-wide reform need), owing to its efforts to reduce its NEET rate. Notably, among all EU member states, the French government has most actively and effectively addressed poverty among the foreign-born population, according to survey respondents. However, the experts are dissatisfied with its efforts to reform the labour market, reporting that there has been no activity at all to reduce in-work poverty, and very little to improve employment rates.

Austria gets good marks in the Equitable Education dimension, but performs poorly in the Poverty Prevention dimension, especially when it comes to targeting refugees or – scoring even worse – the foreign-born population in general.

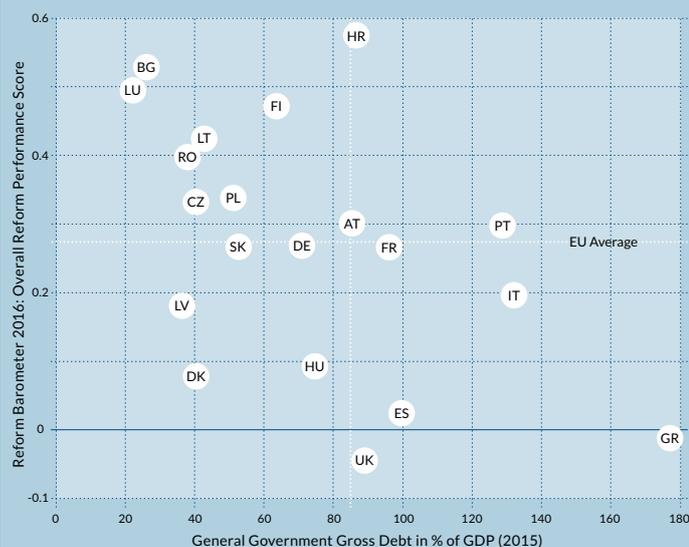
The smallest EU member states, Malta and Luxembourg, among the top performers

Luxembourg, the EU's richest country, largely succeeds in mastering its challenges – and these do exist. For instance, it has experienced the largest increase in youth unemployment from 2013 to 2014 (from 10.4 to 12.1%). Furthermore, the rate of children under 16 years old at risk of poverty or social exclusion rose from 21.1 percent in 2011 to 25.7 percent in 2014. Luxembourg ranks third in the overall reform performance ranking, and leads in the Poverty Prevention dimension by taking remedial action to meet such challenges.

Malta leads the reform performance ranking in the Equitable Education dimension, and ranks third in the Poverty Prevention dimension. Experts say the Maltese government is particularly successful in addressing poverty among children and single parents as well as in fostering the independence of learning success from the socioeconomic background.

Figure 5

Government debt versus social policy reform performance in EU member states



reform performance:

-2 = worst possible +2 = best possible

Not included due to insufficient data:

BE, CY, EE, IE, NL, PT, SI, SE

Eurostat 2016 (debt); SIM Europe Reform

Barometer expert survey 2016 (reform performance)

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Are high government debts a good excuse for bad reform performance?

Figure 5 compares EU member states' gross government debts with their overall reform performance scores. It seems that higher debt ratios generally correspond to lower reform performance. However, this trend is not determinate. For instance, Croatia and the United Kingdom have roughly the same debt-to-GDP ratio (just below 90%), but differ most strongly with respect to reform performance. Another outlier is Portugal; despite its debt-to-GDP ratio of 129 percent, it performs slightly above the EU average.

2 Overall Reform Need and Governments' Responses

Need for reforms in EU remains strong

Above, we have highlighted some above-average performers in respect to reform activity, but the overall EU picture is mixed. Across all EU countries and all dimensions of social inclusion, for instance, the average reform need observed by survey participants is relatively strong, standing at 2.09 on a scale from 0 (no need) to 3 (very strong need). Similarly, in all dimensions, average scores range from 2.01 in Poverty Prevention to 2.22 in Labour Market Access (see Figure 6).

Reform need particularly strong in Southern Europe, France and the UK

The Reform Barometer confirms the finding of the Social Justice Index (Schraad-Tischler and Kroll 2014; Schraad-Tischler 2015; Schraad-Tischler and Schiller 2016) that there is a large social gap between Northern and Southern Europe, but with substantial nuance: While Greece (2.39), Bulgaria (2.37), Spain (2.33), Italy (2.31), Malta (2.27) and Romania (2.27) are ascribed very high need scores, significantly lower scores are given to Denmark (1.55), the Netherlands (1.72), Sweden (1.85) and Finland (1.89). At the same time, France (2.33) and the UK (2.28), which are quintessentially northern, register high reform needs, while the Czech Republic (1.64) and Slovakia (1.75), in Central Europe, are ascribed surprisingly low scores.

Figure 6

Need for social policy reforms (EU average scores)

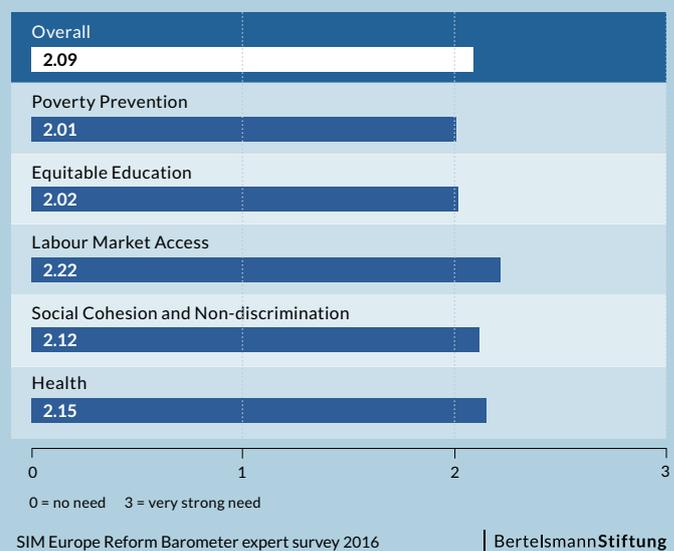


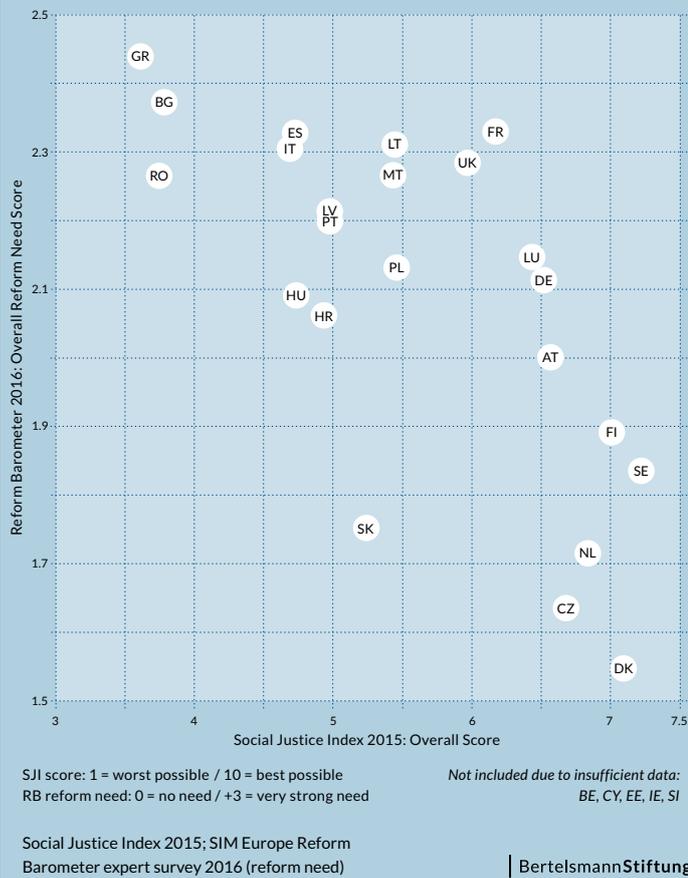
Figure 7

Social policy: Overall need for social policy reforms in EU member states



Figure 8

State of social justice versus need for social policy reforms in EU member states

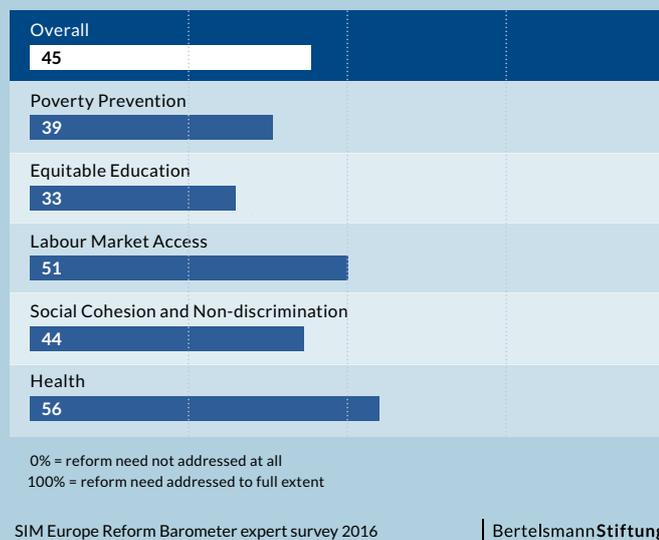


Comparison of reform need based on Reform Barometer expert survey and Social Justice Index

Figure 8 shows that higher Social Justice Index scores tend to go hand in hand with lower average need scores in the Reform Barometer (even though there is no one-to-one correspondence between SJI indicators and policy objectives surveyed by the Reform Barometer). But there are inescapable outliers within this basic pattern. For instance, the overall reform need in Slovakia is assessed as surprisingly low (fourth-lowest overall in the Reform Barometer), but it ranks only 17th in the Social Justice Index 2015, performing poorly in the Equitable Education dimension and well in the Poverty Prevention dimension. The same Slovak pattern applies to almost all policy objectives with matching Social Justice indicators. One possible explanation is that expert assessments for this country are biased for unclear reasons. Another could be that Slovak reforms already underway or planned are expected to show positive effects in due course. In sharp contrast, reform need is assessed as surprisingly high for France (third-highest) and the United Kingdom (sixth) in the Reform Barometer expert survey, yet both countries rank just above mid-table in the SJI rankings (France: rank 12; UK: 13). This might indicate that these countries have failed to hit important policy objectives in the (recent) past, and are hence likely to lose ground in the SJI.

Figure 9

Social policy reform activity (EU average rates, in percent)



Glass half-full: Around 50 percent of reform need actively addressed

The EU's average activity rate across all dimensions is 45 percent, ranging from only 33 percent in Equitable Education to 56 percent in Health. Social challenges have on the whole been at least partially addressed, but a lot more could and should have been done, with over 50 percent of reform need unaddressed by governments, the experts say. In countries most severely hit by the financial crisis, this relative inactivity may be conditioned by tight budgets.

Reform quality largely positive, but room for improvement

The countries' overall quality scores lie between -0.10 (for the United Kingdom) and +1.02 (for Croatia) on a scale from -2 to +2, with an EU average of +0.58. This shows that reform quality has clearly been rated as on the up, but also with some considerable room for future improvement. Either way, there are signs of hope for improved social inclusion in most EU countries. (The SJI 2016 similarly reports a slight improvement from a historic low in 2014).

3 Focus: Children and Youth

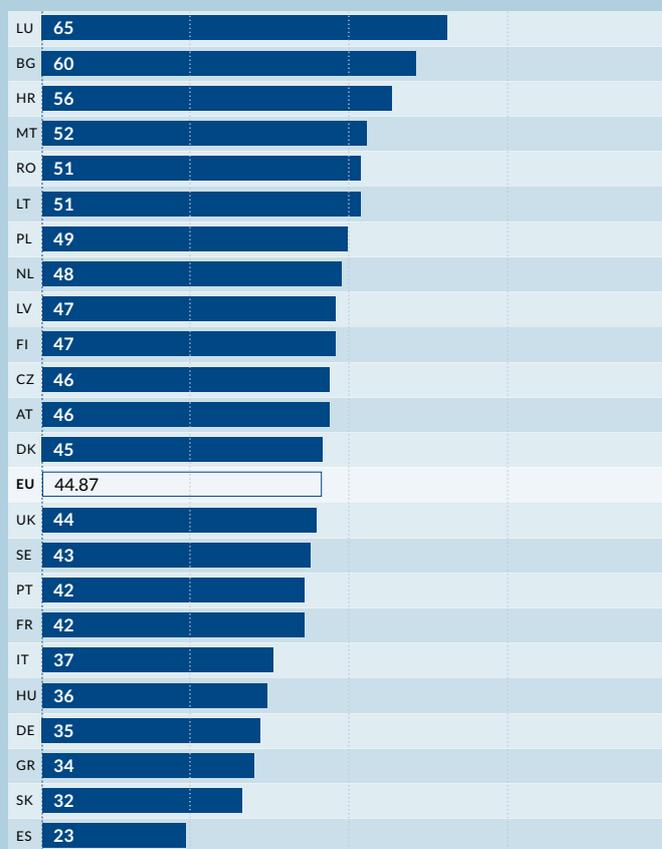
Strongest reform need: Improving life for unemployed youths

The highest EU-average need score is given to the policy objective of 'increasing employment / decreasing unemployment' among 15- to 24-year-olds (2.65), underlining that the fight against soaring youth unemployment rates in many EU member states needs to be stepped up. Eight countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain) even score the maximum possible (3.00), showing that all experts from these countries see a 'very strong need' to combat youth unemployment.

Governments now addressing youth unemployment extensively

Survey respondents also report that governments have responded. With an EU-wide average activity rate of 72 percent, the policy objective of fighting youth unemployment has been addressed most strongly. Five countries (Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Romania) even have an activity rate of 100 percent, meaning that the country experts unanimously report relevant reform initiatives to reduce youth unemployment – responding to what is often a very strong need indeed (see above). Among those eight high-need countries, Finland has an exceptionally low activity rate of only 25 percent. In many countries, the experts do expect the reforms to be reasonably effective, most notably in Romania, Lithuania and Bulgaria.

Figure 10
Social policy: Overall reform activity in EU member states (in percent)

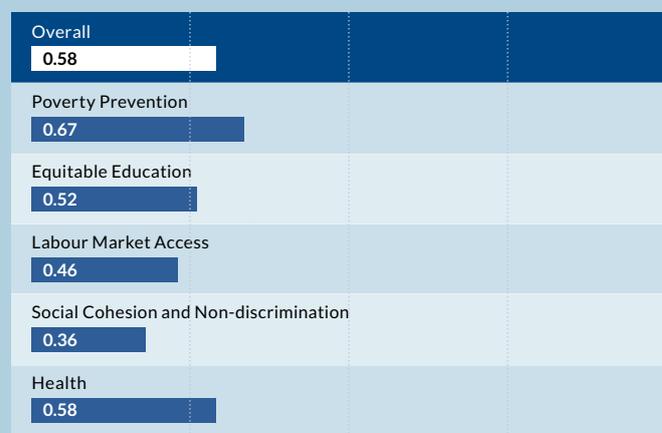


Not included due to insufficient data: BE, CY, EE, IE, SI

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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Figure 11
Social policy reform quality (EU average scores)



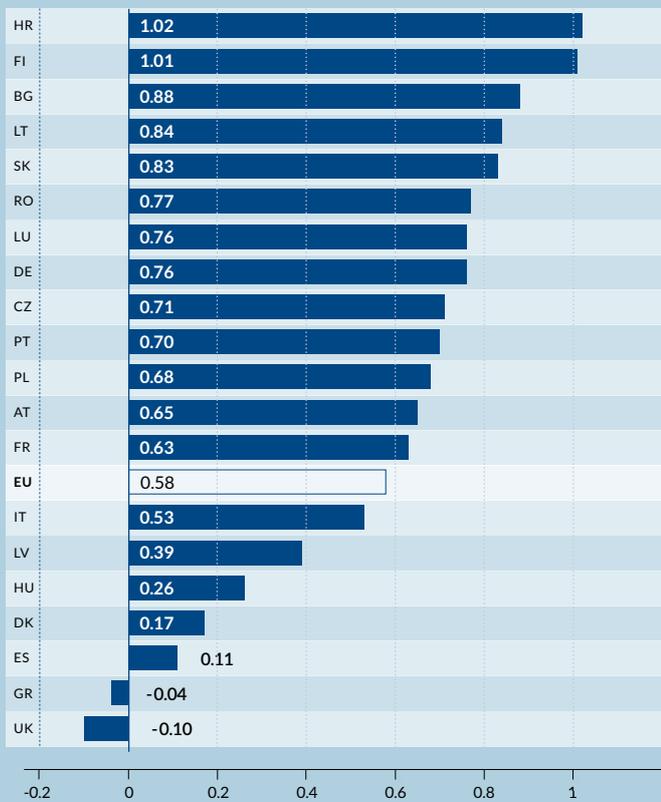
-2 = reforms expected to have very negative effects
+2 = reforms expected to have very positive effects

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Figure 12

Social policy: Overall reform quality in EU member states



-2 = reforms expected to have very negative effects
 +2 = reforms expected to have very positive effects
 Not included due to insufficient data: BE, CY, EE, IE, MT, NL, SI, SE

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Strong need to reduce child poverty and promote learning mobility

Further policy objectives targeting the younger generations and obtaining high EU-average need scores are to reduce child poverty (2.33) and to improve the independence of students' learning success from their socioeconomic background (2.50). Clearly, reducing the rate of early school leavers is an important leveraging tool in the fight against both unemployment and poverty.

Good government responses to reducing child poverty and NEET rates, but too little activity in addressing disadvantaged students

In the Poverty Prevention and Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination dimensions, the policy objectives that specifically target children or young people (i.e. the reduction of child poverty and of NEET rates, respectively) enjoy a degree of reform activity well above average, accompanied by high reform-quality scores.

However, in Equitable Education, activity rates for improving the independence of students' learning success from their socioeconomic background and decreasing the rate of early school leavers are significantly lower.

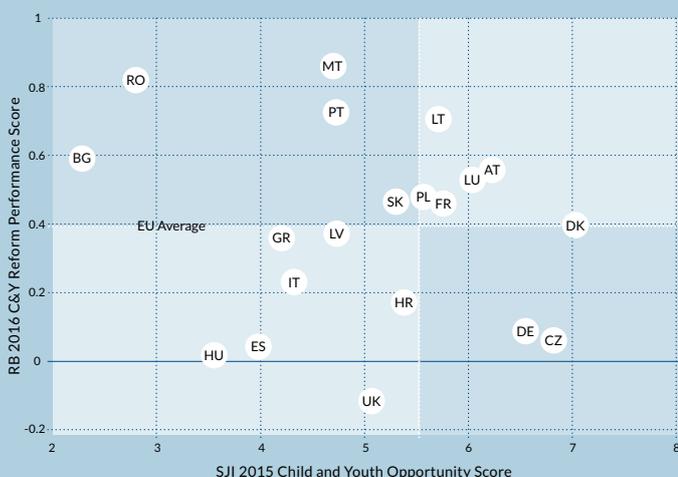
Need-versus-performance landscape for children and youth

Figure 13 compares the Social Justice Index 2015 Child and Youth Opportunity score (Schraad-Tischler 2015) with the Reform Barometer performance score for reforms targeting children and youth.

- Malta, Romania and Portugal are catching up, leading the reform performance ranking. Bulgaria ranks in 5th place.
- Lithuania, Austria and Luxembourg take ranks four, six and seven, respectively, being examples of 'thriving' countries with high reform performances despite below-average reform need.
- The Czech Republic and Germany perform poorly, resting on their laurels.
- The United Kingdom, Hungary and Spain are lagging behind: Their SJI Child and Youth Opportunity scores are below average, and their reform performance ranks are the worst.

Figure 13

Children and young people: state of social justice versus reform performance



SJI score: 1 = worst possible / 10 = best possible
 reform performance: -2 = worst possible / +2 = best possible
 Not included due to insufficient data: BE, CY, EE, FI, IE, NL, SI, SE

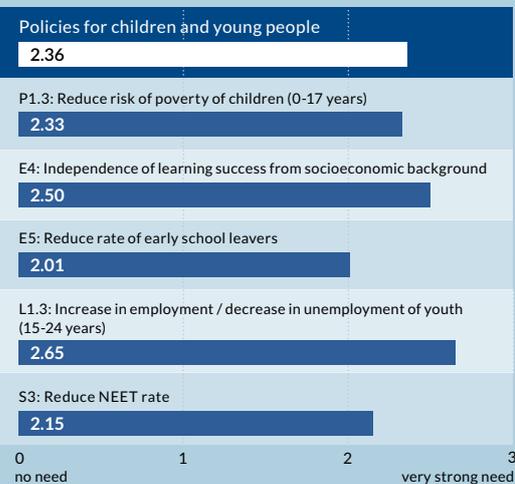
Social Justice Index 2015; SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016 (reform performance)

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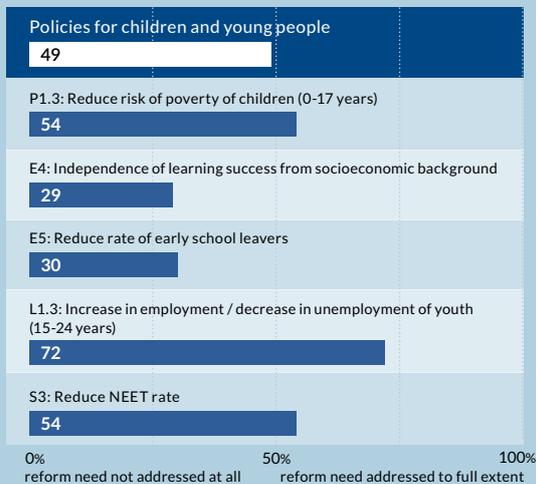
Figure 14

Cross-cutting policies for children and young people (EU average scores)

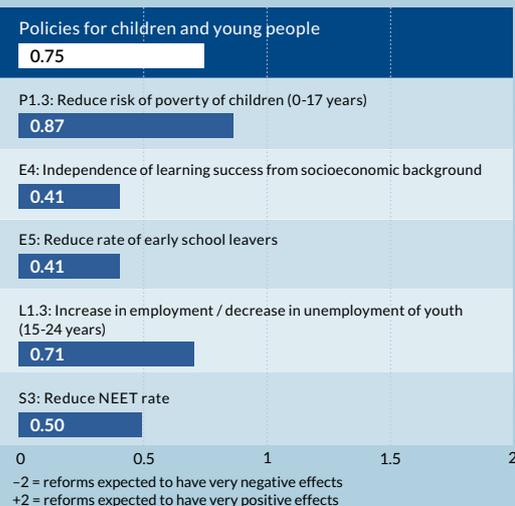
Need for reforms



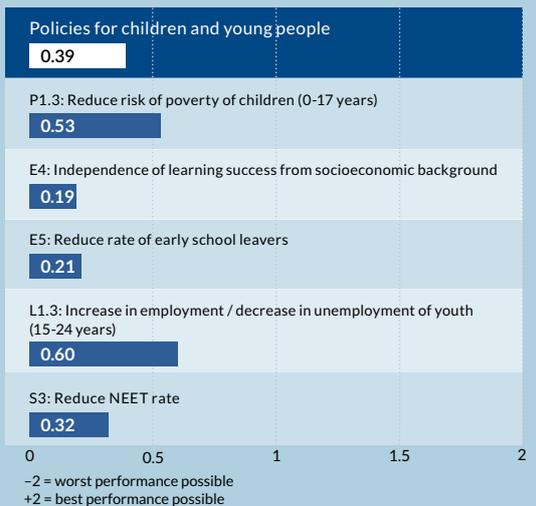
Reform activity (in percent)



Reform quality



Reform performance

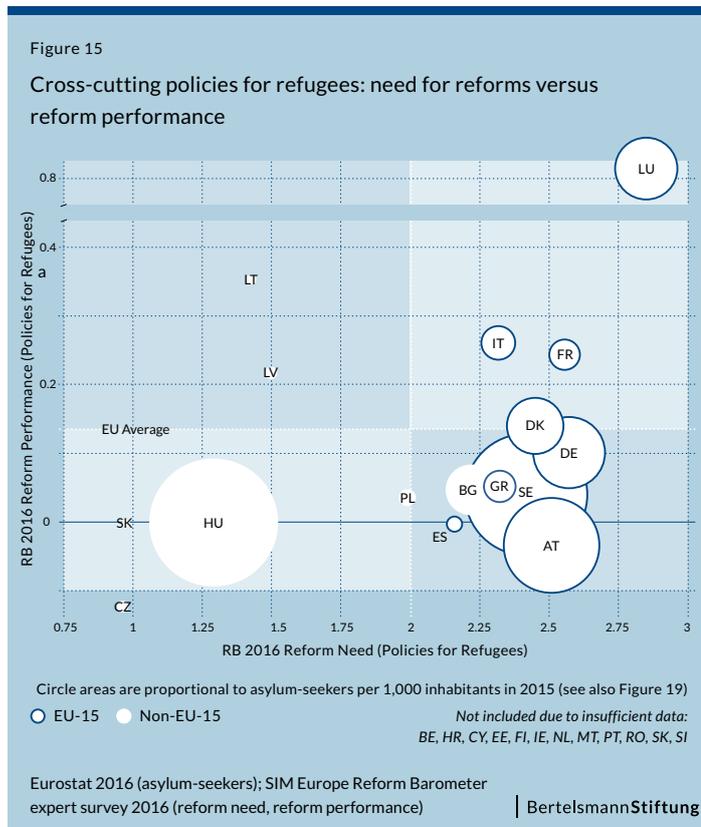


4 Focus: Integration of Refugees

Refugee crisis: A huge challenge for the EU

The refugee crisis is one of the biggest challenges ever faced by EU member states. The peak of the refugee influx in autumn 2015 came within the last third of the period surveyed in the Reform Barometer questionnaire. As a result, the perceived need for governments to take action to integrate refugees into the education system, labour market and society at large, as well as to counteract poverty among them, was very high. At the same time, policy measures have been mostly ad hoc, and in many respects struggle to address the new reality. Statistical data on how integration policies are performing is still very scant and often hard to interpret. Moreover, in EU countries such as Germany, once a refugee's application for asylum has been accepted, he or she appears in the general migrant statistics (including non-refugees) from then on, making it hard to track statistically integration policies specifically targeted at refugees beyond this point.

While the highest activity rate is assigned to general integration policies, no reform activity has been observed in the majority of member states concerning the integration of refugees into the labour market. On average, reform quality scores are lower than in all dimensions, meaning that the expected effects of reforms aimed at improving life for refugees are limited and sometimes even point in the wrong direction.

*The integration of refugees must be largely met by the EU-15*

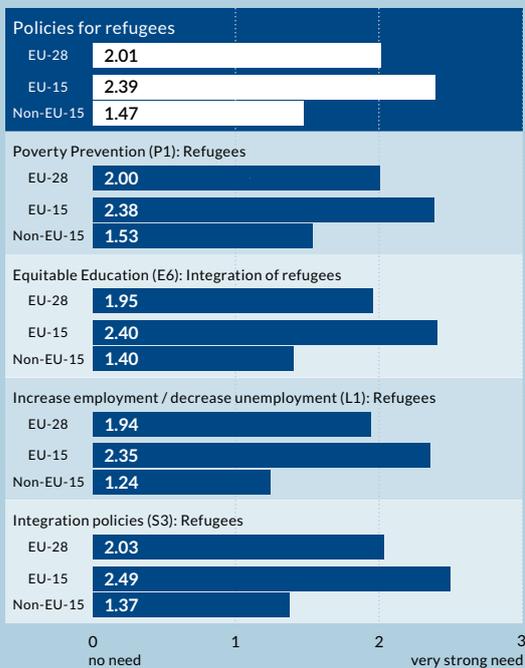
Compared with the five individual dimensions, the composite policy objectives targeting the overall situation of refugees yield a higher need score in the EU-15 (2.39) and a lower activity rate in the non-EU-15 (20%) than the aggregates for all dimensions (see Figures 6, 9, 16).

The experts see the strongest need for reforms in Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, France and Austria, followed by Malta, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom, Greece and Italy. Thus, Malta is the only non-EU-15 country in the upper half in this regard. All Eastern European countries rank in the bottom half. This pattern is relatively stable within the four policy objectives under consideration (see also Figure 16).

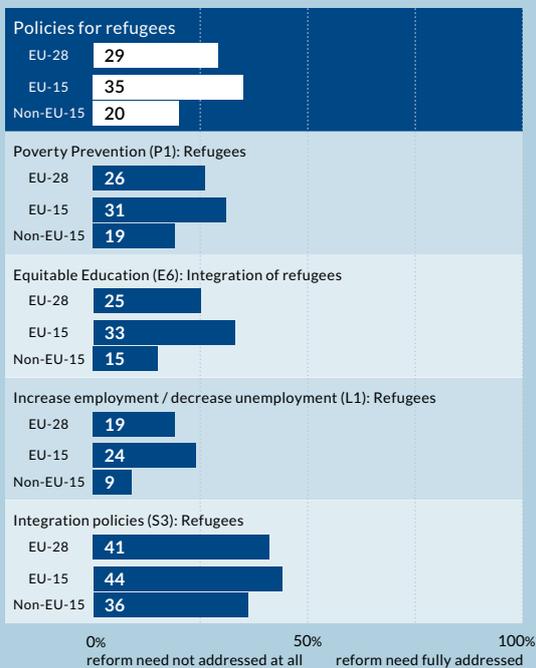
Figure 16

Cross-cutting policies for refugees (EU average scores)

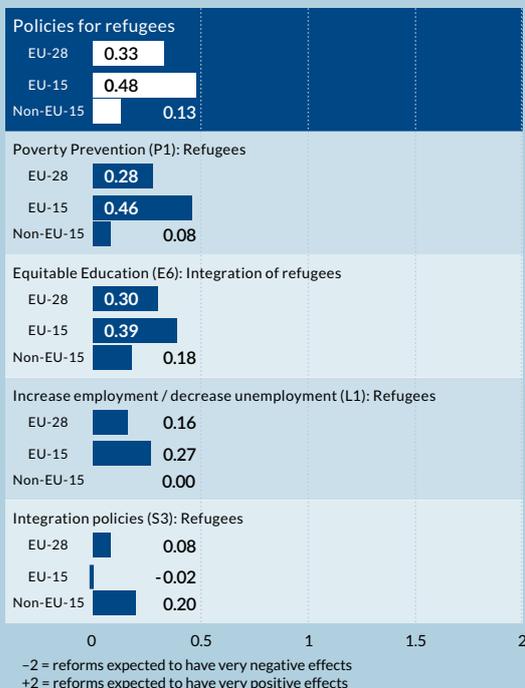
Need for reforms



Reform activity (in percent)



Reform quality



Reform performance

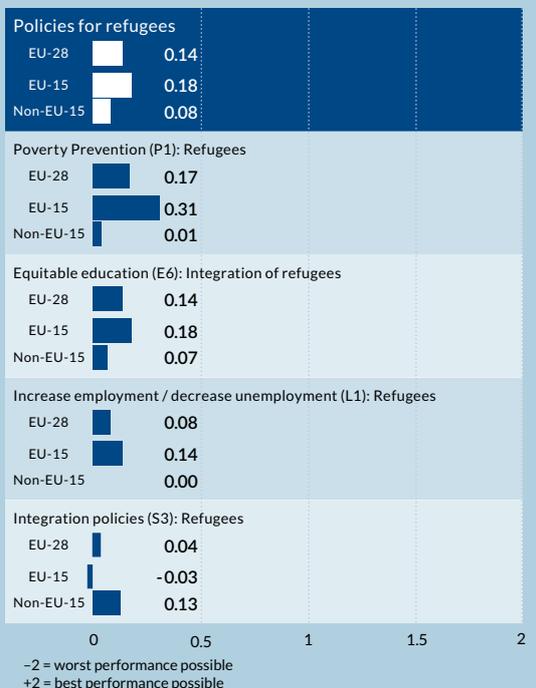


Figure 17

Cross-cutting social policies for refugees:
Need for reforms in EU member states



SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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Sweden, Luxembourg and Denmark most active in dealing with refugee integration – with mixed effects

According to the Reform Barometer survey, Sweden, Luxembourg and Denmark have had the most active governments in terms of addressing the situation of refugees (see Figure 17). Luxembourg appears to have been the most successful at starting to integrate refugees by far (see Figure 16). In particular, respondents report that the country's ministers have focused on poverty among refugees. By contrast, expert responses for Denmark point to negative quality scores for general integration policies (Social Cohesion dimension) and poverty prevention. At the same time, reforms that foster the integration of refugees into the labour market appear to be highly effective in Denmark, ranking it fourth with respect to reform performance in the EU-15, behind Luxembourg, Italy and France. Sweden had to cope with the second-largest number of asylum-seekers in the EU relative to its population size (see Figure 19).

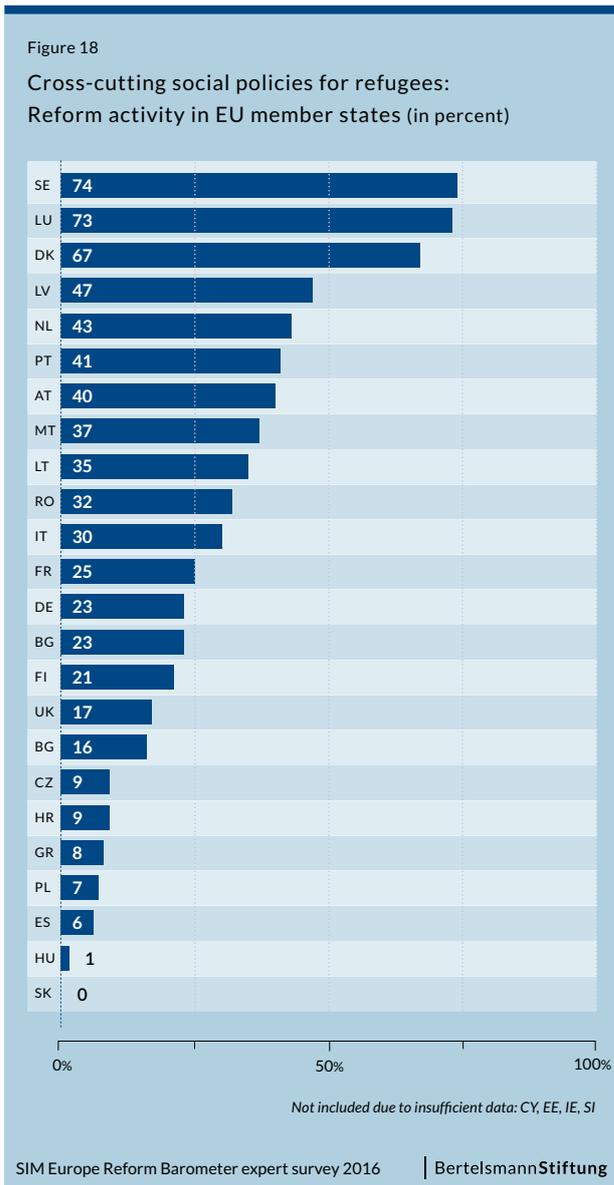
Respondents dissatisfied with measures taken by Austrian government

For Austria, which had to handle the third-largest number of refugees per capita in 2015, expert responses significantly assign negative quality scores for poverty prevention and general integration policies (Social Cohesion dimension). Although the country's efforts to integrate refugees into the education system appear to have been more effective, its performance score is the worst in the EU-15.

Reform activity in Eastern Europe

Bulgaria, which shares an external EU border with Turkey, is assessed as having the highest reform need among the Eastern European countries. This is in line with the fact that it is the only such country with an above-average number of asylum-seekers per 1,000 inhabitants. Its government's response, however, has been below average, the experts say.

Lithuania and Latvia are reported to be the most successful Eastern European countries with respect to the integration of refugees, but were barely challenged, as they had fewer than 0.2 asylum-seekers per 1,000 inhabitants. Very little to no activity has been observed in Hungary, despite the vast influx of refugees into the country (roughly 18 asylum-seekers per 1,000 inhabitants). The lowest reform performance in the whole EU is assigned to the Czech Republic.



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Findings by Dimension

Poverty Prevention

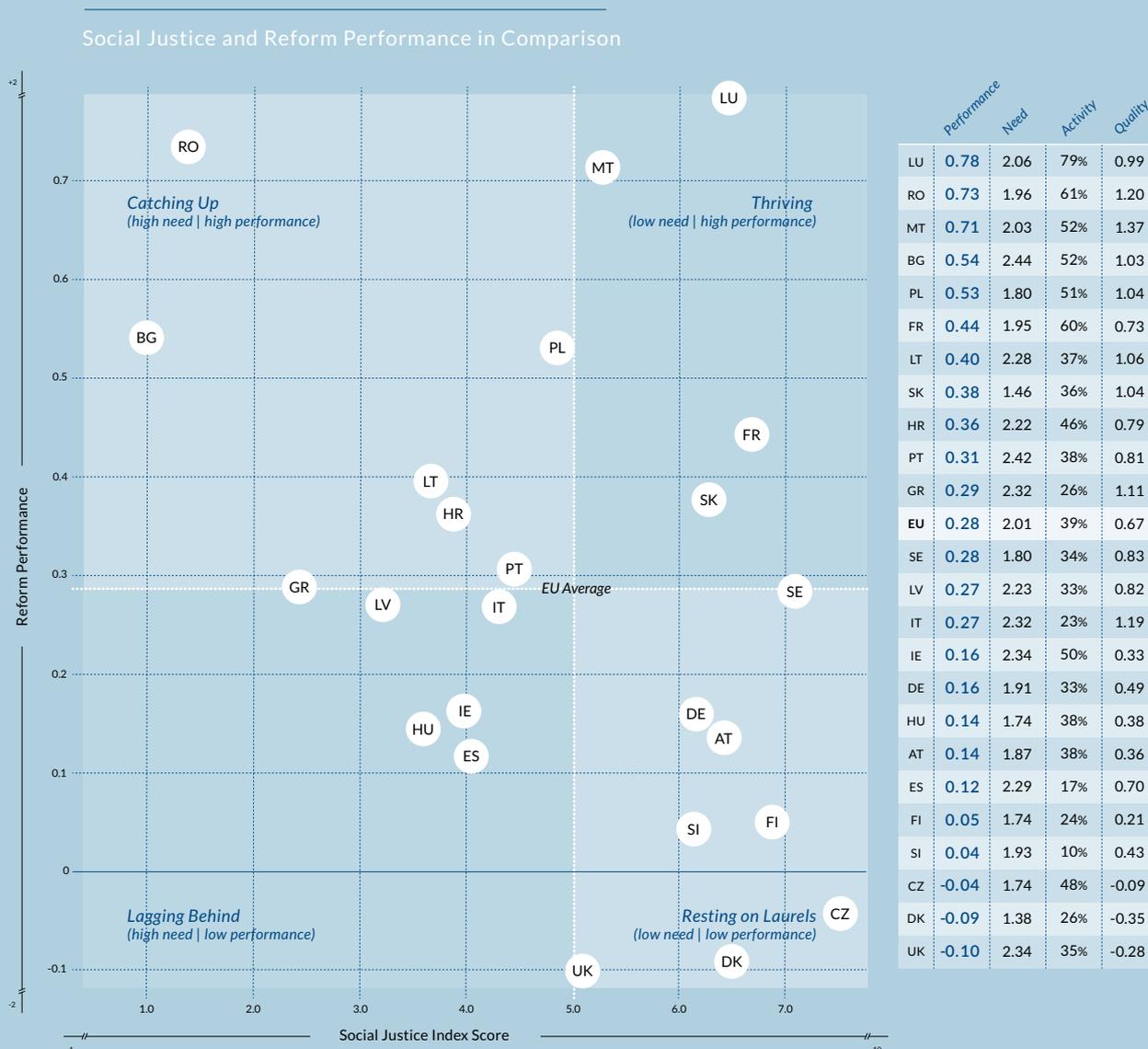
Overview of Policy Objectives and EU Average Scores



NOTABLE FINDINGS

... for the EU as a whole

- Poverty Prevention is the dimension with the highest reform quality in the EU.
- Here, the experts see fighting poverty among single parents and children to be the most pressing need. While child poverty is the most actively and effectively addressed policy objective, poverty among single parents is addressed by significantly less reform activity, and this lower activity, in turn, is slightly less effective
- The least actively and effectively addressed group is the foreign-born population (positive exception: France), followed by refugees (positive exception: Luxembourg)
- The poverty risk for the total population and for senior citizens is also being addressed relatively strongly, despite comparatively low need scores. In Bulgaria, by contrast, poverty amongst the elderly is a very serious problem, according to the experts



... for selected countries and regions

- Luxembourg receives the best reform performance score, particularly because its surprisingly high need score is matched by a top activity rate
- On average, the highest reform-quality values are reported by experts from Malta, where poverty among children and single parents is found to have been targeted particularly successfully
- The lowest activity rate by far is ascribed to Slovenia, with children being the only group targeted at all, according to survey respondents.
- Denmark has the second-lowest need for poverty prevention in the EU, but also performs poorly. Only the United Kingdom shows an even worse reform performance
- Greece, scoring poorly in most other dimensions, earns a respectable 11th-place rank with respect to reform performance here

**POVERTY PREVENTION:
TOWARDS GOOD REFORM QUALITY, BUT NOT EQUALLY ADDRESSED FOR ALL**

by Karin Heitzmann

1 Introduction: Monetary poverty in Europe

Income or monetary poverty remains one of the major social problems within the European Union. Based on its conventional measurement, the at-risk-of-poverty rate amounted to an average of 17.2 percent within the EU-28 in 2014, affecting more than 86 million people. Compared to 2008, it has increased by 0.7 percentage points.¹ At-risk-of-poverty rates below the EU average are evident in Nordic, Continental and Anglo-Saxon states, but also in several Eastern European countries (see Figure P1).² At-risk-of-poverty rates above the EU average are particularly evident within all Southern European countries. Across the EU member states, there are large differences in the at-risk-of-poverty rates, with the former transition countries including both the country with the lowest (9.7% in the Czech Republic) and the highest rate (25.4% in Romania).

The comparatively low at-risk-of-poverty rates in some Eastern European countries are largely the result of the method chosen to measure this social disadvantage. The at-risk-of-poverty rate is a relative measure that includes households whose disposable and – given different household sizes and structures – equivalised household income does not exceed 60 percent of the median within any country. The poverty thresholds differ greatly across Europe – and particularly between northern welfare states and those in Eastern Europe. For example, whereas the poverty threshold in Denmark amounted to €16,717 in 2014, it is set at €4,573 in the Czech Republic. The low poverty rates within both of these countries thus need to be re-assessed while taking into account the profound differences regarding overall income standards.

Poverty thresholds increased in most countries between 2008 and 2014. However, the opposite holds true for Southern Europe. There, poverty thresholds either remained constant (Italy and Portugal) or decreased (e.g. by 29% in Greece) – which reflects not only the difficult economic situation within these countries during the years of crisis, but also the drastic reduction in disposable incomes among the poor. Outside Southern Europe, a drop of the poverty threshold between 2008 and 2014 was only experienced in Ireland (-15%).

Income poverty is not only distributed unevenly across European member states, there are also differences concerning the poverty risk within countries. Some population groups are more likely to be income poor than others in virtually all EU member states. Three components particularly correlate with a higher income poverty risk. First, there is household composition.³ Throughout the EU-28, some household types are more likely to experience income poverty than others. For example, in only three out of 28 EU member states are single-person households less likely to be income poor than

¹ This and all remaining data information is, unless otherwise stated, derived from the Eurostat database (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/de/data/database>).

² Anglo-Saxon countries include Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom; Continental countries include Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; eastern countries include Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia; Nordic countries include Denmark, Finland and Sweden; southern countries include Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

³ Income poverty is measured on the basis of households rather than individuals. This implies that within a household, all household members are either income poor or not. Intra-household distributions are disregarded, not least due to a lack of relevant data.

the population on average. The same applies to only two member states concerning households with two adults and three or more dependent children. And in no country are single-parent families less likely to be income poor than the population on average. These household types thus represent risky ones in terms of experiencing income poverty. The opposite holds true with regard to households of two adults living together: In only three EU member states is the poverty risk of this household type higher than compared to the population on average. Households consisting of two adults with one dependent child are also less likely to be income poor – with the exception of four European countries. This also applies to households with two adults and two dependent children – with the exception of six countries. This evidence suggests that policies targeted at vulnerable household types are required to reduce their likelihood of experiencing material poverty.

A second explanatory factor for a higher at-risk-of-poverty rate is the employment intensity within a household. This is measured by comparing the full employment potential within a household (i.e. the number of employment hours that could be achieved if all working-age adults were in full-time employment) with the actual number of working hours. The results are indeed impressive (for the population aged between 0 and 59 years): If the employment intensity is below 45 percent of the total employment potential, at-risk-of-poverty rates are above the country average in all 28 EU member states without exception. The opposite is true if the employment intensity within households is high (above 80%). In this case, the at-risk-of-poverty rates are below the country average in all member states. These striking results confirm the relevance of – preferably full-time – employment to reducing income poverty risks within all EU member states. The importance of ‘employment intensity’ has been acknowledged by its integration within the Europe 2020 target for combatting poverty and social exclusion.⁴ These results suggest that policies aimed at enhancing the inclusion of as many working-age adults as possible into the labour market are key to reducing their propensity to experience income poverty. However,

Figure P1

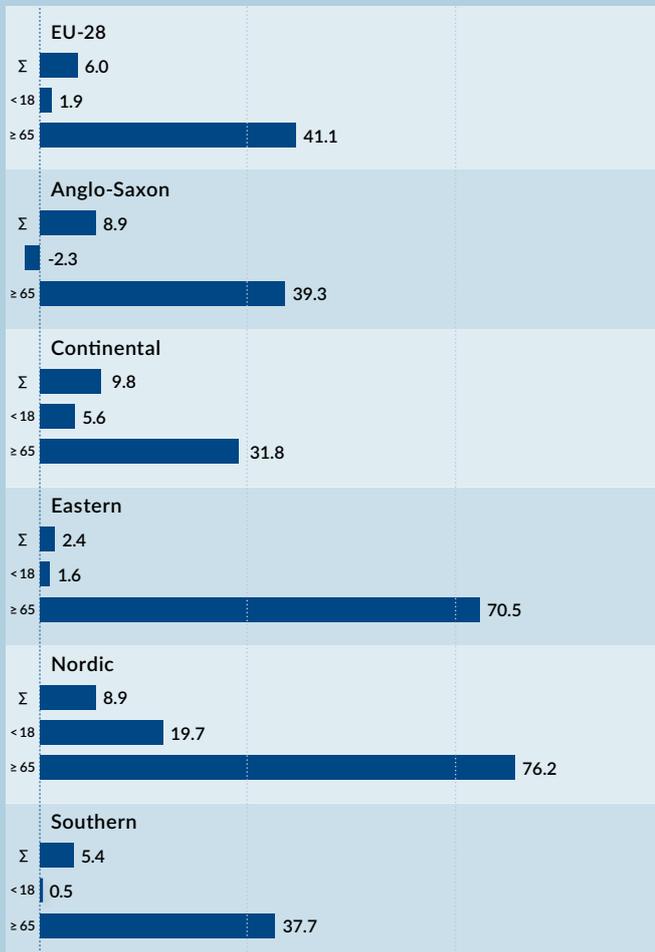
At-risk-of-poverty rates in the EU-28, 2014 (in percent)



⁴ This composite indicator combines three variables: people living in households below the at-risk-of-poverty rate, people living in households with a very low employment intensity (<20%), and people living in households that are severely materially deprived. The latter have living conditions severely constrained by a lack of resources, i.e. households experience at least 4 out of 9 following deprivation items: They cannot afford (i) to pay rent or utility bills; (ii) keep the home adequately warm; (iii) face unexpected expenses; (iv) eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day; (v) a week holiday away from home; (vi) a car; (vii) a washing machine; (viii) a colour TV; or (ix) a telephone.

Figure P2

Difference between at-risk-of-poverty rate for men and women younger than 18 and 65 and older, EU-28, 2014 (in percent)



Reading example: In the EU-28, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for women was 6.0 percent higher than the respective rate for men.

Haigner et al. (2016): *Comparing Social Policy in Europe. A Statistical Documentation*. Wirtschaftspolitisches Zentrum Wien St. Gallen: 21.

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employment is not a guarantee when it comes to preventing or escaping monetary poverty given high proportions of in-work poverty in some countries – especially in Eastern Europe, where minimum and average wages are particularly low.

A third component associated with higher income poverty is whether a member of a household has a migrant background. As this group features prominently in the upcoming analysis, this issue will be discussed in some detail below (see Section 1.4).

In what follows, the poverty risks of specific subgroups of the population, which are referred to in the SIM Europe Reform Barometer survey (senior citizens, children, single parents, foreign-born population and refugees), are examined and illustrated in more depth.

1.1 Senior citizens

The at-risk-of-poverty rate of senior citizens (defined here as individuals above the age of 65) is 3.4 percentage points below the average in the EU-28 (amounting to 13.8% in 2014, thus affecting some 12.6 million people). Material poverty of the elderly has also become less of a problem than it used to be. In 23 of the 27 EU countries for which data is available, income poverty for this risk group decreased between 2008 and 2014, with the exceptions being Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg and Sweden. The decrease amounted to an average of 5.2 percentage points, with the at-risk-of-poverty rate decreasing from 18.9 percent in 2008 to 13.8 percent in 2014 for the EU-28. This decrease is very remarkable given the parallel increase in material poverty that has affected the European population on average (see above).

These results suggest that income poverty for the elderly is becoming less of a problem in Europe. However, three important – and somewhat linked – limitations apply. First, the at-risk-of-poverty rates of senior citizens are actually higher in 13 of the 28 EU countries than that of the overall population. Second, income poverty rates of senior citizens living alone are only lower than the country average in eight EU member states. Third, the deviation of the income poverty risk among women and men is by far the highest for this age group of the population, suggesting that poverty among senior citizens is predominantly a problem for women (see Figure P2).

Income poverty among senior citizens thus remains a problem in specific countries and for specific subgroups. Given that senior citizens' prospects of gaining work-related income are low, they rely on pensions or other transfers from private or public sources. Consequently, an enhancement of these

pensions – including, for example, the introduction of minimum payouts and/or raising these minimum levels above the poverty threshold – are among the options available for lifting these people out of poverty (which, incidentally, is a proposal that some of the country experts in the SIM Europe Reform Barometer survey 2016 have put forward (see below)). A second concern with regard to senior citizens is that expenditures are likely to increase with age given that the likelihood of requiring health care and/or long-term care increases with longevity. This suggests that there might be the need for more income and/or services to tackle these additional demands on the purse.

1.2 Children

In contrast to the income poverty rate of senior citizens, which was below the EU average in 2014, the corresponding rate for children (defined here as individuals below the age of 18) was higher than average (by 3.9 percentage points). Moreover, while the rate among senior citizens decreased in most member states between 2008 and 2014, the opposite was true in the case of children: Only six member states managed to decrease the at-risk-of-poverty rate of children within this period, whereas 22 states failed to do so. Thus, in 2014, almost 20 million children experienced material poverty within the EU-28. Again, children's risks of becoming income poor is distributed unevenly across member states. It is higher in Eastern (27%) and Southern European countries (25.4%), and lower in Anglo-Saxon (19.7%), Continental (16.3%) and particularly Nordic countries (12.4%).

Research on child poverty has provided ample evidence of the damaging consequences of poverty on the current situation of children and their future prospects. To put it in a nutshell, today's poor children are likely to be tomorrow's poor adults. And the poor adults of tomorrow are likely to be the poor parents of poor children in the future. This vicious cycle is one of the main arguments for investing in children to help them break this poverty trap, for example, by providing good-quality education that enhances their employability (Heckman 2000, 2013).

The social investment package launched by the European Commission in 2013 (see Section 2) proposes policies to break this intergenerational transmission of poverty, such as with enhanced education (and opportunities more generally) for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Indeed, many experts in the Reform Barometer survey suggested in their comments that these investments in children should be enhanced (see also below).

1.3 Single parents

The previous section has presented evidence that children are particularly vulnerable to experiencing income poverty in Europe. We have seen, too, that this vulnerability has increased over time and that there is a variation between countries. However, the risk of child poverty is unevenly distributed not only between, but also within countries. Variations are based on the household types children live in (see also above). Data suggest that single-parent families are among those with the highest risk of experiencing material poverty in the EU-28. Indeed, for all 28 member states, living in a single-parent household implies a higher at-risk-of-poverty rate than compared with the national average; roughly a third of individuals living in single-parent households were income poor in 2014 in the EU-28.

Again, poverty rates of single-parent households are not distributed evenly among EU member countries. The lowest poverty rate has been identified for Denmark in 2014 (13.0%), the highest for Malta (46.3%). Comparing income poverty rates of single-parent households over time suggests that, on average, the risk decreased by 2.9 percentage points between 2008 and 2014 in the EU. On a country-by-country basis, however, about half experienced increasing at-risk-of-poverty rates among single-parent families within this six-year time span.

1.4 Foreign-born population and refugees

A key factor that influences the likelihood of experiencing income poverty in most European countries is whether a person has a migrant background. There are differences in the at-risk-of-poverty rate between the total population and people with a different country of birth. The Eurostat database provides information on different groups. In what follows, we concentrate on two of them: the foreign-born population aged 18 and above, and children below the age of 18 with at least one parent who was born abroad.

Overall, 16.3 percent of the total population aged 18 years or above are on average affected by income poverty in the EU-28. However, this applies to 15.2 percent of those born in the resident country and to 26.3 percent of those born elsewhere. Regarding the foreign-born population, countries of origin make a measurable difference when it comes to the likelihood of experiencing income poverty. People born outside the EU-28 face a higher risk of material poverty (amounting to 30.5% in the EU-28) than people born within the Union (19.8%).

Again, differences between countries apply, with the highest proportions of poor foreign-born people living in Greece (45.1%) and Spain (43.5%), and with relatively low levels in several Eastern European countries (e.g. 5.2% in Hungary, 7.9% in Slovakia, and 9.7% in Poland). Indeed, it is remarkable that, in some Eastern European countries, the average risk of income poverty is lower for people born outside the country of residence than for those born within it.⁵ This applies to Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (information on Romania is not available).

The risk of poverty among children also depends on where their parents were born. While 18.3 percent of children in the EU-28 are at risk of poverty if their parents were born in the resident country, the same applies to 32.7 percent of children if their parents were born in a foreign country. However, these deviations differ among the member states for which data is available. For example, in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Spain and Sweden, the children of foreign-born parents have income poverty rates that are at least 25 percentage points higher than those of children with native-born parents. The smallest differences in the at-risk-of-poverty rates between children of native and foreign-born parents can be observed in Eastern European countries (Haigner et al. 2016: 13). Indeed, income poverty rates of children with foreign-born parents in Hungary (7.5 percentage points) and Latvia (9.6 percentage points) are even lower than those of children born in these countries. The situation is worst for foreign-born children living in Southern Europe. Their income poverty rate amounted to 55.1 percent in

⁵ However, the proportions of people born outside their resident countries vary largely across Europe. The outlier is Luxembourg, as 46 percent of its population was not born in the country. At the other extreme, only 1 percent of the population in Romania, and 2 percent of those in Bulgaria and Poland, were born outside their resident countries. These differences need to be kept in mind when comparing poverty rates of the foreign-born populations across countries.

Spain and 48.9 percent in Greece. In terms of poverty policies, these results suggest that policies targeted at people (and, above all, children) with a migrant background are needed – at least in most European member states.

Quantitative information on the income poverty risks of refugees within the EU is not available – not least because this group does not feature within the EU-SILC dataset, from which information on income poverty in Europe is derived. The EU-SILC excludes people not living in private households – and refugees often live in institutions rather than private homes. However, it is pretty safe to assume that they are more likely to be income poor as compared to the rest of the population – and, indeed, to large numbers of other foreign-born people.

2 EU activity concerning poverty prevention

Despite the relevance of the subsidiarity principle for social policy, the EU institutions have a long tradition of focusing on preventing and combatting poverty (and, later on, social exclusion) (e.g. Room 2010). In 2008, the relevance of poverty and social exclusion for the social dimension of the Union was acknowledged by incorporating this dimension into the Europe 2020 agenda as one of five objectives.⁶ For the first time, the Commission set a quantitative target: By 2020, the number of poor and socially excluded people should go down by 20 million (compared to 2008). The income poverty rate is one of three components that make up the composite index of ‘poverty or social exclusion’ in this respect (see Footnote 4 for a description of the remaining two indicators). However, as a result of the 2008 financial and fiscal crisis that subsequently hit virtually all member states, it appears unlikely at the moment (September 2016) that the target will be reached by 2020. Indeed, in the period between the initial crisis and the end of 2014 (or after half of the period of the 2008–2020 time frame), there was actually a cumulative increase, of 5.1 million people, rather than a reduction in the EU-27 (excluding Croatia).

Against this background of more difficult economic and fiscal circumstances, the European platform against poverty and social exclusion was launched in 2010 to assist EU member states in reaching the headline targets of the Europe 2020 agenda. What’s more, the annual procedure for coordination and monitoring progress of the member states has been renewed (as well as organised on the basis of a ‘European Semester’). Relying on annual reports on reform programmes provided by the member states, the Council of the European Union issues recommendations to ensure that the reforms and reform proposals are in line with, for example, national stability programmes. In these recommendations, the Council also makes suggestions and comments on social issues. However, as with previous attempts to strengthen the Union’s social dimension, countries do not face any harsh consequences in case of underachievement, except for ‘naming and shaming’, such as through the Council’s recommendations or comparative analyses.

Given both the unfavourable economic situation and lack of progress concerning the outcomes of its social dimension, the Commission forwarded a social investment package in 2013 to gain new momentum in social policy. As part of this process, it restructured the social policy areas it fo-

⁶ A further aspect suggesting the high relevance of poverty issues at the EU level (at least in terms of rhetoric) is the fact that 2010 was proclaimed the ‘European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’, with a variety of related events at the EU and member-state levels.

cuses on into two branches: social protection and social investment.⁷ Poverty prevention has been identified as a policy area for the investment branch (together with active inclusion, social innovation, investing in children, homelessness, active ageing and social services of general interest).

The social investment perspective (or, indeed, perspectives, given the differences in the interpretation of this social policy paradigm in the literature) has its roots both in academic writings (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002; Giddens 1998; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2003; Morel, Palier and Palme 2012; Vandenbroucke, Hemerijck and Palier 2011) and political programmes, particularly, but not exclusively, at the OECD (2012) and EU levels (European Commission 2013). By fostering preventive social policies, investments in human capital and activation, the social investment paradigm particularly aims to prevent the transmission of poverty across generations – hence its relevance for the field of poverty prevention.

Upon the initiative of Jean-Claude Juncker, the Commission's current president, another proposal related to social policy and poverty prevention was recently (March 2016) introduced: the European Pillar on Social Rights.⁸ The proposal sets out a number of essential principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems within the eurozone. Although designed to achieve more convergence within the eurozone, it also allows non-eurozone EU member states to join. The European Pillar is now under consultation. It is too early to say whether this initiative will complement or substitute earlier initiatives at the EU level, most notably the social investment perspective. Nor is it possible to foresee the effects it will have on achieving the Europe 2020 targets and/or on social and anti-poverty policies after that date.

3 Survey results across member states

In what follows, results from the questionnaire that forms part of the Social Inclusion Monitor are summarised on the topic of poverty prevention. The latter has been the first of six social risks that the Reform Barometer survey focused on. Here, the questionnaire collected information on three main issues. First, country experts were asked whether they felt that there was a need to reduce the poverty risk for the population in general and five specific subgroups (senior citizens, children, single parents, foreign-born population and refugees) in particular. Second, they were asked whether policy reforms have been implemented to address the poverty risk of the population and the subgroups, respectively. If such reforms had been introduced, respondents were thirdly requested to estimate their likely effects on the poor. In what follows, results of the Reform Barometer survey are presented on these three topics both for the population in general and the five risk groups specifically.

⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=750&langId=en>

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2487&furtherNews=yes>

3.1 Survey results on the perceived need to reduce the risk of poverty

First, respondents were asked whether they felt that there was a need to reduce the poverty risk for the population in general and specific subgroups of the population in particular. Experts were able to choose between four categories of need, ranging from 0 ('no need at all') to 3 ('very strong need'). The country experts could also choose to answer 'don't know'. This question was answered by 463 country experts for the EU-28, or by roughly 40 percent of the 1,151 respondents within the survey as a whole. In comparison with the other five areas in the questionnaire, this is a particularly high rate of response.

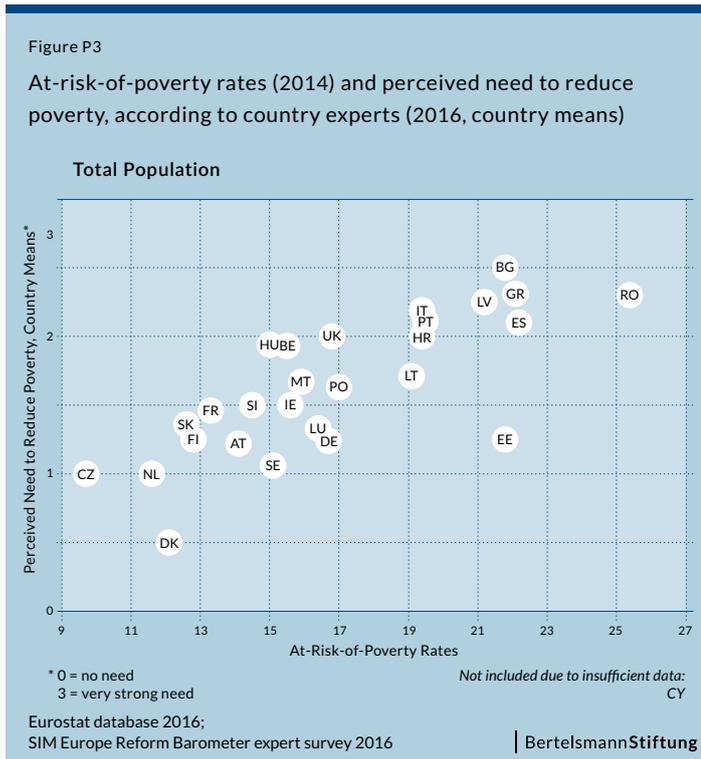
Of the 463 respondents, only a small minority selected the 'don't know' box with regard to the overall population and the subgroups 'senior citizens', 'children' and 'single parents'. Interestingly, the proportion of experts who did not know whether there was a need to reduce the risk of poverty for the foreign-born population or refugees was much higher (15 and 17%, respectively). This suggests that there is a higher degree of unawareness regarding the poverty risks of these subgroups than those of the more conventional groups. Analysing by regions, the highest proportions of 'don't know' answers concerning the foreign-born population and refugees (25% and above) were given by experts from Eastern Europe – and, thus, from countries with relatively small proportions of foreign-born people and refugees (see also Footnote 5). Moreover, an expert from an Eastern European country mentioned that there is hardly any data available on the social disadvantages of refugees and foreign-born people in his/her country, as its official statistics do not provide information on the migrant background of individuals.

Among the 454 respondents who selected one of the four need categories (0 to 3), only a tiny fraction (ca. 8%) reported that there was no need to reduce the poverty risk for the population in general. Another 20 percent suggested that there was indeed a very strong need. The median for the EU-28 was 1.6, while the mean was 1.7. Both values suggest a slightly skewed distribution towards an above-average need.

A pretty large standard deviation detected in regard to the mean (0.8) points to the fact that there are some substantial differences between countries. Indeed, results varied between member states.⁹ As might have been expected from the introduction (see above), Nordic countries are among the EU countries with the lowest means (ranging from 0.5 in Denmark to 1.3 in Finland). The Southern European countries for which data is available are among the countries with the highest means (ranging from 2.1 in Spain and Portugal to 2.3 in Greece). The means of Continental countries (ranging from 1.0 in the Netherlands to 1.9 in Belgium) and of Anglo-Saxon countries (ranging from 1.5 in Ireland to 2.0 in the UK) are in-between. Eastern European countries are more difficult to cluster given that the spread of country means was widest, as the region includes both the country with the second-lowest (Czech Republic: 1.0) and the highest (Bulgaria: 2.5) mean.

If we compare the at-risk-of-poverty rates within Europe with the experts' perceptions on the need to reduce poverty for the population, one can see a close correlation between the objective and the rather more subjective indicators on income poverty (see Figure P3). In countries where the at-risk-of-

⁹ Note that the number of respondents regarding this question varied largely between the 28 EU member states, with a low participation of only one respondent in Cyprus and a high participation of 31 in Italy.



poverty rate is rather high, the country experts' perceptions concerning the need to address poverty also tend to be high. The opposite is true for countries with lower at-risk-of-poverty rates, though there are exceptions. For example, experts from Estonia did not consider there to be a particularly strong need to reduce poverty in their country even though it has one of the highest at-risk-of-poverty rates in Europe.

In what follows, we analyse the results of the questionnaire according to the five subgroups of the population on which the Reform Barometer survey focused (senior citizens, children, single parents, foreign-born population and refugees). An initial finding is that the subgroups are indeed risk groups concerning monetary poverty. With the exception of senior citizens, country experts in the EU-28 perceived the need to reduce poverty as being higher for the subgroups than for the population on average (see also Table P1). Similar results occur when examining the median rather than the mean: Children, refugees, single parents and

foreign-born people all achieved a value of 2 or higher across the EU. This signifies yet again an above-average need to reduce poverty of these risk groups as compared to the total population (and senior citizens).

On a country-by-country basis, some of the subgroups are considered to be less in need concerning poverty prevention than the overall population. Considering mean values, this applies to the subgroup of senior citizens in some Continental countries (Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), in some Southern European countries (Greece, Italy and Spain), and in two Eastern European countries (Hungary and Romania). The mean value concerning the foreign-born population or refugees was lower when compared to the country averages in most Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and in Greece (with regard to foreign-born people). Single parents have obtained the same mean value as the average population in Greece – and higher values in all other countries studied. Experts from all 28 member states perceived the need to address children's poverty as being greater than the need to address that of the overall population.

Indeed, the highest need to reduce the poverty risk at the aggregate EU level has been acknowledged for children and single parents (means: 2.4 and 2.3, respectively). These results do not come as a surprise given that these two groups also display very high at-risk-of-poverty rates. In 2014, the respective rates amounted to 32.5 percent for single parents and 21.1 percent for children. The lowest need to reduce poverty has been identified for senior citizens (with a mean of 1.7 for the EU-28) – a result which is confirmed by the relatively low at-risk-of-poverty rate for this subgroup (13.8 percent in 2014 for the EU-28) and by the downward trend over time.

Experts perceived the need for reducing poverty risks of the two remaining subgroups as higher than that of senior citizens and, indeed, comparable to those of single parents and children. The mean attributed to the need

Table P1

Experts' perceptions of the need to reduce the poverty risk for the total population in general and five subgroups

	Total population Mean (Median)	Senior citizens Mean (Median)	Children Mean (Median)	Single parents Mean (Median)	Foreign-born population Mean (Median)	Refugees Mean (Median)
EU	1.7 (1.6)	1.7 (1.6)	2.4 (2.5)	2.3 (2.3)	2.0 (2.1)	2.2 (2.4)
AT	1.2 (1)	1.7 (2)	1.6 (2)	2.2 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.4 (3)
BE	1.9 (2)	1.5 (1)	2.1 (2)	2.6 (3)	2.6 (3)	2.5 (3)
BG	2.5 (3)	3.0 (3)	2.7 (3)	2.6 (3)	1.6 (2)	2.3 (3)
CR	2.0 (2)	2.6 (3)	2.4 (3)	2.5 (3)	1.8 (2)	2.0 (2)
CZ	1.0 (1)	2.1 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.8 (3)	1.3 (1)	1.3 (1)
DK	0.5 (0)	0.9 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.2 (1)	2.0 (2)	2.2 (2)
EE	1.3 (1.5)	2.5 (2.5)	2.8 (3)	3.0 (3)	–	–
FI	1.3 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.7 (2)	2.2 (2)	1.7 (2)	2.1 (2)
FR	1.5 (1)	1.4 (1)	2.2 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.3 (2.5)	2.4 (3)
DE	1.2 (1)	1.7 (1.5)	2.0 (2)	2.2 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.3 (2)
EL	2.3 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.6 (3)	2.3 (2)	2.2 (2)	2.6 (3)
HU	1.9 (2)	1.5 (1)	2.8 (3)	2.4 (3)	0.7 (1)	1.2 (1)
IE	1.5 (1.5)	1.5 (1.5)	3.0 (3)	2.8 (3)	2.4 (2)	2.8 (3)
IT	2.2 (2)	1.6 (2)	2.6 (3)	2.4 (2)	2.5 (2.5)	2.7 (3)
LV	2.3 (2)	2.9 (3)	2.9 (3)	2.8 (3)	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)
LT	1.7 (2)	2.8 (3)	2.7 (3)	2.8 (3)	1.6 (1)	2.0 (2)
LU	1.3 (1)	0.6 (1)	2.6 (3)	2.4 (3)	2.7 (3)	2.7 (3)
MT	1.7 (2)	2.1 (2.5)	2.0 (2)	2.3 (2.5)	1.9 (2)	2.3 (3)
NL	1.0 (1)	0.9 (1)	1.4 (2)	1.4 (1)	1.7 (2)	1.8 (1.5)
PO	1.6 (2)	1.7 (1)	2.7 (3)	1.9 (2)	1.3 (1)	1.6 (2)
PT	2.1 (2)	2.4 (3)	2.7 (3)	2.6 (3)	2.4 (2)	2.3 (2.5)
RO	2.3 (2)	2.1 (2)	2.8 (3)	2.5 (2.5)	0.9 (1)	1.2 (1)
SK	1.4 (1)	1.7 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.4 (2.5)	0.6 (0)	0.7 (1)
SI	1.5 (1)	2.5 (2.5)	2.0 (1.5)	2.3 (2.5)	–	–
ES	2.1 (2)	1.7 (2)	2.7 (3)	2.5 (3)	2.6 (3)	2.2 (2)
SE	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.8 (2)	2.2 (2)	2.1 (2)	2.2 (3)
UK	2.0 (2)	2.0 (2)	2.7 (3)	2.6 (3)	2.1 (2)	2.7 (3)

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

Not included due to insufficient data: CY

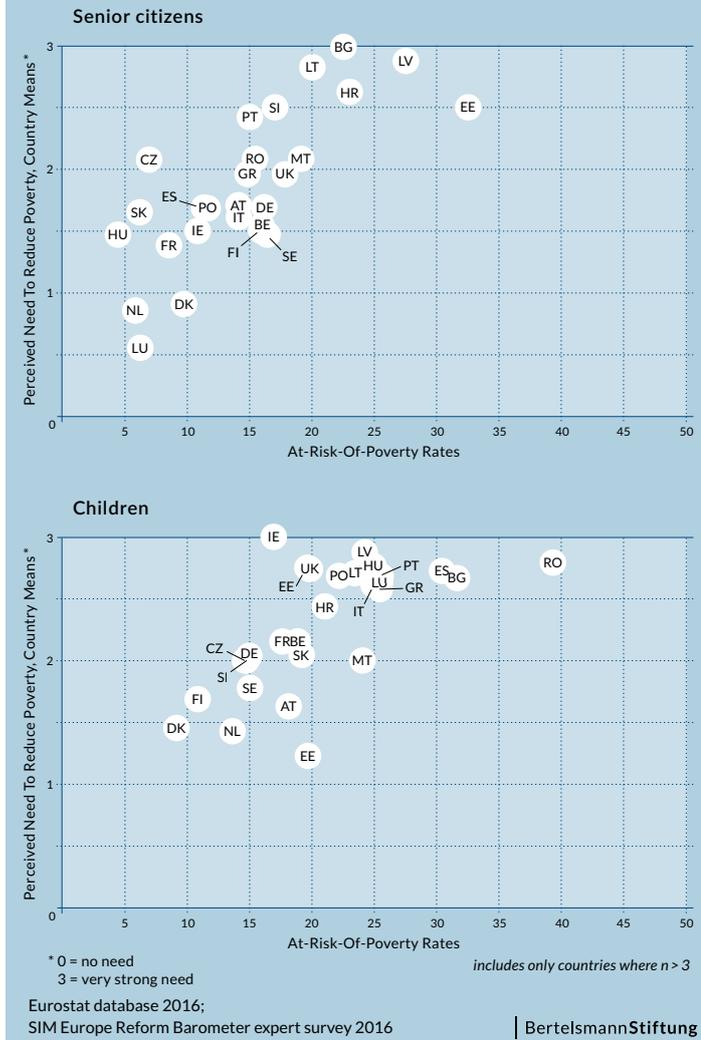
for reducing poverty of foreign-born people achieved a value of 2.0. Regarding refugees, the mean value amounted to 2.2. However, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of the foreign-born population (aged 18 and older) amounted to 26.3 percent in 2014 in the EU-28,¹⁰ which is higher than the material poverty rate of children. However, the profound differences in at-risk-of-poverty rates of foreign-born people across EU member states (ranging from 5.2% in Hungary to 45.1% in Greece) help explain why the aggregate value has not achieved a higher rate.

If we further analyse the results of the Reform Barometer survey by member states, more differences between countries become apparent. Countries vary in terms of whether they perceive the needs to reduce poverty among the four risk groups as higher or lower. Figure P4 (a and b) plots the mean val-

¹⁰ As stated above, data on the at-risk-of-poverty rate for refugees is not available.

Figure P4 a

At-risk-of-poverty rates (2014, in percent) and perceived need to reduce poverty, according to country experts (2016, country means), by EU member state and risk group



ues of the perceptions of country experts by four risk groups and countries, and compares these data with the at-risk-of-poverty rates concerning these groups (comparable data for refugees is not available).

For all subgroups studied, one can see some correlation between the objective indicator of monetary poverty (i.e. the at-risk-of-poverty rate) and the rather more subjective indicator (i.e. the experts' perceptions on the need to reduce poverty).

Countries also vary in terms of the ranking of the subgroups concerning higher and lower needs to address their poverty (see also Table 1). Most notably, all Nordic countries as well as most Continental, Southern and Anglo-Saxon countries identified the lowest need to reduce poverty as being with senior citizens and – with the exception of a few of these countries, particularly Southern countries – the highest as being with refugees. In contrast to these regions, experts from Eastern European countries perceive the highest need to reduce poverty as being with senior citizens (Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia), children (Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Romania), or single parents (Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia). Experts from all the Eastern European countries for which sufficient data is available attribute the lowest need to reduce poverty as being with foreign-born people and/or refugees. Again, this finding has to be related to the fact that the proportions of foreign-born people and refugees in Eastern European countries are sometimes considerably lower than they are in other regions (see Footnote 5). Moreover, and as has been shown earlier,

at-risk-of-poverty rates in some Eastern European countries are lower among foreign-born people (aged 18 and older) than among those in the native-born population (e.g. in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia; see also above).

3.2 Survey results on implemented policy reforms

The second aim of the Reform Barometer survey on the topic of poverty prevention was to gain information on policy reforms targeted at the population in general and the subgroups specifically. The first question in relation to this issue asked the experts whether policy reforms that addressed the risk of poverty had been implemented between July 2014 and January 2016. Experts could choose between three possible answers to this question: 'yes', 'no' and 'don't know'. Depending on the respective answer, three supplementing questions required respondents (i) to name and describe the policy reforms introduced (if the answer was 'yes'), (ii) to forward ideas or suggestions for

policy-makers regarding what could be done (if the answer was ‘no’), or (iii) to add some comments (if the answer was ‘don’t know’).

A total of 428 experts from the EU-28 answered the question on whether reforms had been introduced in their countries. Among these respondents, between 9 and 13 percent did not know whether reforms that target the poor population in general, senior citizens, children or single parents had been introduced. The proportions of those who were not aware of whether policies had been introduced for the foreign-born population or refugees was much higher, with roughly every fourth respondent selecting the ‘don’t know’ alternative. Once more, this suggests that unawareness concerning these two risk groups is particularly high.

If we focus solely on the 385 respondents who answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the second key question,¹¹ less than half of the respondents (42%) reported that policy reforms had been introduced for the general population. With regard to the five subgroups, most experts identified policy reforms targeted at children (55%) and senior citizens (43%). For the remaining subgroups, the corresponding figures were one-third for single-parent families, 23 percent for refugees and 18 percent for the foreign-born population.

However, these quantitative results need to be viewed with caution. The findings indicate that respondents from the same EU member state disagreed on whether policy reforms had been introduced for the population and the subgroups of the population, respectively. One explanation for contradictory replies within member states is that many social policies influence the poverty risk of the groups examined. However, these policies are often not introduced as ‘poverty’ policies. Thus, it has been up to the experts whether they regarded these policies as addressing the poverty risk of the population or not. A good example illustrating this point is tax reforms, which were introduced in several countries during the period under review. Some country experts counted these reforms as poverty-related policies, while others did not. A second explanation for the contradictory answers within member states regards the very interpretation of policy ‘reforms’. For example, in many countries, the level of welfare benefits targeted at the poor and/or the eligibility criteria of welfare benefits were amended in the period under review. Not all experts considered these changes to be ‘reforms’. As the comments regarding the open questions made clear (see also below), many respondents seemed to focus on newly introduced policies and not on

Figure P4b

At-risk-of-poverty rates (2014, in percent) and perceived need to reduce poverty, according to country experts (2016, country means), by EU member state and risk group



¹¹ The number of respondents regarding this question varied between the 28 member states. The lowest (1) was for Cyprus, and the highest (28) for Italy.

changes related to existing instruments. For future surveys, the problems related to these likely misinterpretations of ‘policy reforms addressing the poor’ make it necessary to frame this question more precisely.

If we analyse the policy reforms that country experts mentioned in the open questions, different types of reforms have been included. For example, experts from Continental welfare states (e.g. Austria and Luxembourg) mentioned the introduction of tax reforms. In Belgium, the lowest pension benefits went up 2 percentage points in 2015. Germany introduced a minimum wage in 2015 in addition to expanding child care services. France implemented a ‘multi-annual plan to combat poverty’ and reformed the country’s asylum procedures. Local programmes for refugees were also introduced in the Netherlands.

In Nordic states, Danish experts mentioned improvements in financing care for senior citizens, but also restrictions for refugees in terms of social assistance. Finnish experts referred to the implementation of a basic income experiment. Experts also mentioned the introduction of a fast track that enables refugees and asylum-seekers to enter the labour market. For Sweden, experts mentioned reforms that target refugees and aim to ease their way into the labour market.

Experts from Anglo-Saxon countries referred to increases in child benefits, minimum wages (Ireland) and minimum pensions, the introduction of in-work benefits for families with low-income earners, and a tapering of social welfare transfers to encourage people to enter the labour market (Malta). UK experts mentioned, *inter alia*, tax reforms, increased minimum wages and the introduction of a new state pension as policy reforms introduced during the period.

In Southern European countries, the poverty-prevention measures implemented were very diverse, ranging from ones meant to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Greece (regarding food, rent and electricity) to the introduction of hotspots for refugees. Italian experts mentioned the introduction of a bonus of €80 for low-income workers and the implementation in several Italian regions of a ‘new social card’, that is, a minimum income scheme aimed at poor families with children. The Cyprian expert referred to a reform of the public assistance scheme. In Portugal, increases affected minimum wages, child benefits and pensions.

Reforms implemented in Eastern European countries included increases in pensions (Bulgaria), the implementation of a guaranteed minimum benefit (Croatia), increases in minimum wages (Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia), family benefits (Estonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), and pensions (Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), a tax reform (Hungary) and an enhancement of tax allowances (Hungary, Latvia).

Experts who noted that no policy reforms had been introduced were invited to forward ideas or suggestions for policymakers regarding what could be done. Interestingly, experts from Continental countries broadly agreed that more social investments in children or more generally in education, health care, active labour market policies and other things would be needed to combat poverty among the risk groups and the population more generally. Experts from some Southern European countries criticized the fact that competences in alleviating poverty are increasingly being delegated to third-sector organisations or private companies – or shifted back to the family realm (e.g. in Spain). Several experts, particularly from Southern and Eastern European countries, pointed to problems with in-work poverty and called for higher minimum and average wages in addition to the introduction of minimum income schemes. Some respondents from Nordic countries

Table P2

Overview of social inclusion reforms (2014–2015)

Area of policy reforms		Member states
Poverty reduction and supporting people's entry into the labour market	Social assistance benefits and minimum income support schemes	BE, CR, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, LT, LV, LU, MT, RO, SE, SI
	Support for entry into employment and active labour market policies	BE, BG, DE, DK, ES, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, RO
	Specific measures targeting groups at higher risk of poverty	AT, BE, CR, EE, FI, IE, LT, NL, RO, SI
Investing in children	Preventing child poverty	BE, BG, CZ, ES, LU, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI
	Supporting employment for people living in households with dependent children	HU, IE, MT, PT, UK
	Enabling access to child care	AT, BE, BG, CR, CZ, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, MT, PL, RO, UK
Combatting discrimination	BG, CR, FI, IE, NL, RO, SE, SK	
Homelessness/housing exclusion	BE, BG, CR, CZ, CY, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, RO, SI, UK	

Adapted from Social Protection Committee (2015: 13f)

(e.g. Denmark) voiced criticisms that recent reforms in social policy have been leading to an increase rather than a decrease in poverty for certain population groups. A Finnish expert estimated that social welfare benefits will not be increased for years to come due to the country's sluggish economic performance. Swedish experts referred, inter alia, to necessary improvements regarding child allowances and gender inequalities, such as ones related to pensions. Experts from Anglo-Saxon countries proposed offering more affordable child care (Ireland) or increases in minimum wages and pensions (Malta). UK experts were particularly critical regarding the policy reforms of recent years. Some quotes of the experts illustrate this point, e.g. "(...) the reforms all tended to increase poverty (...)"; "I don't see any serious reforms being proposed (...)"; "Maintain the value of existing benefits. Stop cutting taxes. Reverse the cuts. (...)".

The findings concerning reforms implemented to combat poverty (as well as the proposals forwarded in terms of what governments should do) suggest two things. First, many policy reforms of the past two years have certainly addressed the issue of poverty prevention in Europe. This is also confirmed by an assessment of the European Commission's Social Protection Committee, which recently published a review of social policy reforms covering the 2014–2015 period (and, thus, only a slightly different period than the one covered by the Reform Barometer survey; see Table 2). Second, the country experts' comments make clear that much more needs to be done to effectively combat material poverty in Europe.

In what follows, we summarise results of how effective the implemented reforms have been in the opinion of the country experts.

3.3 Survey results on the effectiveness of policy reforms

Those who have referred to policy reforms in the period under review were asked to comment on their likely effectiveness. In addition to the ‘don’t know’ option, respondents could choose between five categories, ranging from strong negative (-2) to strong positive effects (+2), with the value of ‘0’ suggesting that no effect was expected. The medians to this question for the total population and all five subgroups achieved values ranging between 0.4 and 0.9 in the EU-28, indicating that experts believe the implemented reforms will bring (small) positive effects. When analysing the mean values across risk groups, the highest positive effects are expected from reforms targeting seniors (0.8) and the foreign-born population (0.7). The effects expected for single parents (0.5) and children (0.6) are estimated to be similar to the effects for the poor population in general (0.6). The likely effectiveness of policies implemented for refugees (0.4) is estimated to be more modest.

Again, these results need to be treated with caution. The question on the likely effectiveness of the introduced reforms was a follow-up question that was only forwarded to respondents who had previously identified policy reforms within their countries. As has already been mentioned above, experts disagreed on which policy changes qualify as reforms targeted at the poor. This interpretation influenced whether experts identified reforms in the context of the survey. While the number of respondents who answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question of whether policy reforms had been introduced still is pretty high (ranging from 388 respondents for the subgroup of senior citizens to 324 for the subgroup of refugees), the number of respondents becomes quite small regarding the follow-up question on the effectiveness of reforms. It ranged from 117 respondents (children) to only 25 respondents (foreign-born population) for all EU-28 member states. Concerning the latter group, moreover, the follow-up question was not forwarded to any expert in 14 of the 28 EU-member states.¹² Thus, the small sample sizes do not permit taking the level of analysis to the country level.

4 Discussion in light of other activities

The Reform Barometer survey defined ‘poverty’ for the section on poverty prevention in conventional terms, that is, by including individuals in households where the disposable and equivalised incomes do not exceed 60 percent of the median within a country (‘at-risk-of-poverty-rate’). If we compare the results of the at-risk-of-poverty rate with the broader indicator of ‘poverty and social exclusion’ (see Footnote 4 for a definition of this indicator), the ranking of countries with higher and lower risks changes slightly. The latter (and broader) indicator is the basis for calculating the annual Social Justice Index (SJI) published by the Bertelsmann Stiftung (Schraad-Tischler 2015). Table 3 compares the country rankings of the SJI, the at-risk-of-poverty rate and the experts’ perceptions concerning the needs to reduce poverty for the population in their country (see Table 1). The last column presents a composite indicator that is calculated on the basis of the three indicators while giving the same weight to all of them.

¹² Indeed, 325 respondents chose to answer the question about reform activity targeting the foreign-born population with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Only 40 of them indicated ‘yes’, and 25 out of these chose to also report on the effectiveness.

In terms of European regions, Table 3 suggests that Nordic countries perform best in the EU-28, followed by Continental ones. The performance of Anglo-Saxon states is somewhat less positive and only slightly better when compared to those of countries in the Eastern European region – thanks, in particular, to the favourable rankings of the Czech Republic (rank 1) and Slovakia (rank 6). Southern European countries are performing least favourably among all European regions – despite the fact that two Eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Romania, occupy the bottom positions concerning the composite indicator calculated. These results confirm once again that there is a need for political action across Europe (even though with different urgencies according to European regions) not only in terms of poverty prevention, but also in terms of achieving more social justice in general.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Council of the European Union makes suggestions and comments every year on social issues for each EU member state based on the reform programmes forwarded by the countries. Analysing these recommendations and comparing them with the reform needs identified by the country experts in the Reform Barometer survey suggests some consensus.

For example, regarding Continental states, the Council has proposed that member states ought to improve the functioning of labour markets and provide further incentives to remain longer in employment or to return to work (e.g. Austria, Belgium and France). The Council has also recommended investing more in education and research as well as enhancing the provision of public infrastructure (Austria, Germany). Some of these recommendations have also been put forward by experts in these countries. Regarding recommendations for Nordic states, the Council focuses once more on improvements to ensure a better-functioning labour market. For example, in Denmark, measures ought to be implemented for those most excluded from the labour market. Education outcomes of people with a migrant background ought to be improved. Regarding liberal welfare states, the Council has particularly focused on two aspects. First, it has recommended improving the availability of (or providing better access to) affordable, high-quality and full-time child care – a recommendation that has also been put forward by the country experts in the Reform Barometer survey. Second, it has suggested taking action to improve the basic skills of young people and to reduce early school leaving. Particularly in relation to Ireland, the Council has also endorsed measures to enhance the work intensity within households (see above).

Table P3

Country rankings concerning at-risk-of-poverty rates, experts' perceptions of the need to reduce poverty for the population, the Social Justice Index and a composite indicator

	At-risk-of-poverty rate, 2014	Perceptions of need to reduce poverty, country means, 2016	Social Justice Index, 2015	Composite indicator
CZ	1	2	1	1
NL	2	2	2	2
DK	3	1	7	3
FI	5	7	4	4
SE	10	4	3	5
SK	4	10	6	6
AT	7	5	9	7
FR	6	11	5	8
LU	14	7	8	9
DE	15	5	10	10
SI	8	11	11	10
BE	11	17	12	12
MT	13	15	14	13
EE	24	7	13	14
IE	12	11	21	14
PO	17	14	16	16
HU	9	17	23	17
UK	16	19	15	18
LT	18	15	18	19
PT	21	21	17	20
CR	19	19	22	21
IT	19	23	19	22
ES	26	21	20	23
LV	22	24	24	24
EL	25	24	25	25
BG	23	27	27	26
RO	27	24	26	26

Eurostat 2016, Schraad-Tischler (2015: 17), SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

Not included due to insufficient data: CY

The focus of the Council's proposal concerning Southern countries was on ensuring adequate coverage in minimum income schemes (Portugal) or on streamlining minimum income and family support schemes (Spain). For Italy, the focus was once again on improvements regarding the education system. Proposals for Eastern European countries included references to an improvement in the education system, including vocational education and training (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia and Slovakia). The Council also referred to the provision of better access to education for disadvantaged groups, particularly with regard to Roma children (e.g. in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania). Further proposals addressed the issue of integrating marginal groups into the labour market better, either by enhancing active labour market policies and activation (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) or by making affordable child care more available (e.g. Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia). The Council also recommended raising (minimum) wages and improving wage-setting procedures in some countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia) as well as improving the adequacy and coverage of social assistance and unemployment benefits (e.g. Hungary, Latvia and Romania). Again, several of these recommendations have also been put forward by the country experts.

5 Conclusions

Data on at-risk-of-poverty rates suggest large variations related to this objective indicator of monetary poverty both across Europe and within its individual countries. The results of the questionnaire discussed above largely confirm these differences concerning the (perceived) need to combat poverty for different risk groups across Europe and different population groups. This perception of need from social policy experts within countries may be regarded as a more subjective indicator of material poverty.

Nonetheless, country experts expressed their scepticism regarding the very definition of poverty chosen for the survey (i.e. less than 60 percent of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers). Many experts were critical of this definition – even though it has been the conventional indicator for measuring income poverty in Europe for almost 20 years. This applies, for example, but not exclusively, to respondents from Eastern Europe. A Bulgarian expert noted that the absolute poverty rate in his/her country is higher than the relative rate¹³ – thus making the latter of only minimal relevance. Indeed, looking at the rankings provided in Table 3 does suggest that experts, at least for Bulgaria, had a broader concept of poverty in mind: The country comes out 23rd with respect to the at-risk-of-poverty-rate, but ranks last with respect to the experts' perception for reform need.

Many experts proposed supplementing the traditional at-risk-of-poverty rate with further information, such as details on access to health care, education or the level of an adequate minimum income. Some experts also suggested replacing the conventional way of measuring material poverty with multidimensional measures (e.g. the composite poverty and social exclusion indicator; see also Footnote 4). Indeed, scanning other components of the composite EU indicator signals profound differences between countries. For

¹³ Interestingly, the expert went on to suggest that the basic survival strategy of young people in Bulgaria is "Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 of the airport" – implying that they are better-off searching for employment and employment income elsewhere.

example, looking at households that are severely materially deprived, the EU-28 average amounted to 8.9 percent in 2014. However, it achieved a maximum value of 33.1 percent in Bulgaria and a minimum value of 0.7 percent in Sweden. These results suggest that variations across Europe concerning ‘poverty’ are even larger than those conveyed by a comparison of at-risk-of-poverty rates. In addition to an alternative or at least multidimensional approach, experts also proposed considering the dynamic perspective when trying to understand the pathways into and out of poverty, as was recently done by the European Commission (2015). For the next Reform Barometer survey, this might include more actively inquiring into perceptions of ‘poverty’ rather than putting forward a definition that many experts have problems accepting.

Results of the Reform Barometer survey on policy reforms within countries and their effectiveness are also more difficult to interpret due to possible misinterpretations of the underlying questions. Overall, one can see that policy reforms have been introduced. However, experts are not overly optimistic about the effectiveness of these reforms in terms of addressing the poverty risks of the population. What’s more, experts have made clear that much more needs to be done to combat poverty in Europe, a finding that is confirmed by the annual recommendations forwarded to EU member states by the Council. The Commission has agreed with national governments to reduce the number of poor and socially excluded people by 20 million by 2020. To achieve this target, much more needs to be done than is currently the case – and recommendations on how to do so are not only provided by EU institutions, but also by country experts who have participated in the 2016 Reform Barometer survey.

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Findings by Dimension

Equitable Education

Overview of Policy Objectives and EU Average Scores



NOTABLE FINDINGS

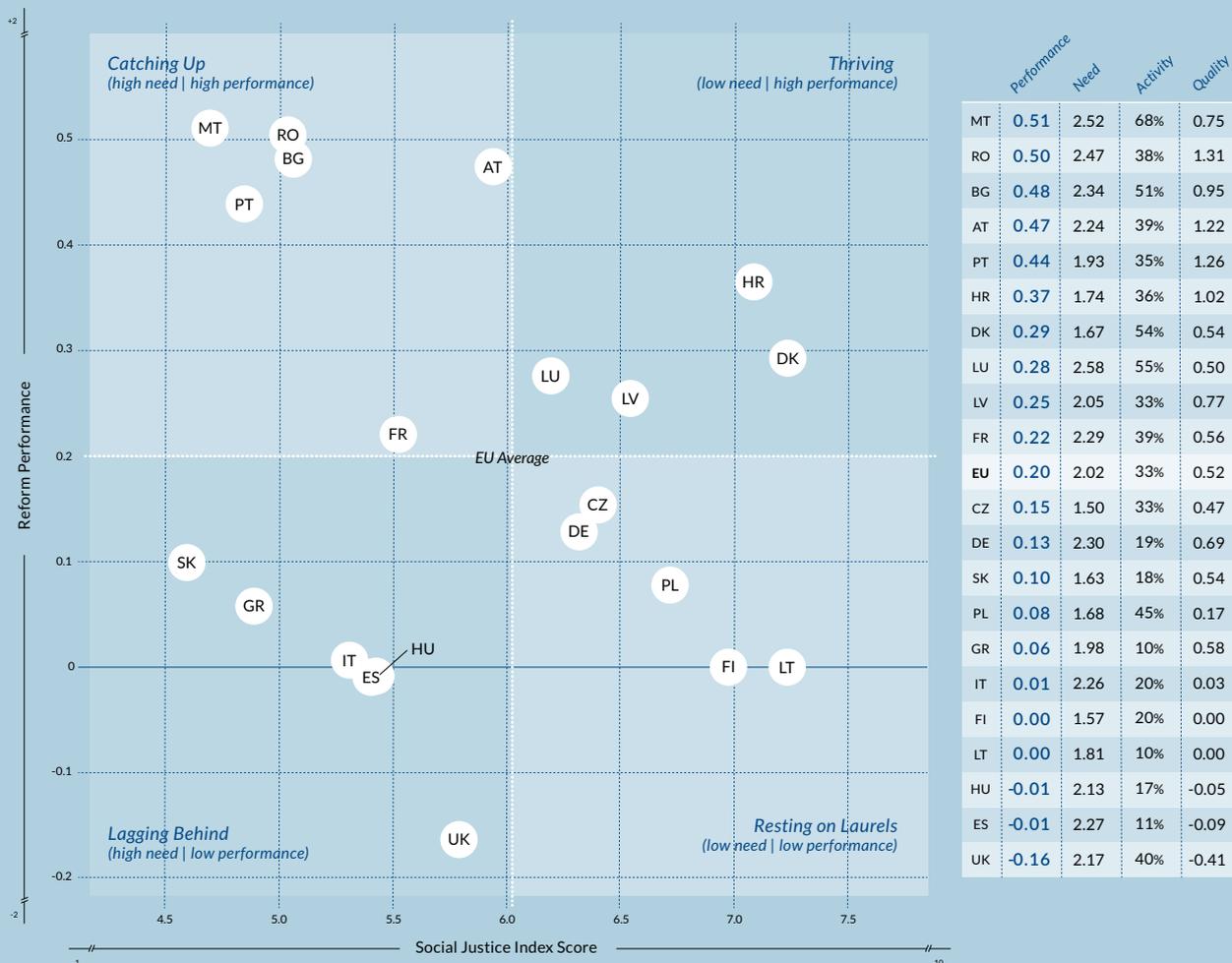
... for the EU as a whole

- Equitable Education shows the lowest rate of reform activity in the EU.
- For most countries, the experts assign the highest need score to the policy objective of establishing independence of students' learning success from their socioeconomic background. At the same time, the rate of reform activity addressing this issue is rather low. In countries with the highest rates of early school leavers (Spain, Malta, Romania, Italy, Bulgaria), the corresponding policy objective of decreasing this rate receives the highest need score (with the exception of Portugal). In Denmark and Finland, the integration of refugees into the educational system receives the highest need score.
- Concerning the different sectors of the education system, the highest average need score is received by secondary education and early childhood education, followed by lifelong learning. Primary and secondary education received the highest average activity rates.



- The highest degree of both reform activity and reform quality is observed for the policy objective of fostering equal opportunities (particularly in pre-primary, primary and secondary education); the lowest is observed for the integration of refugees.
- Governments did very little to establish better lifelong learning practices. Specifically, there was no reform activity aimed at improving teaching quality in the majority of countries, and endowing this education sector with higher financial and human resources has only rarely been considered.

Social Justice and Reform Performance in Comparison



... for selected countries and regions

- The Maltese government has been the most active one, specifically when it comes to reducing the rate of early school leavers. Malta's performance also ranks top for reforms concerned with early childhood education and lifelong learning, while the strongest need for reforms is found in secondary education.
- The governments of Romania, Portugal and Austria initiated education reforms expected to have the most positive effect among all EU member states.
- The worst reform performance is observed in the United Kingdom. Greece, Lithuania and Spain have the lowest activity rates.
- Austria ranks third with respect to reform quality, and is even leading in the policy objectives of improving structural conditions and integrating refugees into the education system.
- Luxembourg is given a high need score. Values are particularly high for targeting the relationship between learning success and socioeconomic background as well as the integration of refugees.

EDUCATION: CONTINUING STRUGGLE FOR EQUITABLE EDUCATION FOR ALL

by Marius R. Busemeyer

1 Introduction

Education occupies a central place in today's knowledge-based service economies. The forces of socioeconomic change in recent decades have increased the relative payoff of the highly educated in the advanced democracies of the European Union (Goldin and Katz 2008): Skill-biased technological change increases the economic value of educational investments in higher education, in particular university education, while depressing the labour market value of those in lower levels of education. In the service economy, demand for highly skilled individuals in knowledge-intensive occupations (e.g. consulting or ICT) is soaring, while low-skilled occupations are increasingly threatened – with some important exceptions for jobs in interpersonal services (e.g. cleaner or waiter). This 'hollowing out' of the middle segment in labour markets contributes to a polarisation of the distribution of skills and ultimately income and wealth, and this development is likely to intensify in the wake of the digital revolution. Hence, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education is and should be a top priority in attempts to promote social inclusion in Europe. In the long run, ensuring that every individual – from early childhood to adulthood – can maximise his or her educational potential is a matter of both social justice and economic efficiency.

Empirical evidence from the OECD countries indicates that there is large cross-national variation in both the degree of socioeconomic inequality and the institutional setup of education and training systems (Busemeyer 2015). Hence, skill-biased technological change as a force of socioeconomic change can have different effects depending on how the 'supply side' of the labour market – the education system – is designed. Political interventions and reforms can have an impact on the supply and distribution of skills in a given economy, but this often requires a long-term perspective and might also be accompanied by political conflicts and struggles. For instance, the transformation of the Swedish secondary school system – from a differentiated system with early tracking into academic or vocational forms of education towards the comprehensive model of secondary schooling that is today credited with being responsible for the relatively low level of socioeconomic and educational inequality in this country – took place over several decades. Moreover, this process did not always proceed smoothly, but was marked by political conflicts.

Furthermore, the association between socioeconomic and educational inequalities is not as straightforward as one might assume. Maximising access to higher levels of education is not a panacea in itself, even though it is a central precondition for social progress and economic development. As will be shown in the next section in greater detail, Southern European countries actually have a higher level of enrolment in tertiary (higher) education compared to Northern and Central European countries, but their labour market performance in terms of youth unemployment (with associated inequalities) is significantly worse. Additional research on the relationship between educational and socioeconomic inequality has revealed that the link between these two dimensions is much less clear-cut than might be assumed (Busemeyer 2015; Solga 2014). For instance, Germany is often criticised for its high

degree of educational inequality related to early tracking in secondary schooling and persistent barriers to higher education. In the United States, in contrast, comprehensive high schools at the secondary level allow a much larger proportion of a typical age cohort to attend academic higher education (colleges and universities) – yet socioeconomic inequality is much higher in the US than in Germany.

These examples show that simply opening up access to higher levels of education is not sufficient by itself because it is important to take into account the institutional substructure of the education system and the linkages between it and the world of work. With regard to the latter, vocational education and training (VET) as well as lifelong learning are educational sectors whose relevance for the promotion of social inclusion and labour market integration is often underestimated, as much of the ‘reform momentum’ in education policy is directed at higher and/or early childhood education. Well-established VET systems can open up access routes to well-paid and often secure employment for those in the lower half of the distribution of academic skills. Thus, even though VET may divert some students from pursuing higher education, it also acts as a ‘safety net’ for many low-skilled youths (Shavit and Müller 2000). In later career stages, lifelong learning could take over this important ‘safety net’ function by providing bridges to new employment opportunities for individuals with low or obsolete skills.

In the following, I sketch out the political landscape of educational reforms in the EU, relying on the data collected in the Social Inclusion Monitor (SIM) Europe project. In the subsequent section, I briefly introduce the strategic framework of EU policymaking in this field before going on to provide a short analysis of the main insights of the expert survey, focusing on the most important reform topics, such as early childhood education, social cohesion, lifelong learning and the structural conditions of education policy. In the final section, I discuss the implications of my findings for educational reforms in the EU more generally.

2 EU activity in the field of education policy

The historical development of education as an established policy field at the EU level is a history of ups and downs as well as surprising turns. From early on, the European Commission had emphasised the link between education and training and the free movement of workers in order to justify the delegation of competences from the national to the EU level. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Commission acted as a kind of ‘policy entrepreneur’ by setting up new programmes (e.g. the popular ERASMUS scheme) and initiatives in the field of education and training. This activism in a policy field that had traditionally been firmly in the hands of national (or even subnational) authorities in the member states led to increasing resistance from governments (Shaw 1999: 572). As a consequence, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 contained a specific clause explicitly prohibiting the harmonisation of education policy across EU member states. At the same time, and this is different from the past, it formally acknowledged a (limited) formal competence of the EU in the field of education, in particular with regard to the promotion of student and teacher mobility and the further development of education and training.

Shortly after the formal competences for the EU in education policymaking had been defined by national policymakers, a comprehensive process of

Europeanisation of higher education was set in motion in the form of the Bologna Process, which started outside the regular EU institutions and procedures in 1999. This process aimed at promoting the harmonisation of governance structures in higher education, such as the establishment of two-level study structures (bachelor's and master's degrees) and the creation of a credit point system that would improve the ability of students to obtain credit for studies abroad. The Bologna Process was not based on unilateral or hierarchical decision-making, but on mutual policy learning, transnational communication and the principle of voluntarism. Hence, formally speaking, decisions in this process are voluntary agreements between member states or recommendations from EU institutions, such as the Commission or the European Parliament. In spite of this, the Bologna Process has had a significant impact on the reform of higher education institutions and governance structures in many EU member states (Voegtler, Knill and Dobbins 2011; Witte 2006). Indeed, it is a powerful example of the strength of seemingly weak or soft governance tools, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

The development of a European dimension in education policy received further momentum from the Lisbon Strategy of 2000. Two years later, the Copenhagen Process aimed at promoting joint activities and harmonisation in the VET field. The Lisbon Strategy was a critical turning point in the development of EU education policy because it provided a new justification for expanding the EU's involvement in this policy area. In achieving the strategy's central goal of having the EU become "the most competitive and the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world", education was to play a central role. This renewed attention to education policy, however, went hand in hand with a redefinition of the primary purpose of education (Walkenhorst 2008): Instead of being a goal by itself, education was increasingly regarded as an important tool to promote labour market integration and 'employability'. Hence, the connection between education and labour market policy (justified by the free movement of workers across borders) became a central focal point, resonating with similar shifts in the legitimisation of education at the national level.

The post-Lisbon follow-up strategies and programmes – the 'Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Growth'¹ as well as the Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) strategic framework² – basically follow the same policy paradigm as the Lisbon Strategy: Policymakers agree on a set of policy goals to be achieved by 2020 and on a set of indicators to measure progress towards achieving these goals. The OMC – more recently within the framework of the European Semester – is applied in order to shame and exert peer pressure on member states that are lagging behind. Along with other targets related to employment, climate change, research & development and social exclusion, the Europe 2020 strategy contains two targets for the field of education:

- reducing the rate of early school leavers to below 10 percent
- having at least 40 percent of 30- to 34-year-olds complete tertiary education.³

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Aef0016>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm

The ET 2020 complements these with additional ‘strategic objectives’ in the form of priorities for different cycles (the most recent one is from 2016 until 2020). The strategic objectives of the ET 2020 are:

- improving lifelong learning and mobility
- enhancing the quality and efficiency of education and training by also paying more attention to basic skills
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in education
- encouraging creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.⁴

In terms of benchmarks, the Education and Training Monitor defines a set of indicators, in particular:

- at least 95 percent of children should participate in early childhood education and care
- the share of 15-year-olds failing to reach level 2 in the OECD’s PISA test should be below 15 percent;
- the share of employed 20- to 34-year-olds having successfully completed upper secondary education should be at least 82 percent;
- at least 15 percent of adults (25- to 64-year-olds) should have received formal or non-formal education and training, i.e. participate in lifelong learning.⁵

This choice of goals and indicators exhibits a general tendency to emphasise the importance of early childhood education, lifelong learning and higher education. Furthermore, EU education policy refrains from providing concrete recommendations on the institutional design of school systems (e.g. by failing to recommend either comprehensive schools or early tracking), focusing instead on minimising the proportion of students with only basic skills as well as the number of early school leavers. Without doubt, the goals and priorities of EU education policy address important aspects, but they show certain biases because the EU has only limited competences in the field of education.

Member states are particularly keen on preserving their prerogatives in the field of general schools policy (primary and secondary education), even though this would clearly need to be a high-priority sector at the EU level as well. This can be explained by two factors: First, in many EU countries (both in formally federalist and unitary states), subnational levels of government (regional, local or municipal governments) are responsible for the provision and often also the funding of education in the general schooling sector. This adds complexity to the multi-level game of education policymaking at the EU level because these subnational governments also want to safeguard their competences against intrusion from both the national and the EU levels. Second, as will also become clear in the expert opinions discussed below, the institutional design (and reform) of general schools is a contentious political issue that triggers political conflicts between different stakeholders. One contentious issue, for instance, is the transformation of the structure of secondary schools from differentiated models with early tracking (still to be found in many EU countries, such as Germany and Austria, but also to a certain degree in France and Belgium and others with a strong distinction

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Aef0016>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm

between academic and vocational tracks) towards a more integrated and comprehensive system. A second issue is the decentralisation of the governance and funding of education from the national towards the subnational and local level, which is often accompanied by privatisation efforts (i.e. the strengthening of non-state actors in education). Since all of these are politically contentious issues, member states are reluctant to delegate them to the EU level, which in the worst case leads to a ‘lowest common denominator’ approach to defining the priorities of EU education policy.

What is more, the role of vocational education and training (VET) is generally underappreciated in EU education policy. The Europe 2020 goals are only concerned with early school leaving and tertiary education. In the more detailed ET 2020 targets, VET is not specifically mentioned. Instead, the focus is on increasing the proportion of young people with an upper secondary school qualification (which could be either from the general/academic or the vocational track) and on reducing the proportion of pupils with only basic skills (which is a goal primarily related to schools, since the indicator addresses 15-year-old pupils). This lack of discussion of VET is significant because, as argued above, there is evidence that a well-established VET system can contribute to lower levels of youth unemployment and a more equitable distribution of skills in the labour market by boosting the relative position of those in the lower half of the skills distribution.

The lack of discussion on VET can partly be explained by the fact that this sector of the education system is underappreciated and underdeveloped in many (probably most) EU countries. Rather than being a serious alternative to general academic education, it is often regarded as a second-best choice for those who cannot make it to university (see e.g. Fuller and Unwin (2011) for the well-documented case of the UK). Furthermore, there is much more diversity across countries in the governance of VET compared to higher education (see Busemeyer and Trampusch (2012) for a typology of skill-formation regimes). The similarity of higher education (HE) structures across European countries facilitates cross-border exchange and therefore joint EU initiatives, such as the Bologna Process. In the field of VET, in contrast, some countries (e.g. Sweden and France) have a primarily school-based system, whereas in other cases (e.g. Germany and Austria), company-based training (a dual apprenticeship system) is more important. In Southern European countries, VET is generally an underdeveloped sector of the education system; and in Anglo-Saxon countries, the system is primarily market-driven, which makes it difficult to mobilise the commitment of employers to training. This heterogeneity of governance structures hinders a joint EU-wide approach to the reform of VET, and it could therefore be partially responsible for the significant absence of this sector from the set of EU priorities and targets in the field of education and training.

When it comes to the individual performance of countries with regard to the EU policy benchmarks, there is, of course, a huge degree of variation. With regard to the first of the Europe 2020 goals, EU countries have made significant progress. Across the EU, the average rate of early leavers from education and training was 11 percent in 2015, i.e. just one percentage point above the target for 2020.⁶ It is mostly member states in Eastern and Southern Europe (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Ro-

⁶ See the recent review from the EU on relative performance on this indicator: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/2016/early_leavers_education_training_201605.pdf, p. 2.

mania and Spain) that still have significantly higher rates of early school leavers. Nevertheless, the EU as a whole seems to be well on the way towards achieving this goal by 2020.

The performance is more mixed with regard to the second of the Europe 2020 goals: increasing the share of 30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary education to at least 40 percent. Figure E1 displays the enrolment rates of participants in tertiary education relative to the size of those between the ages of 20 and 24. This is a rough indicator of the real participation rate because it does not take into account how many of those who are enrolled actually graduated, how many foreign students were enrolled, and the fact that some students fall outside the 20- to 24-year-old age range. In spite of these deficiencies, the indicator shows that participation rates in tertiary education are clearly above average in the Scandinavian countries as well as in Southern Europe. In contrast, Continental (Central) European countries are slightly below average, whereas rates in Eastern European and Anglo-Saxon countries are more or less at the EU-average level.

Furthermore, Southern European countries actually perform remarkably well when it comes to issues of intergenerational mobility. Figure E2 presents data on the educational attainment of young people between 25 and 34 years of age relative to their parents' educational level. As can be seen, the share of people who have experienced downward mobility relative to their parents' education is lowest in Southern European countries. In contrast, the share of people who have moved upward is highest in the Anglo-Saxon (45%) and the Southern European countries (44%). Likewise, the share of those with a tertiary education degree who have experienced upward mobility (i.e. whose parents did not have such a degree) is highest in Southern Europe (75%) and lowest in the Nordic countries (45%).

This seemingly contradictory data can be explained by the fact that Southern European countries have undergone a process of catching up compared to the rest of Europe by expanding access to tertiary education, whereas the Nordic countries have already reached a plateau (see the extremely high participation rates in the Nordic countries in Figure E1). However, contrasting this data with data on the labour market performance of different European countries yields some interesting insights. As is well known, youth unemployment has reached exceedingly high levels in Southern European countries (46.6% among 15- to 24-year-olds in 2014) and remains a significant problem in Nordic (19.5%) and Eastern European (23.6%) countries (Haigner et al. 2016: 52). Youth unemployment is lowest in the Continental European countries (15.2% on average, but much lower in countries with a well-established dual apprenticeship

Figure E1

Participants in tertiary education related to the population aged 20–24 (in percent)

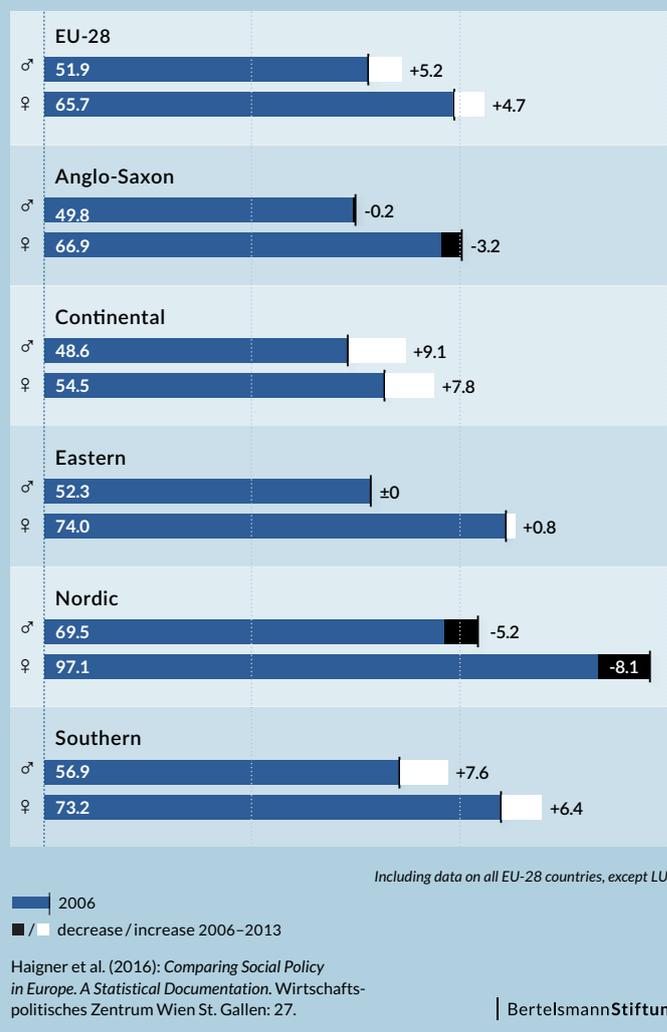
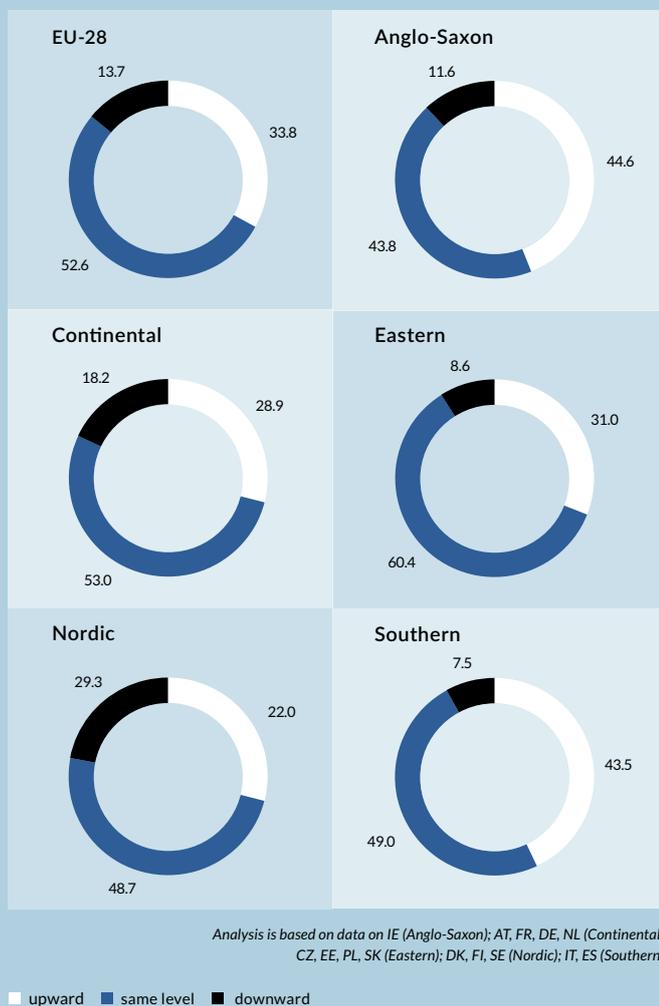


Figure E2

Educational attainment of 25- to 34-year-olds relative to parental attainment (in percent)



Haigner et al. (2016): *Comparing Social Policy in Europe. A Statistical Documentation*. Wirtschaftspolitisches Zentrum Wien St. Gallen: 28.

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training system, e.g. Austria, Germany and the Netherlands). Hence, when it comes to the link between the education system and the labour market, expanding higher education while neglecting other sectors of the education system, in particular VET, can be associated with problems in the transition between education and work as well as with high levels of youth unemployment.

Summing up the state of affairs in EU education policy, a mixed picture emerges. Without doubt, the definition of concrete goals and indicators in the Europe 2020 and the ET 2020 strategic framework is an important step forward. However, the EU approach to education policy is characterised by certain biases related to the distribution of competences between the EU and its member states. This has led to a certain neglect of some educational sectors, in particular secondary schooling and VET. These sectors, however, are crucial in promoting social cohesion and equity in education because they have strong implications for the distribution of skills in a given age cohort as well as for the ease of transition from schools to training and employment. Besides higher education, expanding opportunities in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is rightfully a priority in both national and EU-level policymaking because it has enormous implications for social cohesion and inequality (Esping-Andersen 2002). So far, however, access to ECEC across the EU countries is uneven and biased towards upper income classes (Van Lancker 2013). The following sections will show to what extent actual reforms in the EU member states have responded to these challenges.

3 Survey results across member states

The SIM Europe Reform Barometer addresses several important issues contained in the EU policy priorities on education, emphasising in particular the connection between education and social inclusion. For instance, experts were asked to evaluate policy reforms in their respective country with regard to their contribution towards promoting equal opportunities in education, to enhancing the structural conditions regarding fiscal and human resources, to improving the quality of teaching, to weakening the link between individual pupils' socioeconomic backgrounds and educational attainment, to reducing the rate of early school leavers, and to integrating refugees in the education system. The first three of these policy objectives are then assessed for the different sectors of the education system: early childhood education, pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and

post-secondary non-tertiary education (including vocational training), tertiary education and lifelong learning. For each of these issues, experts were first asked whether they perceive a strong need for reforms in this domain, whether the government in the particular country actually pursued reforms that addressed the issue in question, and whether they would expect these reforms to have a positive or negative impact relative to the particular goal.

This section will provide a general overview of the most conspicuous patterns in expert opinions across countries and policy objectives, whereas the subsequent section will delve into more specific issues. A core issue is the link between education and social cohesion. Across all European countries and different sectors of the education system, 42 percent⁷ of experts expressed the opinion that there is a very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in education. This proportion is significantly higher than the average share of experts who thought there is a very strong need to improve structural conditions in terms of fiscal and human resources (32%) or to enhance the quality of teaching (29%). Furthermore, the average proportion of experts who see a very strong need to mitigate the link between children's individual socio-economic background and educational attainment is a striking 77 percent, while 50 percent also identify a very strong need to reduce the rate of early school leavers.

The picture is even more pronounced when experts perceiving a 'strong' need are added to those who see a 'very strong' one. Figure E3 displays the share of experts in this broader category across countries in the field of early childhood education and care. Across all EU countries, an average of 72 percent⁸ of experts perceive a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in ECEC. In some countries (Ireland and Poland), all experts interviewed agreed with this; in Romania and Portugal, these were nine out of 10. In contrast, the lowest proportion of experts identifying a strong need to ensure equal opportunities in ECEC can be found in Scandinavian (Denmark and Sweden) as well as in some Southern and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Greece). Here, it is important to remember that a high share of experts expressing a strong need can go along with different averages of needs. For instance, 63 percent of experts in Slo-

Figure E3

Share of experts who perceive a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in early childhood education and care (in percent)



* population-weighted average

Not included due to insufficient data:
BE, CY, NL

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

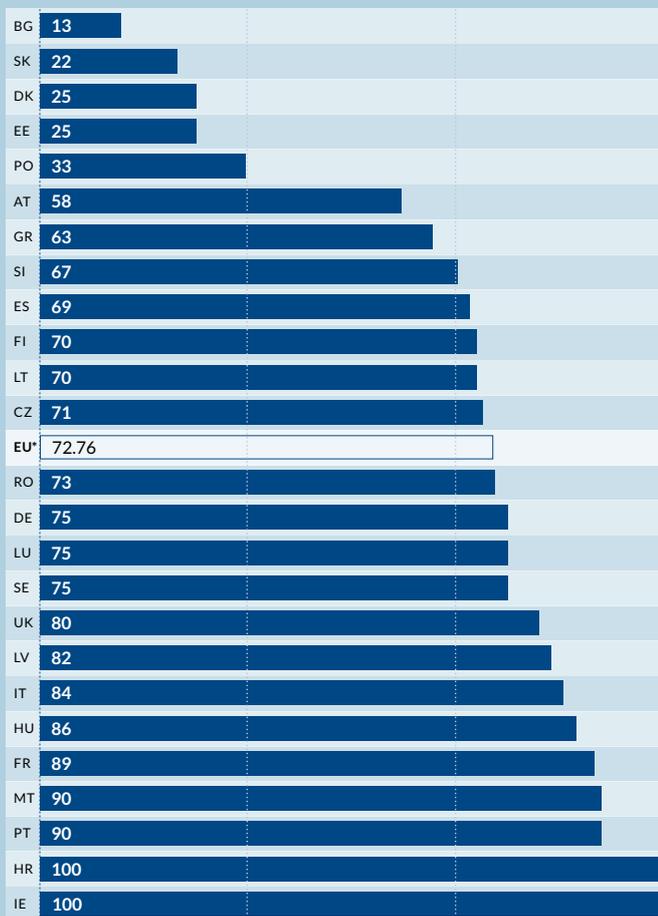
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⁷ This is the average of percentages in the six sectors of the education system inquired about in the Reform Barometer questionnaire. The percentage for each sector is a population-weighted average of all EU countries (omitting countries for which fewer than three experts have rated the respective reform need).

⁸ This is a population-weighted average of all countries for which at least three expert assessments are available (all EU countries except Belgium, Cyprus and the Netherlands).

Figure E4

Share of experts who perceive a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in higher education (in percent)



* population-weighted average

Not included due to insufficient data:
BE, CY, NL

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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vakia see a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in ECEC, and the average need is at the EU median. In Slovenia, even more experts (67%) see a strong or very strong need, but the average need is below average (1.67 on the scale from 0 to 3).

With regard to the Nordic countries, it seems likely that experts do not see a particularly strong need since these countries already perform relatively well in that respect. It is more surprising to see similar judgments on the state of affairs in the Southern and Eastern European cases, where – from a comparative EU perspective – the need for equitable access to ECEC could be expected to feature more prominently in the minds of experts. In these cases, perhaps other issues – such as improving the structural conditions of education and the quality of teaching – are more pressing than ensuring equal opportunities.⁹ Another explanation might be that – at least in the Eastern European cases – access to ECEC is still quite readily available given the legacy of socialist rule. It is also important to note that, at least in some Southern European countries (Italy, Portugal and Spain), the proportion of experts seeing a strong need to ensure equal opportunities in ECEC is much higher.

Figure E4 repeats the same exercise for the higher education sector. In this case, the EU-wide average of experts perceiving a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in higher education is about the same as in the case of ECEC (73%). However, there is more variation across countries, which could indicate that the political debate about the necessity of

further expanding access to higher education is more contentious than in the case of ECEC, where experts tend to agree that further expansion is necessary and beneficial. Again, there are some cases in which all experts agree that this is necessary (Croatia and Ireland). And, again, it is mostly experts for Eastern European countries who perceive a below-average need for ensuring equal opportunities in higher education (Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland and Slovakia), but this is also the case in Denmark. Most countries cluster between 60 and 90 percent of experts agreeing on the need for more reforms in the field of equal opportunities in higher education.

Hence, similar to the case of ECEC, a large majority of experts generally believe that access to higher education should be broadened in order to provide greater equality of opportunity. Decoupling educational opportunities from socioeconomic background factors would enhance the potential con-

⁹ This is certainly the case in Greece, for instance, where only 38 percent of experts see the need for equitable access to ECEC, but 100 percent see a need for improving the structural conditions. The Czech Republic, on the other hand, is a contrasting case: Again, it is only 57 percent of experts who identify a need for improving equitable access, but merely 20 percent of experts who see a need for improving quality.

tribution of education to lowering inequality. This issue – in different facets – seems to be more pressing than the objectives to improve the quality of teaching. An often-necessary condition for reducing the impact of socioeconomic background on educational opportunities is the improvement of structural conditions in human and fiscal resources, and both goals receive similar evaluations from the experts.¹⁰ However, there is some variation in expert judgments in different sectors of the education system, which will be explored in greater detail in the following section.

4 Survey results across policy objectives

In the following, I will present and summarise the survey results across different policy objectives, though I will slightly deviate from the order of questions in the questionnaire. The reason for this is that I focus on broader debates in current education policymaking, for which I may employ different survey questions. In particular, these are the debates about the expansion of early childhood education, the potential contribution of education to promoting equity, reducing the rate of early school leavers, integrating refugees into the education system, and improving the quality of teaching and the structural conditions of education.

4.1 Early childhood and pre-primary education

As mentioned above, the official EU target is that 95 percent of children should attend early childhood education and care (ECEC) by 2020. With regard to children in pre-primary education, this goal is not far off, since more than 90 percent of 4-year-old children are already enrolled in some form of pre-primary education with the exception of Eastern Europe, where the share is only 86 percent (in 2013; cf. Haigner et al. 2016: 29). However, in ECEC for children below the age of 3, enrolment rates vary tremendously across countries (OECD 2015: 333). In Denmark, for instance, 92 percent of 2-year-olds were enrolled in ECEC in 2015, compared to 16 percent in Italy and 52 percent in Germany. Furthermore, research has shown that the class bias in access to ECEC is stronger in countries with low levels of overall enrolment (Van Lancker 2013). This means that the extensiveness in the provision of ECEC is crucial: When levels of enrolment are low, which is often associated with quality problems and/or high levels of fees for child care institutions, ECEC might actually exacerbate existing inequalities rather than mitigate them.

Given this background, it is not surprising to note that experts particularly agree that there need to be more reforms in early childhood and pre-primary education. Promoting equal and easy access to early childhood education is an important policy recommendation of the proponents of the ‘social investment model’ of the welfare state (Bonoli 2013; Esping-Anderesen 2002; Hemerijck 2013; Morel, Palier and Palme 2012; Vandenbroucke and Vleminckx 2011). There are several reasons for this: For one, it has been shown that early intervention in children’s education and learning processes can help prevent the emergence of inequalities in educational attainment in later years of life since children are particularly receptive in their early years. Second, expanding opportunities for ECEC can help young families and

¹⁰ The EU median for (perceived) need in promoting equal opportunities is 2.03, compared to 2.08 for the improvement of structural conditions.

women, in particular, to better combine working and family life, further contributing to lowering inequalities.

On average across all EU countries, 49 percent of experts state that there is a very strong need to ensure equal educational opportunities in early childhood education. In contrast, the average share of experts expressing a similar opinion ranges between 36 and 43 percent in the remaining educational sectors. In a similar vein, the proportion of experts identifying a need to improve the structural conditions in early childhood education is significantly higher compared to the other educational sectors: 44 percent compared to about 30 percent for the other sectors (and even as little as 24% for lifelong learning). If we include expert opinions that express merely a ‘strong need’ rather than a ‘very strong need’, the respective proportions even rise to 72 percent in the question about equal opportunities and to 74 percent in the question about structural conditions (see discussion in the previous section).

Hence, experts see a clear need to enhance the contribution of early childhood and pre-primary education to promoting equal opportunities and, as a consequence, to improve structural conditions in terms of fiscal resources. How do experts then assess the policy reforms directed at these objectives? Here, the picture is mixed. Forty percent of experts across all 28 EU member states state that policy reforms in early childhood education have been implemented with the goal of ensuring equal opportunities. However, reform activity seems to be slightly higher in the case of pre-primary education (50%) as well as in secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (52%). In general, experts believe that reforms in early childhood education do have a positive effect, although not a very strong one. In fact, the overall average of experts’ opinion is 1.3 on a scale from -2 (very negative impact) to +2 (very positive impact). In sum, there is some positive reform activity in early childhood education, but there is also room for improvement.

Of course, there is a stark cross-national variation in how far countries treat the expansion of early childhood education as a policy priority. In Germany, for instance, 42 percent of experts still see a very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in early childhood education. This is interesting because Germany has already undergone a rather astonishing expansion of child care in recent years, as is shown by the establishment of a statutory right for a place in ECEC for children under the age of 3 in 2013. Experts acknowledge these reforms (56% in the case of ECEC, and even 67% in the case of pre-primary education), but they obviously see a need for further improvement.

The situation is different in the Scandinavian countries, where access to ECEC is broad and the quality of provision is high. Even though some experts see a strong need to ensure equal opportunities in ECEC, very few see a ‘very strong need’ (0% in Denmark, 25% in Sweden, but 45% in Finland, which is a bit of a Scandinavian laggard in terms of expanding ECEC and pre-primary education). However, even in these countries, some demand a greater focus on inequities in ECEC, in particular for children with a migrant background. One Danish expert puts it like this: “If we are striving after equal opportunities for all, the field of early childhood education needs focus. It’s highly difficult to get equal opportunities for all when immigrant children start primary school with no Danish skills and without mandatory mother tongue education.” The same holds true for Central European countries that have well-developed ECEC institutions, such as France (where only 33% of experts see a very strong need).

Southern European countries can be regarded as laggards with regard to the expansion of ECEC opportunities (Hemerijck 2013). Consequently, the share of experts who see a ‘very strong’ need to expand the contribution of ECEC to promoting equal opportunities is very high (58% in Italy, 56% in Spain). In these countries, however, experts also see little reform activity. Only 13 percent of experts in Spain state that policy reforms enhancing equal opportunities in ECEC have taken place, while the comparable figure for Italy is 19 percent. Furthermore, none of the Spanish or Italian experts observe any reforms that would improve the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources for both early childhood education and pre-primary education – a clear reflection of the dire budgetary conditions in both countries.

The Eastern European countries are in some ways in a similar situation to Southern Europe. Even though early child care institutions were once widespread in the socialist countries, there seem to be significant problems in equality of access and potential quality in Eastern Europe. For example, in Lithuania, 70 percent of experts see a strong or very strong need to ensure equal opportunities in early childhood education, and even more (82%) do so for pre-primary education. Likewise, 86 percent of experts note a strong or very strong need to improve structural conditions regarding financial and human resources in early childhood and pre-primary education in this country. However, only 20 percent of experts observe any reforms in early childhood education (17% in the case of pre-primary education) to improve equal access, and only 25 percent of experts observe reforms to improve the structural conditions in early childhood education (none of the experts saw any reforms on this issue in pre-primary education). This chimes well with a Lithuanian expert’s comment: “The country is facing insufficient accessibility of pre-primary and primary education due to unequal spatial distribution of infrastructure (lack of kindergarten facilities and primary schools in some areas of cities) and financial reasons (some families are too poor to pay for private educational institutions when public [ones] are not in the proximity).”

4.2 Promoting equity and social cohesion in education

As mentioned above, the objective of promoting equity occupies a central place in expert assessments on necessary policy reforms. Access to higher levels of education are class-biased, privileging children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds in basically all European countries, but the strength of this association varies significantly. According to OECD data measuring the association between children’s social background and their PISA score in mathematics (OECD 2014: 200), educational inequalities are lower in the Scandinavian countries (especially Finland), but also in Southern Europe (e.g. Italy). They are highest in Central European countries, such as Belgium and France.

Thus, experts’ opinions on the urgency of the matter vary somewhat. In countries with above-average levels of educational inequalities, experts therefore tend to agree more that policy actions are very much needed (more than 80% of experts see a ‘very strong’ need in Austria to loosen the link between learning success and children’s socioeconomic background, while the comparable figure is 100% for France and Germany and 75% for Poland and the UK). The issue seems to be less pressing in countries whose education systems are characterised by a high degree of educational mobility (e.g. only

25% of experts in Denmark see a ‘very strong’ need to pursue policy reforms that would weaken the link between socioeconomic background and educational attainment, and even 0% in Finland and Sweden).

However, looking at the statements of individual experts, the picture is a bit more mixed. For example, against a background of the worsening economic situation in Finland in recent years, some cost-saving reforms have been introduced (e.g. cutbacks in grants to adults pursuing lifelong learning as well as a reduction in the paid hours of public child care to 20 per week for parents who are staying at home). According to some experts, these reforms hurt Finland’s potential to ensure equal opportunities in education. For example, one Finnish expert participating in the study quite strongly stated: “The present trend in policymaking is to disregard all issues related to equal opportunities; in other words, we in Finland are going backwards. The reason for the disregard given by policymakers is that we no longer can afford providing equal educational opportunities.”

In terms of educational sectors and besides ECEC, experts regard secondary, post-secondary and higher education as the most relevant sectors with regard to the promotion of social inclusion in education. Seventy percent of experts across all countries see a ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ need to ensure equal opportunities via secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. The latter category includes vocational training, which has been shown to effectively contribute to lower levels of socioeconomic inequality (Busemeyer 2015; Estévez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice 2001). Even slightly more experts (73%) believe there is a ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ need to ensure the contribution of education to fostering equal opportunities in tertiary education. Lifelong learning also holds a similar potential (77% of experts).

When asked about governments’ reform activities, however, a more nuanced picture emerges. Across all EU countries, slightly over half of the experts (52%) observe policy reforms that ensured equal opportunities in the field of secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. The share is much lower in the case of higher (tertiary) education (39%) and lifelong learning (28%). Thus, there has been some progress in promoting social inclusion via education in the field of secondary education, but efforts in higher education and lifelong learning are lacking. This is striking considering the fact that the expansion of tertiary education is one of the two education-related policy goals included in the Europe 2020 strategy.

As before, there is a considerable degree of country variation with regard to reform activities. There are indications – similar to those in the case of ECEC mentioned above – that these are lacking in exactly those countries that would benefit from them most. For instance, a necessary precondition for tertiary education to make a significant contribution to promoting social inclusion is that financing and infrastructure improve in those countries that lag behind with regard to levels of tertiary enrolment. However, only 17 percent of the experts for Austria state that policy reforms improving such structural conditions in tertiary education have taken place, compared to 63 percent for Denmark, even though the latter is already spending at a significantly above-average level in international comparisons of education financing. In Spain, just 24 percent of experts are of the opinion that policy reforms have been introduced in recent years to improve the system’s performance with regard to social cohesion and equal opportunities (across all sectors of the education system). Furthermore, there is much scepticism about whether these reforms are headed in the right direction. As one Spanish expert put it: “The

reforms introduced by law during the last 4 years were exactly the contrary of what should be done. They promote inequality in schooling at every level.”

However, there are also cases of improvement, particularly in Eastern Europe. In Romania, for instance, 89 percent of experts observe reforms that would ensure equal opportunities in secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (80% are of this opinion for pre-primary education, 60% for primary education, and 63% for early childhood education). Furthermore, these reforms are generally evaluated in a positive light: They receive a score of 2.00 on average in the case of early childhood education, 1.6 for pre-primary education, 1.5 for primary education, and 1.0 for secondary education. Similarly positive figures can be observed in the cases of Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic and Poland (where, for example, a striking 100% of experts note reforms improving equal opportunities in pre-primary education). However, the situation seems to be less benign in other Eastern European countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia), with Latvia and Hungary occupying a middling position.

4.3 Reducing the rate of early school leavers

Reducing the rate of early school leavers is a central goal of the Europe 2020 strategy. Across all EU countries, 77 percent of experts agree that there is a ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ need to address this issue. This is, however, a significantly lower share compared to that of experts seeing a similar need to weaken the link between individual socioeconomic background and learning success (93%). Hence, it seems that reducing the rate of early school leavers is regarded as one, but not the only policy instrument that may help lower educational inequalities. On average, 28 percent of experts state that policy reforms have been implemented in their respective countries that would address this problem, which is a strikingly low figure compared to the perceived reform needs.

In some countries, the problem is regarded as more pressing. In Italy, for instance, 91 percent of experts identify a strong or very strong need to reduce the rate of early school leavers, whereas the share is only 33 percent in Sweden and 50 percent in Finland. In France, all experts agree that reducing the rate needs to be a priority. To achieve this goal, one French expert recommends paying more attention to VET provision, writing: “France has [an] above-average rate of NEETs [youths who are not in education, employment or training]. One of the main problems is the under-valued VET system, both by employers and youths and parents.” Another comment, this time by an Italian expert, suggests that the problem is not only related to different sectors of the education system, but also to inequalities between regions and localities: “The early school leavers are concentrated in certain areas and districts of the country, especially in the outskirts of large metropolitan areas and especially in the south. Policymakers should address the living conditions and opportunities of young people and their households in those areas and districts.”

The brief analysis above suggests that the problem of early school leaving is also particularly pronounced in Eastern European countries. For example, all experts in Romania agree that there is a strong or very strong need to reduce the rate of early school leavers, but only 20 percent observe reforms that would effect change. Likewise, 75 percent of Hungarian experts also see a strong or very strong need, but no expert believes that significant reforms have been introduced. In Bulgaria, the situation is slightly different. Here,

too, 86 percent identify a strong or very strong need to tackle the problem of early school leaving, but 80 percent acknowledge that reforms in this regard have already taken place (though one Bulgarian expert indicates that this positive trend might now be changing).

4.4 Integrating refugees into the education system

The integration of refugee children poses a particular challenge in many EU countries that have recently witnessed a strong increase in the number of migrants. Not surprisingly, the proportion of experts who identify a strong or very strong need to do more about this policy problem is quite high (79%) and therefore on the same level as the share of experts who cite a strong or very strong need to weaken the link between individual socioeconomic background and learning success (80%). Unfortunately, the number of responses from individual countries is too low to be able to draw reliable conclusions on the relevance of these issues across countries. This might be a consequence of the fact that this is a challenge that has largely been unforeseen by both policymakers and experts alike. As some experts suggest, the integration of minorities – the Roma, in particular – remains a significant challenge in some cases.

4.5 Quality of teaching

High-quality education can mitigate inequities in the provision of education, help to reduce both the rate of early school leavers and students with minimal skills, and boost the educational attainment of students. Surprisingly, experts are of the opinion that there is less need to enhance quality in teaching compared to promoting equal opportunities or improving structural conditions. The share seeing a very strong need to enhance quality of teaching across all EU countries and all sectors of the education system is merely 29 percent, compared to 42 and 32 percent for the latter two goals, respectively. The share of experts expressing a strong or very strong need to improve quality of teaching is highest in the case of secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (68%). On the other hand, it is lowest in the cases of pre-primary education (43%) and early childhood education (47%), which is surprising given that the figures above indicate a strong need for reform in the latter two sectors. As a corollary, the proportion identifying significant policy reforms that promote the quality of teaching in the secondary education sector is also high (39%), followed by the share of experts identifying significant reforms in primary education (30%). However, it is important to note that experts tend to have a less positive opinion about these reforms in secondary education compared to quality-enhancing reforms in pre-primary education (1.2 for the former compared to 1.4 for the latter on a scale from -2 to +2).

4.6 Structural conditions regarding financial and human resources

Again, the improvement of structural conditions regarding financial and human resources is an important precondition for improving the quality of provision in education. Previous research has shown that there is a large degree of cross-national variation in the levels of public education spending as well as in the division of labour between public and private sources of education

funding (Busemeyer 2007, 2015). Furthermore, the governance of education systems – that is, the distribution of competences in the financing and provision of education across different levels of government – varies greatly. As stated above, the share of experts citing a very strong need for improving the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources amounts to 32 percent across all sectors of the education system (in all EU countries). The strongest need for improving structural conditions is seen in ECEC (44%, see above), in contrast to a value of 24 percent for lifelong learning. Compared to the other policy goals (ensuring equal opportunities and improving quality of teaching), the proportion of experts identifying significant policy reforms is lower in the case of the goal of improving structural conditions (between 11% for lifelong learning and 26% for secondary education).

Not surprisingly, experts see less need to improve structural conditions in countries that already exhibit high levels of public investment. In Denmark, for instance, only 11 percent of experts see a very strong need to improve structural conditions for primary, secondary or tertiary education (40% across all education sectors, though, if experts expressing a strong or very strong need are both taken into account). In spite of these beneficial background conditions, 61 percent of the experts for Denmark agree that significant policy reforms to improve conditions have happened anyway. But, as we have seen, there are some indications that the positive financial situation of education might be changing in the Nordic countries, particularly in Finland. As one Finnish expert notes: “There are many reforms conducted [or] planned in the educational sector. All of them are based on financial cuts, not to improve conditions. Our conditions [in] the educational sector have been at a good level until [the] 1990s. And got worse since then.”

In contrast, the share of experts stating a strong or very strong need for improvement in structural conditions is much higher in countries with significant financing problems (e.g. 92% in Greece, 76% in Italy, but also 79% in Germany). Furthermore, the proportion noticing significant policy reforms that improve structural conditions is generally lower in these countries (7% in Greece, 13% in Italy, and 17% in Germany). Not surprisingly, no experts observed any reforms that improve structural conditions in early childhood, pre-primary, primary or secondary education in Greece. In France, 21 percent of experts agreed that reforms in structural conditions were taking place across all sectors of the education system. However, as one expert put it, increasing the level of spending on education is different from increasing the efficiency of resource use, adding the criticism: “The major financial constraint in compulsory education is teacher salaries. Other countries are as expensive but use their budget for pedagogical resources.”

5 Discussion

The experts’ assessment of the state of education policy reforms in the EU can be summarised as follows. First, it is widely recognised that education plays a crucial role in mitigating inequalities and promoting social cohesion, and that the education systems of most EU countries have deficiencies in this respect. This is evidenced by the fact that large majorities of experts identify educational equity as the policy field in which there is a strong need for reform. Notably, equitable education ranks above other policy goals in this respect, in particular those to enhance the quality of teaching and to improve structural conditions in terms of financial and human resources,

even though both are important for improving access to education. Also, while experts did observe some progress in promoting equal opportunities in education, policy reform activity – both across educational sectors as well as across countries – varies significantly. Nevertheless, it seems that national policymakers have recognised the importance of educational equity.

Second, educational sectors enjoy different degrees of priority, and early childhood education (ECEC) generally ranks very high on the agendas of both policymakers and experts. This reflects policy priorities at the EU level as well as the general consensus among scholars and experts that investments in ECEC are particularly effective in reducing socioeconomic and educational inequalities in later stages of life (Esping-Andersen 2002). Furthermore, it might also be a consequence of the fact that expanding opportunities in ECEC is generally popular among European electorates because it improves the possibilities for young families to achieve a good work-life balance. Thus, ECEC is also the sector with above-average reform activity in some countries, especially in those lagging behind the pioneers in the expansion of child care services. In Germany, for instance, experts perceive a high degree of policy activism: 55.6 percent state that reforms to promote equal opportunities in ECEC have been introduced, 50 percent see reforms that improve the structural conditions, and another 50 percent witness quality-enhancing reforms. In Italy, in contrast, the corresponding figures are 18.8 percent, 0 percent and, again, 0 percent, even though experts see a similar need for reform as in Germany. Thus, there can be a significant discrepancy between problem pressure and the need for reform on the one hand and actual reform activity on the other.

Third, in contrast to ECEC, lifelong learning – an important policy objective of the Europe 2020 strategy – is given lower priority. Again, this is evident in both the experts' assessment of reform needs and their evaluations of reform activity. As mentioned above, fewer experts see a particular need to improve the contribution of lifelong learning to social inclusion. Furthermore, the reform activity of governments is lower in this field.

Fourth, besides ECEC, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education are also regarded as a policy field of high priority with strong implications for social inclusion and educational equity. The experts' evaluations of reform activity do indicate that there are some significant initiatives in this field. But in comparison to other educational sectors, in particular ECEC, they seem to disagree in their assessment of the direction of these reforms. This can be explained by the fact that, with ECEC, the dominant reform trajectory unequivocally points towards qualitative and quantitative expansion. In contrast, in secondary and post-secondary education, in particular, there might be less consensus among policymakers on whether academic HE or VET best promotes the goal of social cohesion (see e.g. Shavit and Müller 2000). Furthermore, some structural reforms at the level of secondary education – for instance, the transformation of differentiated school systems towards a more comprehensive model – are controversial among the public, policymakers and experts.

Fifth, the central place of higher (tertiary) education contrasts with the rather inconspicuous perception of reform needs and activities by experts for this sector. Fewer experts see a strong need to ensure equal opportunities in this sector, and the respective value for the need for improvements in structural conditions and quality of teaching in higher education is also lower than in other educational sectors. This is surprising since the quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of academic higher education

features so prominently on the agenda of policymakers and is a central component of the Europe 2020 strategy. It might be explained by the fact that the process of expanding tertiary education has already been going on for many years in several countries, whereas demands for expanding other educational sectors, in particular ECEC, are more recent and therefore more present on experts' minds and policymakers' agendas. Furthermore, the recent economic and fiscal crisis has had significant consequences for the labour market integration of young people, especially in the crisis-ridden countries of Southern Europe. Some of these countries (e.g. Spain) exhibit high levels of enrolment in academic tertiary education, and yet this has not prevented youth unemployment from shooting up. So, other types of post-secondary education, in particular VET, may be receiving more attention from experts and policymakers as a potential solution to the persistent problems of youth unemployment.

6 Conclusions

Education policy reforms continue to occupy a prominent place on the agenda of policymakers in Europe. In some respects, the EU agenda seems to be aligned with that of national policymakers, in particular with regard to the expansion and qualitative improvement of ECEC as well as to addressing the crucial problem of educational inequalities. In other respects, EU strategies emphasise aspects that are discussed less urgently both among experts and policymakers. A typical example of the latter dynamic is lifelong learning. In turn, national policymakers seem more concerned about the reform of secondary education. These imbalances are partly a result of the idiosyncratic division of competences between the EU and member states. EU policymakers are limited in terms of defining education-related priorities, biasing strategic actions towards policy objectives for which the EU can legitimately claim some competences. These are usually those education sectors with the closest ties to the labour market (related to the principle of free movement of labour in the Single Market) and/or those sectors that are not yet fully institutionalised in the member states – hence the emphasis on lifelong learning and ECEC. A more comprehensive approach to education policy in Europe would need to overcome these biases and develop a strategic framework that focuses on the most pressing issues and problems without taking into account the distribution of competences among the EU and member states. Compared to earlier initiatives, the EU's Europe 2020 and Education and Training framework are already steps in the right direction. In future, even more attention should be paid to primary and secondary education as well as to vocational education and training, since these are crucial to addressing the challenge of creating an equitable education system.

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Findings by Dimension



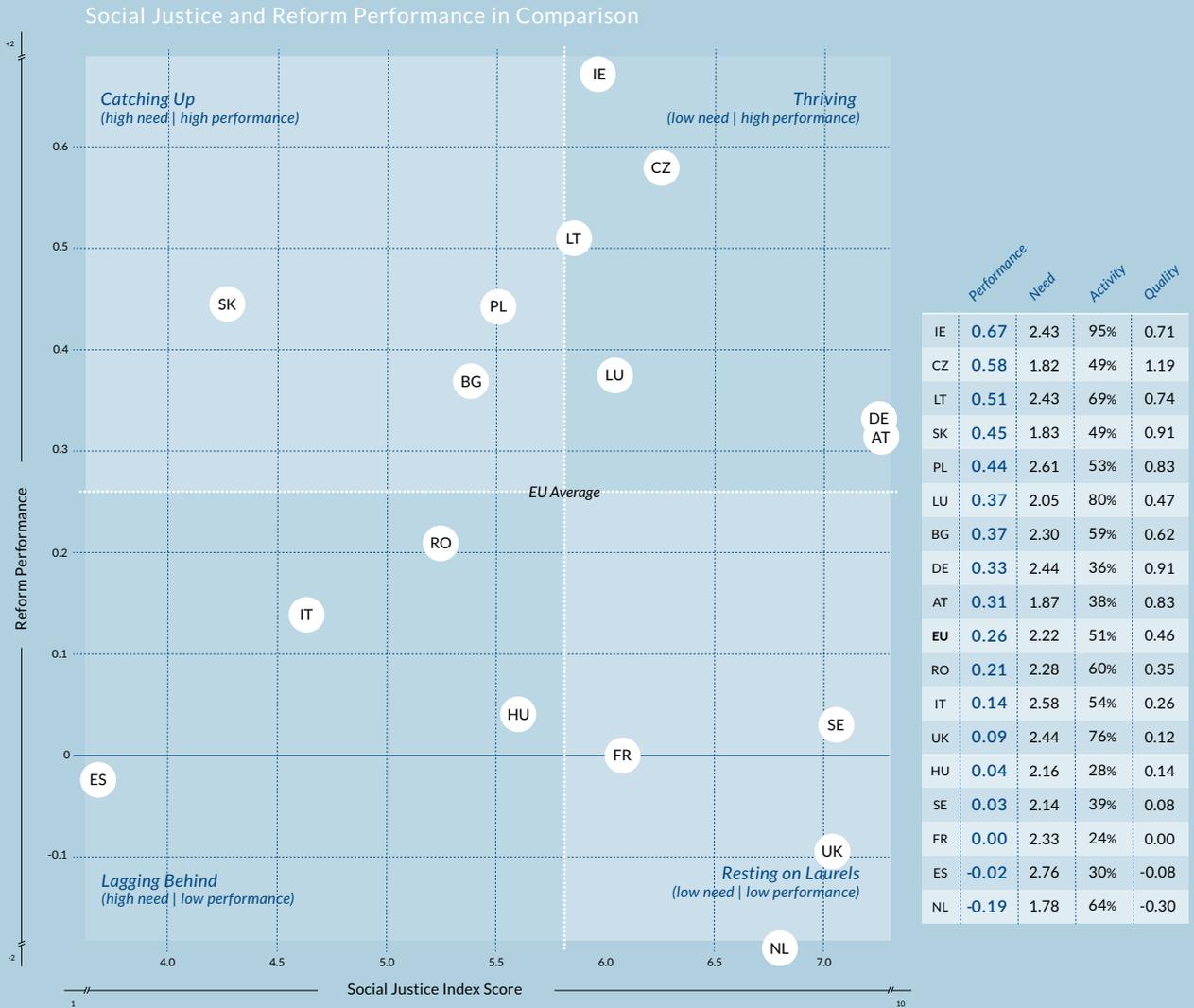
Labour Market Access

Overview of Policy Objectives and EU Average Scores

**NOTABLE FINDINGS**

... for the EU as a whole

- Experts see fighting youth unemployment as the most pressing need. Governments have responded accordingly, making this policy objective the most actively and effectively addressed one here.
- As regards need, reducing youth unemployment is followed closely by fighting long-term unemployment and improving the situation for low-skilled citizens.
- The least actively addressed policy objective is job creation for refugees, with no observed activity at all in 11 countries (out of 19 countries covered).
- The least effectively addressed policy objectives are improving employment rates for refugees, the foreign-born population and women. Some positive exceptions are: Italy (all three groups), Denmark (refugees, foreign-born), Ireland (foreign-born) and the Czech Republic (women).



... for selected countries and regions

- Spain, Poland, Italy and Greece rank highest in terms of the experts' assessed need for improving the overall labour market situation, while experts see relatively little need for reform in Denmark, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria.
- Experts' assessments of the need to improve the labour market situation of foreigners and refugees differ markedly across the member states, with relatively low shares in Eastern European and very high ones in Nordic countries.
- Ireland has shown the best reform performance here. In particular, its government addressed a remarkable 95 percent of reform need.
- Substantial reform gaps remain in France, Hungary, Greece and Spain.
- Comprehensive labour market reforms aimed at increasing employment in Romania are generally rated very highly by the experts.
- The Netherlands ranks last with respect to reform performance.

LABOUR MARKET: MANY GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT STILL FAR AWAY FROM MARKET PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

by Viktor Steiner

1 Introduction

Labour market access is key for social integration. Earnings from dependent employment not only provide the main income source for the great majority of people, but employment is also crucial for the integration of individuals and families into society. Depending on the social insurance system, unemployment and irregular employment are normally associated with low and insecure disposable household income and, thus, significantly contribute to inequality and poverty as well as social disintegration. Dramatically increasing unemployment, inequality and poverty rates in some of the member states of the European Union in the wake of the recent economic crisis underline how important labour market access is for social policy.

As summarised in the 2015 Social Justice Index (Schraad-Tischler 2015), employment and unemployment rates differ markedly across EU member states: Employment rates are above average in Anglo-Saxon, Continental and Nordic countries, and substantially below average in Southern and Eastern European countries. Unemployment rates in 2014 ranged from about 6 percent in some of the former countries to about 25 percent in Greece and Spain. Also, changes in employment and unemployment rates over time differ within country groups: Whereas the average employment rate in Germany increased by almost 10 percentage points between 2005 and 2014, it stagnated in several other Continental European countries. In contrast, employment rates declined in all Southern European countries during this period, most strongly in Greece, which saw a drop of 10 percentage points. At the same time, the average unemployment rate in Greece and Spain increased by about 10 percentage points.

The descriptive evidence summarised in Haigner et al. (2016) also shows that labour market access (as measured by various indicators) differs substantially between various demographic groups – in particular, older workers, youth, women and unskilled workers – and that these differences are much more pronounced in some of the member states. Youth unemployment is high in most member states and has recently reached extremely high levels in Greece and Spain, where one out of every two youths is unemployed.

A particularly important indicator of labour market access relates to long-term unemployment, which has been increasing since the economic and financial crisis of 2009. Currently, about 10 million people have been unemployed for more than 12 months in EU member states, which means that almost one in two of the unemployed is long-term jobless. On average across all EU member states, the share of long-term unemployed people has been steadily increasing, from about a third in 2008, and it continues to do so even though the overall unemployment rate began to show a slight decline after 2013. The long-term unemployment rate has increased in almost all member states since the 2009 recession, but the increase has been particularly strong in Greece, where the proportion of long-term unemployed people surpassed 70 percent in 2015. This share, as well as the increase in long-term unemployment, varies greatly, with relatively high shares in

Southern and Eastern European countries, and relatively low shares in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Duell, Thureau and Vetter 2016).

A high and persistent share of long-term unemployment is also an indicator of inefficiency in the labour market caused by both demand- and supply-side factors. Institutional factors, such as employment protection regulations and unemployment compensation systems, have been identified as contributing to long-term unemployment. Employment protection regulations tend to increase job security for those already in work – and, in particular, for certain groups of employees, such as older or disabled ones – but at the same time to reduce job opportunities for entrants and re-entrants into the labour market. Thus, they may affect both the level and structure of employment and unemployment (OECD 2014, Chapter 4; Turrini et al. 2015). Other institutional factors, such as extended entitlement periods to unemployment benefits and means-tested income support, may contribute substantially to long-term unemployment and ‘unemployment traps’ (see e.g. Immervoll et al. 2007).

Various policy reforms to reduce long-term unemployment have been introduced in a number of member states, but the empirical evidence about the effectiveness of these reforms has been mixed and inconclusive. One relatively robust result seems to be that long periods of entitlement to benefits have a much stronger impact on long-term unemployment than the income replacement ratio (i.e. the ratio of the level of unemployment compensation to individual net earnings). Empirical research on the relationship between employment protection and the structure of employment and unemployment, summarised in OECD (2014), indicates that temporary and other forms of irregular employment cannot be viewed simply as ‘stepping stones’ to regular and more secure employment for unemployed people and labour market entrants, but rather seem to be of a more permanent nature and may lead to ‘precarious’ employment. Furthermore, even having a permanent job may not prevent individuals from being relatively poor, depending on household composition and the tax-benefit system. ‘In-work poverty’ is one of the social inclusion indicators defined by the European Commission and considered to be of increasing importance in a number of member states (European Commission 2011). Labour market policies aimed at preventing or reducing long-term unemployment or precarious employment and in-work poverty come under the responsibility of the individual member states. However, there are various guidelines and activities at the EU level that are designed to affect the implementation of national labour market policies, as briefly summarised in the next section.

Given this background, the aim of this study is to summarise the views of a large number of experts who participated in the SIM Europe Reform Barometer survey 2016 and assessed the recent labour market situation as well as related reforms in the member states. The experts assessed the need for reform to improve the labour market access of the overall population as well as of certain groups of people, in particular, older workers, youth, women, foreigners and refugees, low-skilled workers and the long-term unemployed. They also assessed the situation of people in precarious employment and the working poor. And, lastly, they were asked about the implementation of labour market reforms and for their views about the effectiveness of these reforms.

2 EU activity in the dimension

Within its fairly limited competence in employment matters, as defined in Article 149 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU aims at encouraging cooperation between member states and supporting their action in this area. The Europe 2020 strategy launched in 2010 defines the long-term (10-year) strategy for jobs and growth. It includes a target of raising the employment rate of the working-age population (people between 20 and 64 years old) to 75 percent. The employment target – as well as related ones of reducing poverty and social exclusion and increasing the level of education – is complemented by national targets for individual member states, which are reviewed annually as part of the European Semester process. The Europe 2020 strategy also serves as a standard of reference for employment policies at both the EU and member-state levels. According to the European Commission (2014), this strategy played some part in the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds in the 2014–2020 period.

In March 2015, the Commission issued ‘Guidelines for the employment policies of the member states’ (European Commission 2015). According to these guidelines, member states should – among other demand-side policies – foster job creation, shift the tax burden away from labour, and support more wage flexibility. On the supply side, the guidelines recommend the reduction of long-term and youth unemployment as well as of barriers to labour market participation for women, older workers and legal migrants. The functioning of labour markets should be enhanced by reforming employment protection rules to reduce segmentation. Furthermore, the guidelines suggest strengthening the role of labour market policies to encourage people to take up jobs.

Beginning in 2014, the Commission introduced a new set of indicators (‘scoreboard of key employment and social indicators’) with the aim of monitoring the integration of employment and social policies within the European Semester. As well as the overall employment target, this set of indicators also contains the labour force participation (‘activity’) rate of the working-age population, the average and the youth unemployment rates, and the long-term unemployment rate. Although there are no explicit targets for these additional indicators, the Commission uses them to assess the relative labour market situation across member states on top of the overall 75 percent employment target.

Progress towards reaching that main target has been mixed. Although the labour market situation has recently improved in most member states compared to how it was during the severe recession in 2009/2010, with a few exceptions (Austria, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) employment rates remain well below 75 percent. They are very low in Southern European member states, which were hit particularly hard by the recession, but also in some Eastern European countries. Other labour market indicators (e.g. the overall unemployment rate, the youth unemployment rate and the long-term unemployment rate) give similar rankings across member states and suggest that current labour market developments in most countries do not meet the 75 percent employment target (see Schraad–Tischler 2015).

It is much more difficult, of course, to assess the effectiveness of reforms aimed at improving labour market access than to merely monitor general labour market developments and the implementation of specific policies in member states, as undertaken within the European Semester. There are only a few member states in which the effectiveness of labour market programmes is evaluated scientifically on a regular basis, and in those countries where such evaluations are carried out, they usually concern programmes that were

implemented several years ago or are too recent to assess rigorously. Nevertheless, the experts' views summarised below should provide important information not only about the need for, but also about the implementation and effectiveness of labour market reforms in the EU member states – and these may complement the 'official' view given within the European Semester framework.

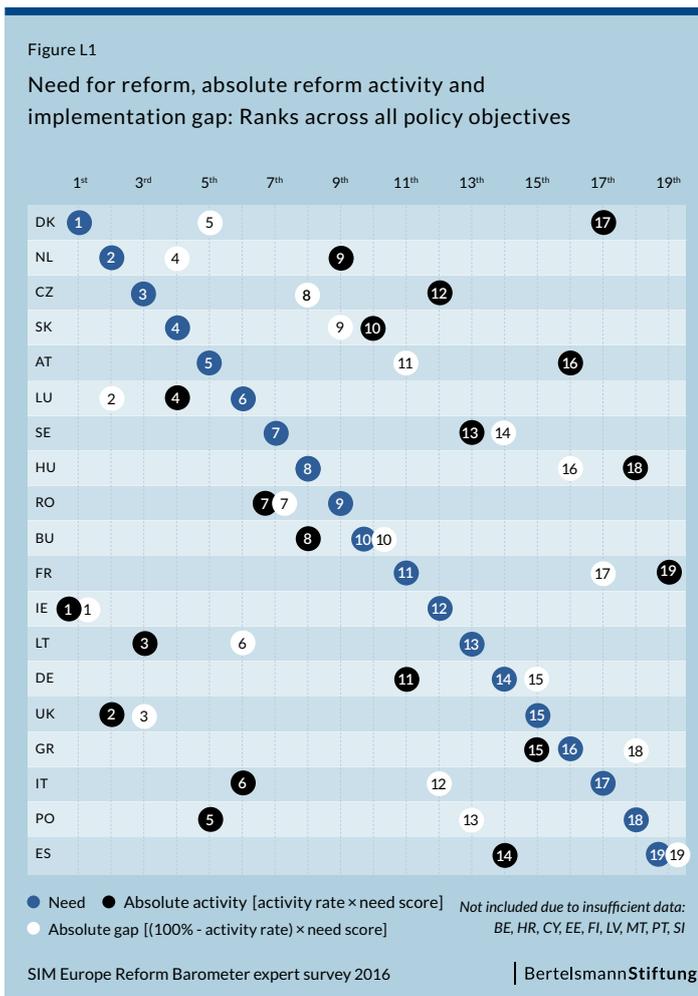
3 Survey results across member states

The dimension 'labour market access' in the SIM Europe Reform Barometer 2016 consists of three policy objectives. The first relates to the question of whether, in the respondents' view, there is any need to increase employment and/or decrease unemployment. This question refers to both the overall population and to particular target groups in the labour market, namely, older workers, youth, women, low-skilled workers, the long-term unemployed, foreign workers and refugees. Two other policy objectives concern ('involuntary') temporary employment and in-work poverty, respectively, and are related to precarious employment. After assessing the need for each policy objective, the experts assessed whether any policy reforms had been

introduced during the reference period (July 2014 to January 2016) that addressed employment/unemployment rates of the various target groups or precarious employment, respectively. Respondents who answered these questions were asked to assess the effectiveness/quality of the respective reforms.

The following summary of experts' responses presents both quantitative and qualitative information. Survey results across member states focusing on differences in respondents' assessments of the need for and the actual implementation of reform are presented first. In addition, the experts' qualitative assessments of the need for, implementation and, in particular, effectiveness of reforms are reported in general terms, while a more detailed summary of survey results across policy objectives is contained in the following section.

To compare the overall performance across member states, Figure L1 summarises our experts' rankings of needs and implemented reforms ('activity')¹ across the various policy objectives as well as the average 'reform gap' in each country (for the methodology, see Methodology chapter). This gap measures the difference between the values of the reform needs and the implemented reforms (addressed need) averaged over all policy objectives. The rank-



¹ The need is ranked in increasing order (first rank = lowest need); the activity is ranked in decreasing order (first rank = highest activity).

ings could not be calculated for all member states, as for some countries too few respondents answered the questions on specific policy objectives.

In view of the severe economic and financial crisis the EU has experienced, it is not surprising that there is a stronger need (higher ranking of needs) for increasing employment/reducing unemployment and improving the situation related to precarious employment in the Southern European member states (Greece, Italy and Spain) than there is in other member states. Other countries for which the experts see a strong need for reform (and for which rankings could be calculated) include Germany, Poland and the UK, whereas little need for reform is seen for Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden. Some of these rankings were to be expected (e.g. regarding the Netherlands and the Nordic countries), while some are counterintuitive (e.g. the differences between some of the Eastern European member states as well as the more favourable ranking of Austria compared to Germany). Regarding Austria and Germany, their different rankings do not seem to reflect the divergence of unemployment rates in the two countries – strongly increasing in Austria, declining in Germany. One reason for the experts' favourable assessment of the Austrian labour market might be due to this convergence. However, the experts' views on the need for reforms in the two countries differ greatly across target groups and policy objectives. In particular, experts see the highest need to increase employment/reduce unemployment among older workers in Austria, whereas Germany holds a middle position in this respect, reflecting the relatively good recent employment performance among older workers. On the other hand, experts see little need for reform regarding precarious employment in Austria, whereas Germany is ranked relatively high in this regard.

One would have expected to see more reforms being implemented in those countries where there is great need for reform compared to countries for which the experts see little need. Figure L1 seems to indicate a relationship between the rankings of need for and the implementation of reforms across member states, but there are exceptions. For example, while Greece, Italy and Spain all have high rankings regarding the need for reform, only Italy is also given a relatively high rank in terms of reforms actually implemented during the reference period. France, which ranks relatively high in terms of the need for reform, also obtains the lowest rank regarding implemented reforms.

The ranking by reform gap shows to what extent reforms have been implemented in member states relative to the experts' assessment of the need for labour market reforms. In the view of the experts, Greece and Spain have wide reform gaps (i.e. low ranks of the gap), while Italy has narrowed the gap by implementing reforms. Likewise, reform gaps are considered relatively wide in Germany and France, whereas the gap in the United Kingdom ranks third due to its top ranking for implemented reforms.

Of course, the reform gap as defined here might be less informative in the case of countries with very little need for reform, as they would not be expected to be implementing reforms. But this would still affect the measured reform gap. For example, experts see little need for reform in Denmark and also report little reform activity there. This results in a change in the country's ranking with respect to the reform gap, but it need not indicate a weaker labour market performance. Thus, when interpreting the country ranking concerning reform gaps, one should keep in mind the experts' assessment concerning the need for reform in any particular country.

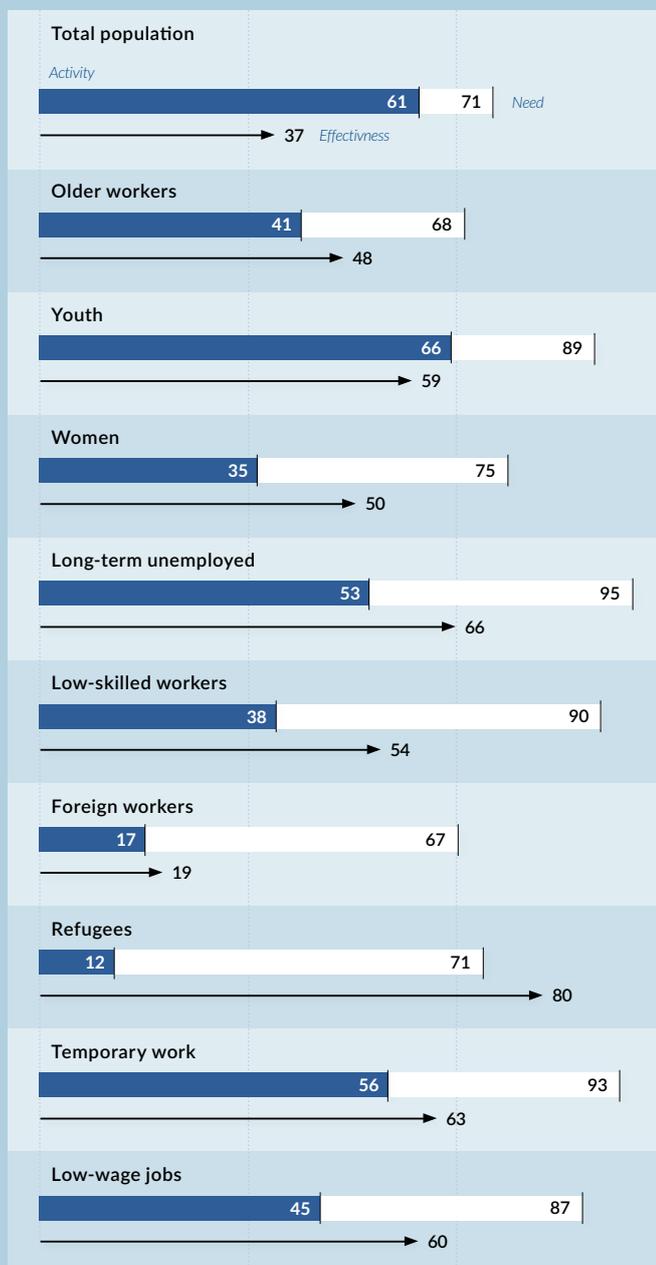
4 Survey results across policy objectives

For the various policy objectives concerning labour market access, Figure L2 shows the average shares of respondents across all member states who stated that there is a ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ need for reform. The figure also shows the average shares of respondents answering that reforms were implemented during the reference period, and that these reforms had ‘positive’ or ‘strong positive’ effects on the respective target group. Given that very few respondents answered that there was no need at all to increase employment and/or decrease unemployment and that implemented reforms had ‘negative or no effects’, little information is lost by this aggregation.

In order to present survey results across policy objectives in a concise way and to take into account the small number of observations for individual countries, the following analysis is mainly based on the aggregation of member states into five country groups: Anglo-Saxon countries (Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom); Continental Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands); Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia); the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden; and Southern Europe (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). For the needs and activity questions, the average shares of respondents (in percent) who answered that they, respectively, see the need for reform and that reforms have been implemented during the reference period are reported by policy objective and country group in Table L1. Given the relatively small number of answers to the questions about the effectiveness of reforms within most country groups, shares of respondents who gave positive evaluations of reforms are not reported. Instead some qualitative information on the respondents’ assessments of reforms is given below.

Figure L2

Increase in employment / decrease in unemployment:
EU average need for reform, reform activity and effectiveness
by targeted groups (in percent)



Activity = yes Need = 2 or 3 Effectiveness = 1 or 2

EU average shares are weighted to account for population size of the member states.

Table L1

Survey results by country group and policy objectives (average shares in percent)

Country group	Total	Older workers	Youth	Women	Long-term unempl.	Low-skilled	Foreign workers	Refugees	Temp. work	Low-wage jobs
	Reform need									
Anglo-Saxon	53.3	38.5	86.7	60.0	86.7	93.3	35.7	45.5	66.7	87.5
Continental Europe	58.5	79.2	77.8	66.0	88.7	92.3	82.7	88.0	81.3	72.4
Eastern Europe	71.2	78.1	91.8	65.3	93.1	88.6	24.0	37.3	69.4	82.5
Nordic	78.3	27.3	87.0	43.5	95.7	87.0	100	90.9	53.8	30.0
Southern Europe	100	100	100	100	100	93.5	81.8	66.7	88.2	90.9
Total	73.9	71.6	89.2	70.3	93.3	90.8	65.0	65.9	75.2	78.8
Country group	Reform activity									
Anglo-Saxon	63.6	44.4	83.3	40.0	69.2	45.5	30.0	0.0	55.6	100
Continental Europe	63.2	54.8	61.5	41.0	43.6	32.4	28.9	21.6	40.7	29.2
Eastern Europe	65.7	48.4	76.5	38.7	72.3	59.1	8.5	2.3	40.0	55.8
Nordic	72.2	35.3	72.2	27.8	61.1	58.8	65.0	63.2	11.1	11.1
Southern Europe	71.4	41.0	79.5	48.6	63.2	45.9	16.7	12.5	41.9	19.4
Total	67.0	46.8	73.9	40.4	62.4	49.4	24.5	18.1	39.7	40.7

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

4.1 Total Population

Across all member states, three out of four respondents identified a strong or very strong need to increase employment and/or reduce unemployment for the overall population. In Southern European member states, where the crisis hit labour markets particularly hard, there is unanimous accord among respondents about the need for reforms. However, the views on the need to improve the labour market situation of the overall population are not always in line with recent labour market developments in some countries. For example, while unemployment has recently developed much more favourably in Germany than in Austria, the proportion of respondents who see strong or very strong need for improvement is similar (about 50%) in both countries.

Whereas only about 50 percent of respondents see a strong or very strong need for reform in Anglo-Saxon countries and Continental Europe, all respondents for Southern Europe do so in terms of reducing unemployment and/or increasing employment, for obvious reasons. For Eastern European member states, the share of respondents who see a strong or very strong need for further improvement of employment/unemployment conditions in the overall population is about 70 percent. This high proportion may seem remarkable given recent positive developments, as reflected by the marked increase in employment rates and decline in (long-term) unemployment between 2005 and 2014 (Haigner et al. 2016, Chapter 4). However, one has to bear in mind that unemployment in most Eastern European member states was very high at the beginning of this period.

On average across all member states, two out of three experts stated that some policy reforms aimed at improving the employment/unemployment situation of the overall population have been implemented during the reference period. This is below the proportion (three out of four) that, on average, sees a strong or very strong need for reform, with developments in the Southern

European member states mainly accounting for this difference. There, about 70 percent reported some reform affecting the overall population, although all of them saw the need for improving the overall labour market situation. For the other member states, there seems to be little difference between the shares of experts reporting the need for and the implementation of reforms.

One in two respondents views the implemented reforms as being effective with respect to the overall population. For a few member states, experts provided detailed comments on the implementation and effectiveness of recent labour market reforms. One expert mentioned several reforms that were introduced in Greece as part of the agreements with international lenders in early 2012, stating: “Legislation boosted flexible employment, facilitated redundancies and reformed the collective bargaining system. Reforms facilitated company labour contracts and the individualisation of employment conditions accompanied by reduced remuneration. The minimum monthly wage was cut by 22 percent by law in 2012, a sub-minimum wage was introduced for young people, and unemployment benefits were cut sharply.” According to the same expert, the government’s plans to improve job placement and the activation of the unemployed to get them back to work (e.g. by providing financial incentives, training and coaching) have not yet been realised due to, among other factors, a lack of sufficient trained personnel. Insufficient placement and activation support is also mentioned by one expert as a reason for high long-term unemployment in Italy.

4.2 Older Workers

About 70 percent of respondents across all member states see a strong or very strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment among older workers. This share is above average in Continental, Eastern and Southern European member states, and relatively low in the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries. In this latter groups of countries, only one in four respondents sees a strong or very strong need to improve the labour market situation of older workers. This seems compatible with the relatively high and increasing employment rates in these countries, particularly in Sweden (Haigner et al. 2016, Chapter 4). The average proportion of respondents in Nordic countries who see a strong or very strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment among older workers is similar to the need reported for the overall population. However, only one in two experts across all member states stated that reforms targeted at older workers had been implemented during the reference period.

Remarkably, according to the experts’ assessment, the likelihood that reforms were implemented seems to be only weakly related to the assessment of a need to improve the labour market situation among older workers. While more than 80 percent of the experts assessing the situation in the Eastern European member states see a strong or very strong need for reform in this policy area, only about 50 percent report that any such reforms have been implemented. A similar (weak) relationship between the assessed need and the implementation of reforms targeted at older workers can also be observed, on average, for the Eastern European member states. In the Nordic member states, by contrast, only one in three experts sees a (very) strong need for policy reforms specifically targeted at older workers, and a similar proportion reports that such reforms have been implemented during the reference period.

About one in two respondents sees positive effects from these reforms on the labour market situation of older workers, a similar share as for the

average of all member states. One expert described the policy implemented by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, writing: “The unemployed aged over 50 are one of the priority target groups of active labour market policy. Employment mediation services and various training and employment initiatives are implemented to promote jobs for the unemployed over the age of 50. The over-50s are enrolled with priority in most active labour market programmes and measures financed by the state budget.”

4.3 Youth

In almost all countries, the great majority of experts see a (very) strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment among young people. This was the case for all experts for Southern European member states and for 90 percent of those for Eastern European ones. The assessment for these countries does not come as a surprise given the low average level of employment and – in the case of Southern European countries – high and strongly increasing level of long-term youth unemployment (Schraad-Tischler 2015). According to the experts’ views, youth unemployment is also, on average, a very serious problem in the Anglo-Saxon member states; almost 90 percent of the experts assessing the situation there see a (very) strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment of youth. This contrasts sharply with the experts’ views about the labour market situation of the population as a whole and of older workers in the Anglo-Saxon member states, as described above. Our experts’ concern over youth unemployment in the member states corresponds with the views expressed by those reported in the 2015 Social Justice Index (*ibid.*).

On average, the share of experts stating that reforms have been implemented to improve the youth labour market situation exceeds 70 percent across all member states and is even higher in the Anglo-Saxon and Southern European countries. These reforms are also assessed favourably by the majority, with more than 80 percent of the respondents answering the question about the effectiveness of the respective reforms, and with almost half of the respondents to this question referring to Eastern European member states. An expert describing the labour market policy implemented by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour explains the structure of individual action plans that are made for every registered unemployed young person on the day of registration with the labour office. The plan contains a profile for the young person determining the individual’s needs for training, and also describes the individual’s employment opportunities and the barriers to labour market access.

4.4 Women

The majority of experts see a (very) strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment of women in most member states, with the exception of the Nordic countries, which already feature high employment/low unemployment among women. Still, even in these countries, about 40 percent of all experts see a (very) strong need for improvement. All experts assessing the labour market situation in the Southern European member states see a (very) strong need for increasing female employment. However, this assessment probably does not describe gender differences in the labour market, but rather the generally poor situation in these countries. In the other member

states, the respective shares amount to about 60 percent, on average, with little variation between Anglo-Saxon, Continental European and Nordic ones.

On average across all member states, only two in five experts state that reforms have been implemented to improve the labour market situation of women, and this share seems to vary little across the member states despite the relatively large differences in experts' assessments of the need for such reforms. One in two experts who answered the question concerning the effectiveness of the respective reforms (with most of them referring to Eastern European countries) sees some positive effects on women's labour market situation.

4.5 Long-term unemployed and unskilled workers

Almost all experts see a (very) strong need to increase employment/decrease unemployment among the long-term unemployed and unskilled workers, and their assessment seems to differ little across countries. Even for the Nordic member states, where the long-term unemployment rate is low relative to the Eastern European or Southern European ones, almost all experts state an urgent need for reform to combat long-term unemployment. The respondents' concern about long-term unemployment corresponds to the views expressed by those reported in the Social Justice Index 2015 (Schraad-Tischler 2015). The experts' assessment in the Reform Barometer survey is also very similar regarding unskilled workers: Overall, about 90 percent see a (very) strong need to improve the labour market situation for this group. This is probably due to the high degree of correlation between these two indicators in most member states, and they are therefore described together here.

On average across all member states, the share of experts stating that reforms have been implemented to improve the labour market situation of the long-term unemployed is about 60 percent (50% for the low-skilled). The exception are the Continental European countries, where only about 40 percent of the experts state that reforms targeted at these groups have been implemented. More than half of the respondents who have answered the question on the effectiveness of these reforms refer to Eastern European member states. A majority of them (ca. 60%) assess these reforms positively. For example, an expert describes the public works programme in Hungary that is targeted at the long-term unemployed and low-skilled, and states that the unemployment rate would be 4 percentage points higher without this programme. It is not clear, however, what the basis for a positive assessment of them might have been. In most cases, these assessments do not seem to be based on results from empirical evaluation studies of labour market policies.

4.6 Foreign workers and refugees

Across all member states, two out of three experts see an urgent need to improve the labour market situation of foreign workers and refugees, but this share varies substantially across different countries. Whereas only one in four respondents sees such a need in the Eastern European countries, all experts referring to the Nordic countries and large proportions referring to the Continental and Southern European member states (about 80% in both groups) see a (very) strong need to increase employment/reduce unemployment among foreigners and refugees.

Across all member states, only one in five experts states that reforms targeted at foreign workers or refugees have been implemented during the reference period. The shares vary, both for foreign workers and refugees, from two out of three in the Nordic to virtually zero in the Eastern and Southern European member states. The latter differ, however, in that large shares of experts see the need to improve the labour market situation of foreign workers and refugees in Southern European member states, while the reverse is true in the Eastern European states. Also, in these two regions, the experts' assessment differ regarding the need to improve the labour market situation of foreign workers and refugees: While a large share of experts who see the need for reform in the Southern European member states, one out of four experts commenting on Eastern Europe sees the need for foreign workers and one out three for refugees in these countries.

About half of all experts answering the questions concerning the effectiveness of reforms to improve the labour market situation of these groups see positive effects. Given the very small overall number of responses, it is impossible to say anything concrete about differences between member states. It seems remarkable that there are very few written statements about the effectiveness of reforms aimed at improving the labour market situation of foreign workers and refugees. One rare example, which may be representative for the situation in most of the Eastern European member states, is: "I know first attempts are being made for developing programmes for the employment of refugees and foreign-born people, but still the prevailing attitude is that there will not be many foreigners wishing to live and work in Bulgaria."

4.7 Precarious employment

The level and evolution of precarious employment varies greatly across member states and seems to be viewed as an increasingly important social problem – especially in Southern European member states, but also in some of the Continental European countries (e.g. Germany). In the Reform Barometer survey 2016, precarious employment was addressed in two items: The first refers to temporary work contracts on an involuntary basis, the second to in-work poverty and/or the number of low-wage earners.² Whereas the first indicator concerns the insecurity of a job, the second measures the income of the person, taking into account both non-labour income as well as the size and composition of the household, and may thus only be weakly related to individual earnings. Furthermore, individuals holding a permanent job may be found – just as likely as people with temporary jobs – among the working poor.

For both indicators of precarious employment, three in four of our experts across all member states see strong or very strong need to improve the situation. Almost all experts referring to Southern Europe see need for reform regarding both temporary employment and in-work poverty. The proportions for Eastern and Continental European countries range between 70 and 80 percent, respectively. Compared to the experts' assessment about the need for reform in these countries, relatively few reforms seem to have been implemented during the reference period. For example, only about 40 percent of the experts referring to Southern or Eastern European member states

² According to the Eurostat definition, low-wage earners are defined as "persons who are employed with 'equalised' disposable income below 60 percent of the national median." 'Equalised' disposable income is adjusted by the size and composition of households using the Eurostat equivalence scale.

report some reform of temporary employment. Regarding the reduction of in-work poverty, about 30 out of 50 respondents referring to Eastern Europe report some reform.

The majority of experts who responded to the question on the effectiveness of these reforms assessed them positively. Most of these responses refer to Eastern European countries. Three out of four of the experts answering the question on the effectiveness of reforms stated that they expected them to have positive effects on in-work poverty. Regarding reforms of temporary employment in Eastern European countries, the majority of the small number of experts (14 out of 18) who answered this question expect them to have positive effects. For the other groups of countries, the number of respondents is too small to give a quantitative summary of the experts' views on the effectiveness of reforms in this field. It seems useful, however, to briefly summarise some of the written experts' statements:

In the wake of the economic and financial crisis and induced by agreements with its international lenders, Greece introduced a number of reforms aimed at increasing labour market flexibility by facilitating redundancies, reforming the collective bargaining system and reducing the minimum wage and unemployment benefits. Partly due to these reforms, in-work poverty is reported by one of the experts to have significantly risen. Reforms aimed at increasing labour market flexibility have also been reported for Italy. A new labour contract – one that offers a prolonged trial period and easier dismissal procedures, but also sees employment protection increase with job seniority – has been introduced. One expert sees the threat that this reform may lead to substitution of workers who are better protected and, hence, more expensive. In Spain, the high share of temporary work contracts is reported to have declined in the wake of the economic crisis because these jobs were quicker to disappear than permanent ones and were also partly replaced by 'involuntary' part-time jobs. Several experts see an urgent need to reform income support programmes to better cope with the job crises in Southern European member states. Reform of the income support systems aimed at combatting in-work poverty is also one of the main concerns of several experts commenting on the situation in Eastern European member states.

5 Discussion

Unemployment remains high and the employment rate well below the EU target of 75 percent of the working-age population in most member states. Employment and unemployment rates differ substantially between various demographic groups, in particular older workers, youth, women and unskilled workers. There are substantial differences among countries, with a relatively favourable performance in most of the Anglo-Saxon and Continental European countries and a much less favourable one in others, particularly in Southern European countries, where employment rates have significantly declined and unemployment dramatically increased as a result of the economic and financial crisis. Long-term unemployment is also a pressing problem in several member states, as is the presence of precarious employment and in-work poverty. Thus, progress towards reaching the employment target set out in the Europe 2020 strategy has been mixed at best, and there is still a long way to go for most member states.

The overall assessment of the experts who have participated in the Reform Barometer survey 2016 reflects the labour market situation in the EU. A large majority of the experts indicate that there is a need to increase employment and/or reduce unemployment, and all experts referring to Southern Europe see such a need. Greece, Italy and Spain rank high in terms of the experts' assessed need for improving the overall labour market situation, while experts see relatively little need for reform in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands or Sweden. While this ranking clearly corresponds to actual labour market developments, it seems remarkable that experts rank some countries with a relatively good recent labour market performance less favourably than those where unemployment has recently been increasing. A striking example is the experts' overall ranking of Austria and Germany, which does not seem to reflect the strong increase in the Austrian unemployment rate and decline in the German one. This is an example where the experts' views on the need for reforms may be influenced not only by recent changes in the labour market, but also by the longer-term labour market performance in member states.

In addition to assessing the need for labour market reforms, the experts also reported on whether member states had implemented such reforms during the reference period. Overall, there is a clear relationship between the rankings of need for and the actual implementation of reforms across member states, but – according to the experts' views – not all countries have implemented reforms to the extent suggested by their relative need. For example, while the experts rank Greece and Spain low in terms of implemented reforms across all policy objectives, Italy, which is also ranked high in terms of the need for reforms, obtains a much better ranking regarding reform activity.

Thus, substantial reform gaps remain in several member states with relatively poor labour market performances (e.g. France, Greece and Spain), which may indicate the need for further reforms. However, those with a relatively good labour market performance may also be ranked high in terms of reform gaps if little reform took place during the reference period for the very reason that labour market reforms had already been introduced in the recent past. This seems to be the case for Germany, where – with the exception of the recent introduction of a minimum wage – the main labour market reforms took place about a decade ago.

Any summary labour market indicator masks important differences between various target groups of labour market policy. For several groups of people – in particular, the young, the low-skilled and the long-term unemployed – the share of respondents who see the need to improve their labour market situation is very large in virtually all member states, but especially in Southern European countries. Long-term unemployment, in particular, has increased dramatically in some of the Southern European member states since the crisis. Given the very high share of long-term unemployed people in Greece, for example, it is not surprising that all the country experts share the view that there is an urgent need for reforms aimed at reducing long-term unemployment.

In contrast, assessments concerning the need to improve the labour market situation of older people and women are much more varied across the member states as a whole. These differences reflect country differences in the employment and long-term unemployment rates of older people and women across the EU. For Southern European countries, the catastrophic overall labour market situation clearly dominates the experts' views about the need for reforms for these groups, as well.

Experts' assessments of the need to improve the labour market situation of foreigners and refugees also differ markedly across the member states, with relatively low shares in Eastern European and very high ones in Nordic countries. This may reflect concerns about the deteriorating employment situation of previous immigration cohorts as well as the large recent inflows of migrants to the latter countries, while foreigners and refugees are still a small minority in Eastern European member states.

The proportion of experts saying that there have been some reforms that affected some labour market groups is relatively high for those targeted at youth and the long-term unemployed in most member states, and relatively small regarding older workers, women and low-skilled workers. There is also little variation in the proportions of these latter groups between member states. The share of respondents reporting policy reforms targeted at foreigners or refugees is fairly low overall, particularly in Eastern and Southern European countries, whereas almost two out of three report such policies in Nordic countries.

One in two of all respondents who answered the question concerning the effectiveness of policy reforms aimed at increasing employment/decreasing unemployment sees positive effects of these reforms on the population as a whole. Except for youth, for whom the share of positive assessments is well above average, the share of positive answers varies little for the various target groups of labour market policy. This seems consistent with empirical results from evaluation studies, which tend to show that active labour market programmes for young people have more favourable long-term effects than programmes for older workers. Regarding precarious employment, only a relatively small number of experts answered the questions on the effectiveness of reforms, with a majority giving a favourable overall assessment. 'Involuntary' temporary employment and in-work poverty seem to be a particularly pressing problem in the Eastern European member states, where a clear majority considers the reforms to have had positive effects.

In summary, the experts' views on the labour market situation in the EU seem consistent with the fact that the employment target set out in the Europe 2020 strategy has not yet been reached, that progress towards this target is slow in most countries, and that there is need for further reforms in most of them to increase employment and reduce unemployment. Despite the ambitious national targets formulated by individual governments and the annual reviews by the European Semester, the Reform Barometer experts believe that the implementation of labour market reforms has been insufficient in a number of member states, and that substantial reform gaps remain. This not only relates to the average employment and unemployment rates, but also to particular target groups of labour market policy and to the quality of employment, such as 'involuntary' temporary work and in-work poverty.

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Findings by Dimension

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

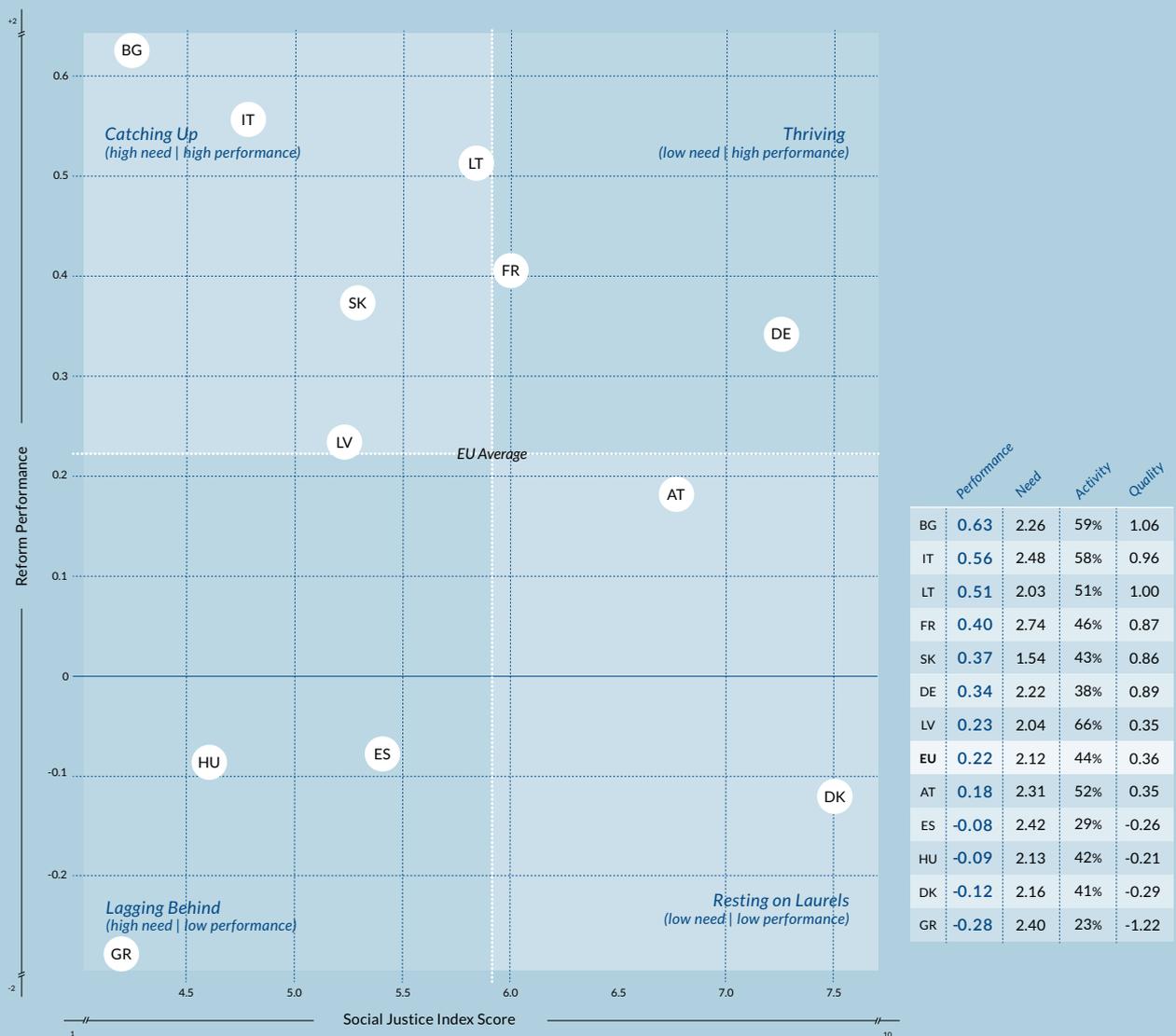
Overview of Policy Objectives and EU Average Scores



NOTABLE FINDINGS

... for the EU as a whole

- This dimension displays the lowest reform quality in the EU and the widest range of quality scores across countries.
- Concerning the need for reforms, policy objectives can be split into two groups: The reduction of economic inequality, the integration of refugees, and the reduction of NEET rates received significantly higher scores. Gender equality and the integration of the foreign-born in general received lower scores, with exceptions to the latter being Hungary (for gender equality) and Denmark (for integrating the foreign-born).
- The reduction of NEET rates is addressed most actively, and gender equality most effectively.
- Integration policies targeting foreign-born citizens were the least actively and effectively addressed policy goals by far (positive exception: Italy).



... for selected countries and regions

- France has markedly the highest reform need, according to the experts. It is followed by Italy, Spain and Greece. While France and Italy have shown good reform performance in response, Greece ranks last in this respect.
- The need to reduce income or wealth inequalities is particularly strong in the Baltic states (insufficient data for Estonia), Southern Europe, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Among these, the level of reform activity is above average only in Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Portugal.
- Sweden is the most active member state when it comes to social cohesion policy. In particular, while it was highly active in combatting economic inequality, Denmark shows very little activity in this respect.
- Austria and Denmark show a similar pattern concerning their integration policies: Both countries receive high need scores and have relatively high activity rates, but they fail to address the challenges effectively.

SOCIAL COHESION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION: A LOT OF TALK, BUT NOT MUCH ACTION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

by *Torben M. Andersen and Christian Keuschnigg*

1 Introduction: Social cohesion

There is widespread concern that social cohesion is threatened by societal changes, in particular, that the consequences of technological changes, globalisation, migration and other trends are not being fairly shared – with some experiencing new opportunities and significant gains, while others are bearing the costs and facing the risk of becoming marginalised. Visible signs include increasing income inequality and poverty rates as well as social barriers to education, segregation of neighbourhoods etc. The concern is that such divergences may threaten social cohesion to such an extent that societies will become more fragmented and politically unstable. Accordingly, social cohesion has become more important in policy debates on a par with more technical discussions on the specific design of tax systems, social safety nets, labour market policies etc. A clear sign of this is that major international organisations – including the World Bank, IMF and OECD – have brought these issues to the fore. The EU has made social cohesion part of the Treaty¹ (see next section).

Given these developments, it is immediately apparent that social cohesion is a normative concept. It is only meaningful in a given societal context and depends on the values, norms and institutions that are considered essential and worth preserving in any society. The significance and understanding of social cohesion may thus differ across societies. At the same time, it is a broad and somewhat loose concept. It is hard to be against social cohesion, but it is even harder to define it precisely.

The concept of social cohesion has its roots in sociology and applies both at the ‘micro’ level to specific groups and at the ‘macro’ level in relation to societies/nations.² At an individual level, cohesion relates to friends, neighbourhoods, colleagues, job opportunities etc. that are important for individual options, choice possibilities and, ultimately, well-being. At the national level, the same issues matter but in broader terms regarding the opportunities and possibilities for all inhabitants. Nationwide cohesion thus affects how society performs in general and whether it embraces and creates an identity and sense of ‘belonging’. At the level of society, cohesion is often discussed with respect to threats arising from changes or transformations in societal or economic structures. The notion of social cohesion thus explicitly builds on the recognition that individuals are interdependent in a way going beyond the (non-personal) interaction in economic markets. At the core of the concept is thus a two-way interaction: social cohesion affects individuals, and individual behaviour and attitudes determine social cohesion.

Both the academic literature and policy-oriented reports have featured various definitions of social cohesion, but no universal definition exists. The OECD (2012), for example, defines a cohesive society as one which “works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.” This definition, and the discussion and

¹ Articles 3, 174 and 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

² For an overview of different definitions and references, see e.g. Norton and de Haan (2013).

literature more broadly, also shows that concepts like social cohesion, social capital, trust, social inclusion/exclusion and social mobility are related and often used interchangeably. Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination are thus closely related to the other dimensions included in this report: Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labour Market Access and Health.

Societal changes typically create winners and losers, which implies that social cohesion is associated with a shared responsibility to share costs and benefits, that is, an explicit recognition of mutual responsibility. Larger economic reforms, such as free trade agreements or pension and tax reforms, entail structural adjustments and thus well-defined gains and costs for different parts of society. They generate heated debate and opposition in some countries, but less so in others. The ability to navigate societal changes in a way considered fair and all-embracing is thus closely related to the notion of social cohesion. A society with little cohesion is likely to be more segregated and conflict-ridden, whereas more cohesion is conducive to a more consensus-driven approach.

Social cohesion is closely related to equality of opportunity and social inclusion designed in the sense of ensuring that all have the same opportunities to take part in the activities of society. Social inclusion respects individual choices, views and differing personal characteristics and priorities in life, but it stresses the importance of ensuring the same set of opportunities for all (or capabilities as defined by Sen 2009). Education is a classic example of an area where equality of opportunity is crucial, both as a value in itself for individual life options and for society in terms of utilising the human capital potential and, in turn, affecting growth and living standards. Equal opportunities apply not only to the formal possibilities (*de jure*) of, for example, entering education for given abilities, but also to the actual possibilities (*de facto*) where social background factors can be a deterrent affecting both entry and performance. Similarly, equal access to health care and social protection are considered essential. Universal access to such basic services is often seen as a precondition for equal opportunities. These issues bring forth that the concept of social cohesion is context-dependent, as the provision of such services crucially depends on welfare state arrangements.

Discrimination is a visible sign of the violation of equality of opportunity; access to jobs or participation in various activities in society is barred based on gender, religion, ethnicity etc. The gender issue of 'equal pay for equal work' is a challenge in all EU countries, as is the issue of equal gender possibilities for job-promotion, leading positions in business and politics etc. In a number of countries, there is increasing concern about intergenerational equity and the problem of 'lost generations', or young cohorts having difficulties finding jobs, accommodation etc. (see e.g. Andersen et. al. 2016). Such a divide may challenge the social contract. Increasing immigration flows obviously change the demographic structure and raise difficult questions about social inclusion. The labour market position of refugees and immigrants from low-income countries is a critical issue. In most countries, employment rates for these groups are significantly below the national averages. While cultural differences (gender roles) and education can explain some of these differences, there is concern that these groups are discriminated against and thus marginalised.

The concept of social cohesion is subject to some caveats. First, it can be associated with a status quo bias where all changes in society are viewed as threats to social cohesion and are therefore to be avoided. Second, it may be

interpreted as implying that homogeneity across the population is desirable based on the premise that this would automatically foster cohesion. But cohesion does not really become an issue unless there are differences across individuals and groups in society. Social cohesion is intimately related to societal changes and the need to cope with such changes in a way that encompasses the entire population. Likewise, equality of opportunity relates to the choice set, and not to the actual choices or behaviours made by particular individuals and groups which might subsequently lead to (voluntary) inequality and heterogeneity.

Social cohesion is not readily measurable or quantifiable. To assess the extent of social cohesion – or, perhaps more importantly, possible trends – it is necessary to resort to various indicators either in the form of hard data or survey results.³ Examples of such material and non-material indicators are measures of poverty, marginalisation in the labour market, the role of social background factors in education, civic participation in elections and social activities, as well as surveys on material deprivation, living conditions, trust etc. No definitive list is possible, and a wide variety of indicators are used in the debate. The difficulty of measurement opens up room for discussion and leaves ambiguities. Such difficulties, however, should not be an argument against attempts to assess aspects of social cohesion, but rather remind us that such indicators should be interpreted cautiously. They may be correlated with aspects of social cohesion, but they may not tell us much about causality.

Related to these measurement issues, there is no one-to-one mapping between aims to improve social cohesion and well-defined policy instruments or possible initiatives. It is easier to say when social cohesion is low or high than it is to say how it can be improved. There are clear differences in a cross-country perspective, but disentangling how they depend on specific institutions, policies or historical trajectories is difficult, if not downright impossible.

The rest of this chapter is organised as follows: Section 2 proceeds by shortly describing EU activities in the area of social cohesion and non-discrimination. Sections 3 and 4 report the results of the expert survey across member states and policy objectives, which assesses reform activity for the period between July 2014 to January 2016. Section 5 discusses the findings, and Section 6 offers a brief conclusion.

2 EU activity in the field

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) explicitly recognises the importance of cohesion and makes it a policy objective to strengthen it, stating (Article 3, 174): “In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion.”

The treaty stipulates that it is the responsibility of member states to conduct their economic policies and coordinate them so as to support these objectives. The European Commission is required to report every three years on the progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Treaty of Rome already embraced social and employment issues, and contained articles on discrimination and gender equality. While initially fo-

³ An example is the EU-SILC survey-based statistics on income and living conditions in EU countries; see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/overview>.

cusing mainly on free mobility and the common market, initiatives have more recently turned to employment and social issues more broadly defined. Social policy is defined by the EU social acquis (Treaty provisions, regulations, directives, decisions, European Court of Justice case law and other Union legal measures, both binding and non-binding; see European Commission 2016). Social policy at the EU level mainly relies on the ‘open method of coordination’ (OMC), which focuses on benchmarking, target-setting and mutual learning processes. The main responsibility lies within the member states (subsidiarity principle). However, the EU has law-making competence to adopt directives, but it is limited by the principle of ‘shared competence’ and can only establish minimum requirements. There are such directives in the area of working environment and access to work (e.g. on equal treatment in the workplace, reconciling family and professional life, the protection of health and safety), collective labour relations (e.g. worker representation, information and consultation, collective redundancy, restructuring of enterprises), and a few on social protection (social security, coordination, equal treatment within social security and social integration). A wide range of social rights and principles are defined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Social issues and questions form part of the EU’s 10-year growth strategy, Europe 2020. The overall aim is for the EU to become “a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy”. The strategy includes specific targets for the EU as a whole, but also translates these into country-specific ones. Targets related to employment and social conditions to be reached before 2020 include: I) Employment: 75 percent of 20- to 64-year-olds to be employed; II) Education: a) reducing the rates of early school leavers below 10 percent, b) at least 40 percent of 30- to 34-year-olds completing tertiary education; and III) Poverty and social exclusion: at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Each member state is supposed to adopt its own strategy to reach these targets and may set additional ones.

As a result of the so-called Five Presidents’ Report (Juncker et al. 2015), there is an ongoing process to develop a social pillar for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) countries. Other EU countries can opt to join in. In his 2015 State of the Union speech (Juncker 2015), Jean-Claude Juncker said that the objective was to have Europe aim to earn a “social triple-A”, adding: “I will want to develop a European Pillar of Social Rights, which takes account of the changing realities of the world of work, and which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area.”

Table S1 provides statistics related to aspects of social cohesion, such as income inequality, gender pay, employment rates for natives and immigrants, early school leavers, and youths not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The table points to substantial heterogeneity across EU countries. Wage inequality (measured by the ratio of total income of the highest/lowest quintile) for people under 65 is lowest in Finland, where the top 20 percent earn on average 3.7 times as much as the bottom 20 percent of the people, while Romania records the highest ratio, equal to 7.7. For people aged 65 and older, the income ratio varies between 2.3 in Slovakia and 4.9 in Portugal. The gender wage gap varies between 3.2 percent of the average wage in Slovenia and 29.9 percent in Estonia. Across countries, there is no clear relation between income inequality and the gender wage gap. In most countries, the employment rate for native-born people exceeds that for foreign-born (largest gap is for Sweden, with 17.8 percentage points), but it is

Table S1

Cross-country comparison of social cohesion in the EU-28

	GDP	Income ratio <65	Income ratio ≥ 65	Gender pay gap	Employment rates (native)	Employment rates (foreign)	Early school leavers	NEETs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
LU	87,600	4.5	3.7	8.6	63.7	69.7	6.1	7.4
DK	46,200	4.2	3.8	16.4	73.8	63.4	7.8	8.7
SE	44,400	3.9	3.5	15.2	76.2	58.4	6.7	10.3
IE	41,000	4.9	4.2	—	61.8	61.4	6.9	22.1
NL	39,300	3.9	3.4	16.0	73.9	60.5	8.7	7.8
AT	38,500	4.2	4.0	23.0	72.3	63.6	7.0	9.1
FI	37,600	3.7	3.2	18.7	69.2	56.7	9.5	13.1
DE	36,000	5.4	4.2	21.6	75.1	62.8	9.5	9.5
BE	35,900	3.9	3.0	9.8	62.9	53.7	9.8	18.0
UK	34,900	5.2	4.2	19.7	72.2	69.4	11.8	18.5
FR	32,200	4.2	4.5	15.1	64.6	52.5	9.0	15.9
EU	27,500	5.5	4.1	16.3	65.2	59.8	11.2	18.0
IT	26,500	6.3	4.4	7.3	55.4	58.5	15.0	32.0
ES	22,400	7.5	4.3	19.3	56.6	50.9	21.9	26.3
CY	20,400	5.4	4.8	15.8	60.8	68.2	6.8	28.4
MT	18,900	4.2	3.2	5.1	62.5	61.1	20.3	9.7
SI	18,100	3.7	3.5	3.2	64.2	55.0	4.4	13.7
PT	16,700	6.6	4.9	13.0	62.7	59.4	17.4	20.5
EL	16,300	7.3	4.1	—	49.3	50.4	9.0	31.6
EE	15,200	7.1	3.3	29.9	70.3	65.3	11.4	16.2
CZ	14,700	3.7	2.4	22.1	68.9	74.1	5.5	13.7
SK	13,900	4.2	2.3	19.8	60.9	78.3	6.7	20.4
LT	12,400	6.6	4.0	13.3	65.6	72.4	5.9	18.0
LV	11,800	6.9	4.3	14.4	67.0	61.9	8.5	18.3
PL	10,700	5.2	3.4	6.4	61.7	66.0	5.4	19.4
HU	10,600	4.7	2.8	18.4	61.7	71.2	11.4	22.6
HR	10,200	5.2	4.5	7.4	54.6	40.1	2.7	25.2
RO	7,500	7.7	4.8	9.1	61.0	—	18.1	22.6
BG	5,900	7.6	4.2	13.5	61.1	52.1	12.9	26.3

Eurostat 2016

(1) GDP per capita, 2014, in euro

(2) Ratio of total income highest/lowest quintile, 2014, for people younger than 65

(3) Ratio of total income highest/lowest quintile, 2014, for people 65 years and older

(4) Gender pay gap in percent of average wage, 2013

(5) Employment rates, 2014, native-born people aged 15–64

(6) Employment rates, 2014, foreign-born people aged 15–64

(7) Early leavers from education and training, 2014, percent of population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training

(8) Young people not in education, employment or training

negative in a few countries (–17.4 percentage points in the case of Slovakia). The share of early school leavers varies between 2.7 percent in Croatia and 21.9 percent in Spain, while the NEET rate varies between 7.4 percent in Luxembourg and 32 percent in Italy. Surprisingly, there is no strong correlation between the share of early school leavers and the NEET rate. Overall, there is substantial heterogeneity in country performance, and performance could be improved along one or several dimensions in all countries.

3 Survey results across member states

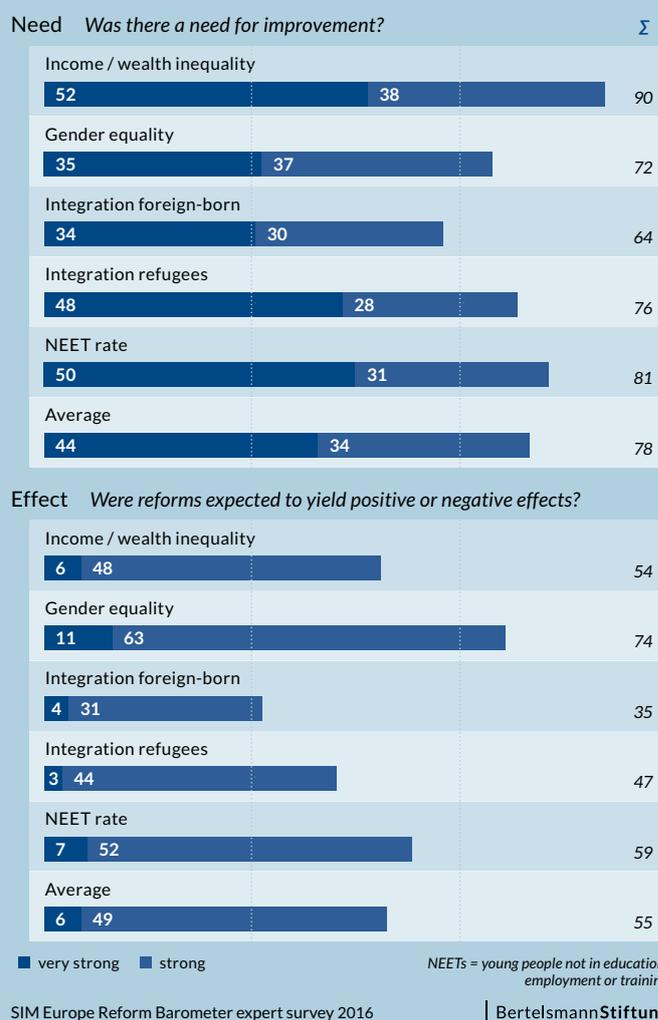
Figure S1 a and b give a first overall picture aggregated across all four policy objectives and over the entire EU-28. It reports the shares of specific expert ratings among all responses, excluding those who stated ‘don’t know’ and thus did not provide an informative evaluation. The survey finds that 78 percent of European experts identified a ‘strong’ need for reform, implying that only 22 percent see either no need at all or little need for reform. Out of these 78 percent, a very substantial share of 44 percent marked a ‘very strong’ need and thereby expressed a degree of urgency. In contrast to the high perceived need for reform, experts seemed to consider actual government reform activity to be lacking since only 44 percent recognised at least some reform activity while 58 percent were unable to identify any meaningful government action. Experts also seemed to be only moderately optimistic about expected reform outcomes. About 55 percent expected positive effects with regard to social cohesion and non-discrimination, including only 6 percent that expected strongly positive effects.

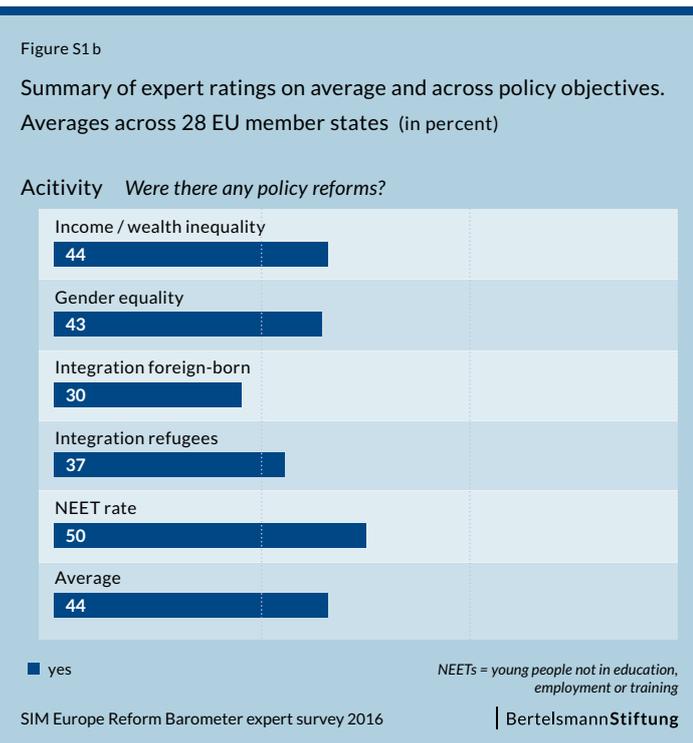
Not surprisingly, expert ratings vary substantially across countries, reflecting the large differences in the economic and social situation in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, different welfare state arrangements, different role models regarding the position of women in society, and different exposure to migration and refugee flows. To draw an overall picture, Figure S2 reports averages over all four policy objectives. In the EU-28, 78 percent of experts believed that the current situation needs a strong or even very strong improvement. The variation of country-specific ratings is somewhat surprising, however. Clearly, one would expect that the need for reform is perceived to be highest in member states which suffer from higher average youth unemployment and which have had to substantially tighten social spending to achieve fiscal consolidation targets. Accordingly, experts perceived the greatest urgency in Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain, where Greece is only marginally above the European average. Italy and France might also fit into this category owing to their persistent structural problems, high unemployment and ongoing fiscal imbalances requiring further budget tightening. Even more surprising is the sense of urgency felt in the Nordic countries as well as in Austria and Germany – in total contrast to the relatively relaxed attitude in Eastern Europe.

One might speculate that high levels of income create even higher expectations with regard to welfare state solidarity and the level of social cohesion. Lower income and higher unemployment do not necessarily stand in the way of social cohesion. Family values and solidarity within the family might substitute for some of the shortcomings in the public safety net. The

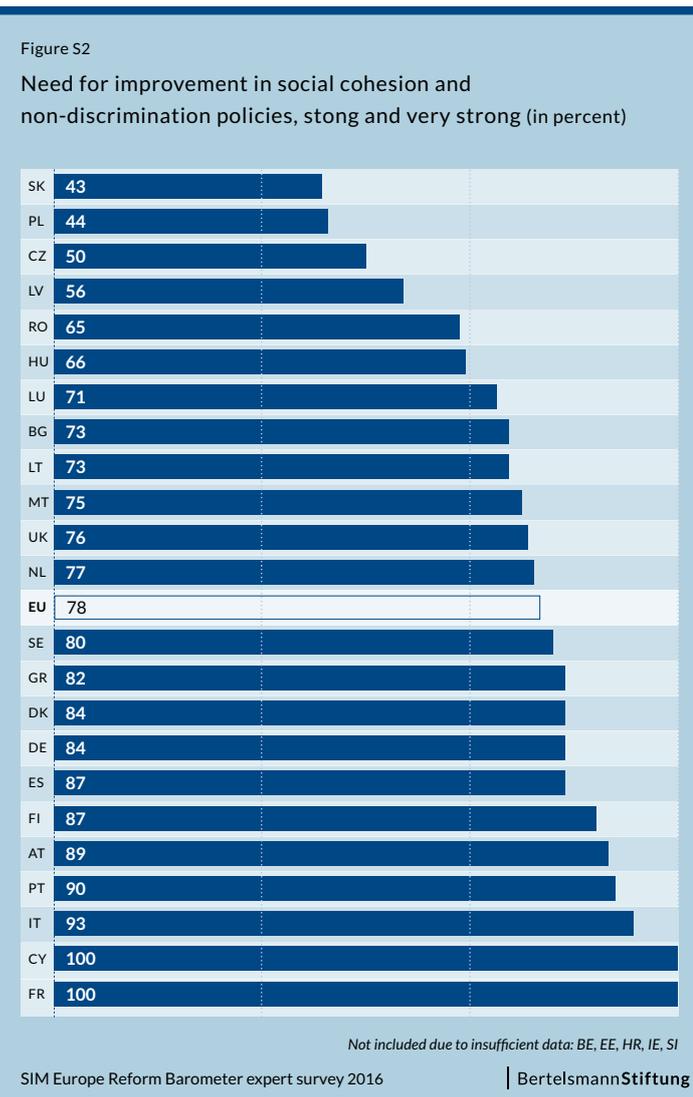
Figure S1 a

Summary of expert ratings on average and across policy objectives. Averages across 28 EU member states (in percent)





role of women in society might be perceived positively or negatively irrespective of the state of economic development. A dynamic economic performance tends to create new opportunities and hopes for a better future even if starting from disadvantageous initial conditions. The participation in schools, the expectation of rising living standards, and the chances of upward social mobility might lead to a less dramatic perception of dreadful current conditions so that countries (e.g. Ireland and many Eastern European member states) perceive a need for reform that is well below the EU average. Social cohesion, non-discrimination and togetherness do not seem to be very closely related to income levels and generous social spending. An average picture, however, hides important differences across the separate policy objectives of social cohesion and non-discrimination. For a fuller understanding of country variation, the next section thus investigates survey results separately for each policy objective.



4 Survey results across policy objectives

The degree of social cohesion and non-discrimination is a multifaceted concept which is best measured along several dimensions and policy objectives. The SIM Europe Reform Barometer lists four policy objectives: S1 Income and/or wealth inequality; S2: Gender equality; S3: Integration policy, differentiated by foreign-born population and refugees; and S4: Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The survey also invited open comments on social cohesion in general and with respect to each of the four policy objectives. Some of them are more widely relevant. For example, an Austrian expert noted that strong anxiety and fear of change, coupled with a tendency to ignore conflicts and refrain from confronting problems, seem to immobilise society. Another expert noted that the labour market and social reforms of the early 2000s in Germany resulted in more low-paid and temporary jobs as well as in lower pension and unemployment benefits. Social cohesion thus suffers from the inability to stabilise the economic and social situation of the middle- and low-income groups and to prevent growing inequality. An expert from Greece simply claimed that the situation is out of control. Italy lacks a coherent strategy regarding its

NEETs, and needs decisive action to fight fiscal evasion and the black labour market. These phenomena also result in unreliable data about the income distribution. An expert from Malta criticised that single mothers and women suffering from domestic violence are never targeted as a group, and further noted that more needs to be done to help sub-Saharan migrants and Syrians fleeing war. Another expert found that Romania urgently needs reforms to promote more social cohesion which would also take into account the European context of labour mobility. Such concerns for social cohesion and non-discrimination are further explored in the following discussion of the four policy objectives.

4.1 Income and wealth inequality

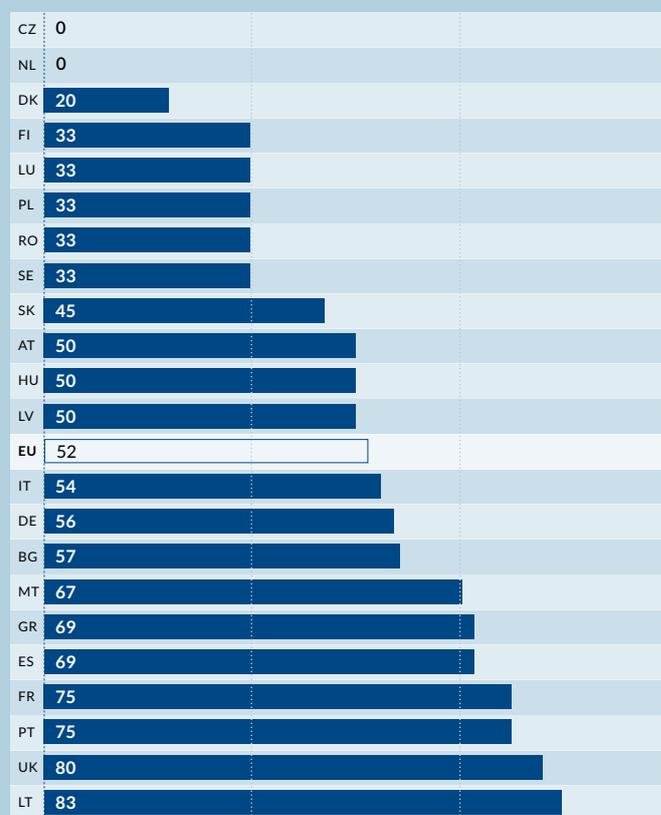
Of all 170 experts out of 1,058 who answered on this first policy objective without providing a 'don't know' response, 90 percent⁴ perceived a strong need, and 52 percent even perceived a very strong need for improvement. Figure S3 shows large variation across member states.⁵

Not surprisingly, the perceived need for reform towards a more equal distribution is clearly above average in crisis countries (e.g. Greece, Portugal and Spain), where low- and medium-income households were particularly hard-hit by austerity measures to contain public-sector indebtedness. Inequality is a very high concern in the UK, where 80 percent of experts perceived a very strong need for improvement, and in France, where 75 percent expressed the highest urgency. Austria, Germany and Italy are about average. Interestingly, inequality is perceived as less of a problem in most Eastern European member states, where ratings are significantly below the EU-28 average or at most close to it. Figure S3 indicates little urgency for reform in more egalitarian countries, such as the Netherlands and the Nordic states.

A policy area with a strong need for improvement should receive more attention and priority among policymakers and trigger more reform activity. Experts, however, are somewhat pessimistic on that front. In the entire EU-28, only 44 percent recognised some reform activity, with substantial variation across countries. There may be several reasons for this. Reform often comes discretely and infrequently so that a short time period cannot capture a country's true activity over a longer period of time. For example, no concrete reform might have been introduced during the reporting period even

Figure S3

Need for very strong improvement regarding income equality (in percent)



Not included due to insufficient data: BE, EE, HR, IE, SI

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

BertelsmannStiftung

⁴ Here and in the remainder of this chapter, this percentage includes all respondents who indicated that they expect a positive or a strongly positive effect of reforms.

⁵ In 12 member states, 100 percent of the experts' rating indicated a 'strong' or 'very strong' need for improvement, giving a high cross-country average of 90 percent with little variation. For this reason, Figure S3 only plots 'very strong need'. In general, we include all answers when calculating Europe-wide averages, but we do not individually plot and discuss countries with fewer than three expert ratings.

though the government was heavily engaged in expert hearings, investigations and negotiations to prepare a new tax and social security initiative to be launched later. Distributional policies tend to be ideologically more divisive than other areas of government responsibility. Even if governments recognise a need for reform, they might not be able to push it through in an increasingly fragmented and politically divided landscape. In fact, an unequal distribution of income and wealth could be an indicator of low social cohesion and a lack of inclusiveness, which tends to reduce a country's ability to forge social compromise. Reforms get blocked.

After answering questions with regard to need and activity, a significant proportion of experts declined to evaluate the effect of policy reform. Out of the much smaller number of answers, a mere 6 percent reported a strong positive effect and only 54 percent⁶ indicated a positive effect. On average, experts pointed not only to a dearth of decisive action, but also to the limited nature of reforms which tend to only result in a minor change.

Several survey participants added written comments. Instead of being confined to income and wealth distribution and the tax transfer mechanism, they also extended to other aspects of social cohesion and non-discrimination. In general, many experts echoed political difficulties in implementing reform and often viewed enacted measures as rather limited. Obviously, tax reform is almost always confronted with difficult equity/efficiency trade-offs.⁷ Austria enacted an income tax reform in 2015 with some complementary measures; it was long overdue but is expected to be unsustainable and have little impact. According to expert opinion, higher capital and wealth taxes plus a general inheritance tax would be needed. French experts similarly noted a need for fiscal reform to redress wealth inequality. A German expert recommended significant inheritance and wealth taxes accompanied by a reduction in taxes on wages. Italy introduced an €80 monthly bonus for employees earning less than €24,000 gross per year, which became permanent with the Finance Act of 2016. Experts called for lower taxes on labour combined with more tax on rental income and financial transactions. The effect on inequality is expected to be small because measures are not universal, the sums involved too small, and money transfers less effective than service provision.

Latvia enacted a progressive income tax reform in 2015 to be introduced in 2016. The reform is considered to be very complicated and with a high administrative burden, especially for people with low incomes. An increase in the non-taxable minimum income (tax threshold) might have been more useful for low-income earners. Danish experts emphasised that, despite rising inequality, the rich get tax breaks while support for the poor is tightened in order to "prepare them for the labour market". A similar tendency was noted in the UK, where relief for the low-paid was always matched with tax cuts for the wealthier. Finnish experts reported cuts in social benefits with simultaneous reductions in company and income taxes, and expected these policies to increase rather than reduce income inequality. Tighter regulation on offshore companies and various tax havens would be required in Greece. In the same vein, a Slovakian expert called for an end to exemptions, loopholes and tax vacations for companies to achieve more effective taxation of

⁶ Here and in the remainder of this chapter, this percentage includes all respondents who indicated that they expect a positive or a strongly positive effect of reforms.

⁷ In the following, all references to specific reforms are based on expert statements rather than on independent analysis of new legislation in individual countries.

the most affluent groups. Similarly, an expert from Spain pointed out that combatting tax fraud and imposing higher taxes on large fortunes would be necessary. Based on the idea of 'flexicurity' and of making work pay, social transfers are sometimes targeted towards the working poor. An expert from Malta mentioned that in-work benefits and a tapering of benefits are good measures for those able to enter the labour market, but that the drawback is that those unable to do so for reasons of mental health, addiction and care for young dependent children will become poorer. A number of experts also refer to the choice of monetary versus in-kind transfers as instruments of protection. Italy, for example, introduced a family card for Italians and legally resident foreigners with more than three dependent children, entitling them to discounts for goods and services. A German expert suggested massive expansion of public transport.

In addressing income and wealth inequality, experts also pointed to the importance of complementary policy measures that go beyond taxes and social benefits, especially to target certain problem groups. To protect the working poor and groups without a regular income, a number of experts referred to minimum wages or minimum income policies. Slovakia increased the monthly minimum wage from €380 in 2015 to €405 in 2016. In Germany, too, a statutory minimum wage has been in force since autumn 2015, albeit with wide-ranging exceptions. Equal pay policy is a related instrument. A Spanish expert identified a need to equalise real wages between men and women as well as between native- and foreign-born people. An Austrian expert also noted a serious gap in gender-related incomes. A French respondent similarly demanded more progress on equal pay policy for women as well as for ethnic and racial minorities to reduce wage gaps in both the private and public sectors. Malta adopted a directive on equal pay for equal value. Germany imposed a quota for women on company supervisory boards in autumn 2015, although the quota is rather modest for DAX enterprises (30 percent) and only voluntary for other firms.

General non-discrimination could also contribute to more equality in income and wealth. An Austrian survey participant criticised a relatively weak implementation of EU anti-discrimination directives regarding gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age and disability since the early 2000s. It was also noted that a better integration of refugees and asylum-seekers with respect to language, housing and labour market access would be required. An expert argued that the Czech Republic should show more progress on anti-discrimination legislation and consistent enforcement of it. In Finland, a new act on non-discrimination came into effect on 1 January 2015 and is useful in enlarging the realm of non-discrimination from gender to a wider range of areas, including nationality, language, religion, family status, disabilities and sexual orientation. Authorities, education providers and employers must now conduct an equality assessment. Hungary established an equal opportunity office but needs to do more to fight child poverty and to help the poor and the Roma population, according to expert opinion. In Luxembourg, experts similarly see a need to address the situation of black citizens, the foreign-born and women as well as discrimination against them in social, economic and political life. An expert for Romania noted that young and elderly people live in poor situations there, and that the Roma are still severely discriminated against. People with disabilities are practically excluded from social and economic life. Slovakia launched a programme for anti-discrimination, equal

opportunities and human rights. According to one expert, the main remaining problems are to reduce regional disparities, to integrate the Roma minority, to improve the situation of young single-parent families, and to combat the social undervaluation of public-sector employees, such as teachers, doctors and nurses. An expert for the UK noted that little is done there to address discrimination in recruiting older workers.

A prime policy area for more inclusiveness and a more equal distribution is labour market access for disadvantaged groups. An Austrian expert criticised inadequate education policies and recommended a fight against precarious, atypical and half-time jobs. In Denmark, problems with poorly educated and marginalised persons in the labour market persist. Increasing access to knowledge, learning opportunities and apprenticeships for low-skilled groups is required to avoid further polarisation. There, an expert noted that social cohesion is being increasingly challenged by immigration and refugees. In Italy, differences in labour rights between long- and short-term employees have been reduced. Measures could be improved by better reconciling work and family policies, by paying greater attention to women. Improving access to the labour market helps reduce dependency on social welfare, as one Slovakian expert emphasised. In Greece, indicators of political and, to some extent, interpersonal trust are decreasing at an alarming rate.

4.1 Gender equality

The survey questions on gender equality were answered significantly less often compared to those on the first policy objective (123 instead of 170 in the EU-28 as a whole). In consequence, more countries are left without any response at all. Across the EU-28, 72 percent of experts perceived a strong or very strong need for improvement, and 35 percent a very strong need. About 16.5 percent of respondents could not state whether there was any reform activity at all. Excluding the 'don't know' answers, 43 percent of the respondents recognised some activity to improve gender equality, and 57 percent saw no reforms. Substantially fewer answers were provided to rate the effect of reforms, with no ratings available in quite a few countries. Among the 41 responses collected over the entire EU-28, 74 percent anticipated some moderate equality improvements, while only 11 percent expected strong positive effects.

Experts offered numerous remarks and various country-specific initiatives related to gender equality. Member states are addressing the challenge of gender equality on four fronts: labour market participation and career prospects of women; child care and parental leave to reconcile work and family; actions against sexual offenses; and, finally, social attitudes and role models. With respect to labour market performance, gender inequality in Austria is among the highest in Europe, and more efforts are needed to close the gender and resulting wealth gaps. According to expert opinion, Austria is among the very few EU countries which are rather inactive and lagging behind with regard to anti-discrimination laws. More affirmative-action and equal-treatment legislation is needed (e.g. punishing firms that violate equal pay for equal work). Fighting precarious employment will benefit women, who are disproportionately represented in these jobs. In Greece, as well, experts noted that women in the private sector do not enjoy full job security in case of pregnancy. There is a need for a safety net to protect prospective mothers, but the problem is not being addressed. Much should be done to

address the long-term discrepancy between men and women, who have much higher unemployment rates and much lower income for the same job. An effective 'glass ceiling' prevents women from climbing the career ladder in most business sectors, with the possible exception of the civil service. In Hungary, survey respondents noted a widespread gender prejudice, although there were efforts to support women's career development and remove the glass ceiling on job promotion for women. But the government seems to have a rather conservative approach. Experts only see prospects for rising female labour market participation if there is sufficient labour demand. In Slovakia, at the end of 2014, the government passed a national action plan on gender equality for the 2014–2019 period, focusing on employment aspects. However, as one expert criticised, the plan states general aims but sets few specific targets. Spain needs more progress regarding employment prospects, wages and the burden of raising children to better reconcile work and family life. Gender discrimination in salaries must be more systematically analysed and better controlled, especially in private-sector firms. A UK expert suggested that voluntary reporting requirements for large businesses regarding pay rates could be made mandatory.

Inspired by the European Parliament's proposal for quotas in June 2015, Cyprus introduced quotas for women's participation in political and financial decision-making posts, prompting a growing debate about the impact of quotas. The Czech Republic legislated for a 40 percent quota for women on the boards of the largest listed companies, and equal pay law obliges employers to develop a transparent remuneration policy. Finland adopted an act of equality between women and men at the end of 2014, requiring more precise provisions for equality planning ('pay mapping'). Bigger companies (those with more than 30 employees) must rid pay structures of any discriminatory elements. Still, experts mentioned that better access to employer information and more pay transparency are required. By a law dating back to 2001, public and private listed firms in Italy are already obliged to gradually raise the share of women on boards of directors to 33 percent. In France, an act in 2014 increased to 40 percent the mandatory presence of women on the board of directors of listed companies to be reached by 2017. Germany enacted a law at the beginning of 2016 that aims at a more visible representation of women at the highest managerial levels. Specifically, listed corporations must fill one-third of their supervisory boards with women. Experts remain somewhat sceptical that a higher percentage of women in executive positions will have a broader impact unless it is also applied at lower managerial levels. A UK expert suggested that legislation could enforce better gender equality among representation in Parliament.

Many governments are active in improving child care and parental leave to better reconcile work and family. In Austria, experts reported progress with regard to maternal, parental and paternal leaves and expansion of statutory child care. In addition to improving the reconciliation of work and family life, this will improve the career chances of women and enrich fatherhood. A Danish commission recommended in 2012 that part of parental leave be earmarked for fathers, but the policy proposal fell through. At the start of 2015, a reform of parental leave was implemented in France to reduce the average length of maternity leave and encourage fathers' involvement. By 2018, the family support allowance for single mothers is to be increased by 25 percent in real terms. Experts expect slight improvements in reducing the wage gap in companies, but fighting stereotypes against wom-

en still remains a big challenge. Hungary increased the scope and accessibility of child care services, which should positively affect the balance of work and family. The Jobs Act of 2015 in Italy provided greater protection to self-employed women; incentives for companies using teleworking or other innovative solutions to reconcile family and work; protective legislation for mothers; permits and daily hours of rest for mothers with children. Experts identified a remaining need for more child care. They expect that these various measures should improve the presence of women in atypical roles but, in general, female employment and activity rates are hardly on the rise. Spain still needs to show more effort in supporting women with child-raising and reconciling work and family life. The UK passed a shared parental leave regulation in 2014 for shared maternity leave and amended it in 2015.

A policy of gender equality must also act on sexual offenses, stalking, violence and other offenses that inhibit women's role in society. In Austria, an expert mentioned that a law governing sexual offenses has been implemented but remains a topic of highly controversial public debate. Finland ratified the 2014 Istanbul convention on violence against women and adopted a national programme including a number of targets. Among the main measures taken is the criminalisation of stalking. A help line has been established for victims of gender crime, and the cost of providing shelters was handed over from municipalities and NGOs to the state. Still, experts mentioned that additional penal law amendments will be needed, and that the provision of services to victims remains insufficient, especially concerning sexual crimes. Italy is reported to have stepped up anti-violence measures against stalking, in particular. In April 2015, Slovakia created a centre for the prevention and elimination of violence against women, based on the Istanbul convention. Spanish experts noted that gender violence needs to be confronted with more powerful tools.

Social attitudes and role models in family and society must change to achieve more substantial and lasting progress in gender equality. Austrian experts remain somewhat sceptical and do not see much development at the societal level. A German expert noted that the income tax regime still favours the bread-winner family model and continues to inhibit women's motivation to apply for full-time employment. Romania re-established in 2015 the national agency for equality of men and women, but no other significant actions are being taken. According to expert opinion, little is done in Malta to improve the situation of women in general. In consequence, Malta continues to slip down in the Gender Equality Index. To increase gender equality and cohesion, a holistic rather than fragmented approach would be needed. In the same vein, an expert noted that Portugal has laws but lacks the necessary changes in societal and cultural attitudes. A Slovakian expert mentioned that an open discussion in society is needed. In all likelihood, resistance to changes in persistent traditional role models and social attitudes are greatly impairing the effectiveness of policy changes to establish gender equality. According to a UK expert, negative attitudes of society and employers to paternity leave mean that fathers will not engage. Greater education for employers and a shift in societal attitudes are required for success.

4.3 Integration policy

The survey responses on the integration of immigrants (foreign-born population) and refugees are even less frequent compared to those on the first policy objective (115 instead of 170 in the EU-28 as a whole). As a result, responses are unavailable for a number of countries. Across the EU-28, 64 percent of experts perceived a strong or very strong need for improvement in the integration of immigrants, and 34 percent a very strong need. With respect to refugees, experts noted an even larger urgency, with 76 percent of them noting at least a strong need and 48 percent a very strong need. About 19 percent of respondents could not state whether there was any reform activity towards immigrants at all (17.5% regarding refugees). Excluding the ‘don’t know’ answers, 30 percent of the respondents recognised some activity to improve integration of the foreign-born population, meaning that as many as 70 percent were unable to identify any reforms. Experts identified slightly more reform initiatives towards refugees (37% reform; 63% no reform). Substantially fewer answers were provided to rate the effect of reforms, with no ratings available for quite a number of countries. From all 39 responses collected over the entire EU-28, 35 percent anticipated moderately positive effects on the integration of immigrants while only 4 percent expected strong positive effects. With regard to refugees, 47 percent expected some positive impact, but only 3 percent strong positive effects. Despite a substantial perceived need for reform, experts are much more sceptical about whether reform will happen and, indeed, have a positive impact compared to other aspects of cohesion and non-discrimination (see Figure S1).

Experts offered numerous remarks and various country-specific initiatives relating to the integration of migrants and refugees. We organise comments across two themes: controlling inflows of migrants and refugees, and integrating them once they are permitted to stay in the host country. As the European refugee crisis gained momentum and revealed their limitations to absorb large numbers within a short time frame, member states became increasingly concerned about restricting inflows of migrants and refugees. In Austria and Germany, expert ratings on the need for improvement were somewhat above the EU-28 average. After an early phase that saw a lot of volunteers supporting efforts to integrate foreigners and refugees, the government in Austria turned to a restrictive policy of imposing tight upper limits in response to popular anxieties and rising voter support for right-wing political forces. Experts mentioned that policy should be non-nationalistic and European, and that it should address the causes of refugee flows, requiring “not fences but more diplomacy”. The right to asylum is a human right that cannot be limited per year. Asylum-seekers should have full access to rights, while immigrants should be handled according to clear criteria rather than a simple control-oriented integration policy. With the opening of German borders in September 2015, a growing number of refugees had to be registered. Policy efforts in Germany shifted to accelerate the decision-making process, requiring more employees in the immigration agencies and a decline in the number of refugees by imposing stricter rules to act as a deterrent to others. It is difficult to distinguish between legitimate refugees with a right to asylum (e.g. those from Iraq and Syria) and illegitimate economic refugees (e.g. from North Africa and elsewhere). When the country of origin is declared a ‘safe home country’, it becomes nearly impossible for people from that country to get asylum rights.

According to experts, the aim of recent reforms in Denmark to limit the rights of refugees and foreign-born populations has been more about preventing more refugees from coming and less about promoting social cohesion and non-discrimination. A new law was adopted in January 2016 which includes the right to family reunification only after three years as well as confiscation of valuables (above a threshold level) of arriving asylum-seekers. Imposing social assistance ceilings partly serves the same purpose. Finland experienced large numbers of asylum-seekers in 2015. Experts interpreted policy changes concerning asylum procedures as being aimed at a faster rather than a fairer process. They view the asylum problem as a European one requiring cooperation. The current discussion centres on making family reunification more difficult and on reducing social benefits for asylum-seekers. Policies aim at keeping refugees away rather than at integrating those who receive residence permits. As one expert put it, refugee policy in Hungary is to keep borders closed, leaving very few to be integrated. In Slovakia, too, experts pointed to low numbers of refugees and foreign-born people. Asylum policy is very restrictive, and there is consensus on this among almost all political parties and the general public.

In Italy, a 2015 decree amended current legislation by improving the process of registering asylum-seekers, granting immediate six-month residence permits and the possibility to work after only two months (instead of six) after the submission of an application for protection. The law introduced a monitoring mechanism, including the management of registration centres. According to experts, the reform does not provide effective new tools to deal with the current crisis. The difficulty is that new guidelines in Europe regarding the redistribution of asylum-seekers among other states, the establishment of hotspots, and resettlement programmes for refugees are not yet available. Somewhat by way of contrast, experts report that Greece was completely unprepared to receive huge inflows of refugees and migrants. The open-door policy of the newly elected government in the early phase probably exacerbated an already growing problem of large numbers of incoming refugees. It was not accompanied by measures to help, protect and feed the refugees who gathered at the northern borders of Greece. Experts pointed out that ad hoc reforms taken under a state of emergency, either for settled migrants or asylum-seekers, have very few prospects of being effective. The ongoing economic crisis further hinders efforts for any consistent long-term reform.

Once migrants and refugees are admitted, integration efforts must start to assimilate them and to assure the cohesion of society with new and old members. Member states have designed rules and launched a multitude of programmes to regulate and support access to the labour market, social security and other public services, and to reconcile foreign cultures with national practices and values. Almost everywhere, integration policy must tackle the immediate problems of shelter and medical care; offer language courses and other education services for adults to familiarise them with national values and democratic institutions; provide schooling for children; and guarantee that there is no discrimination against the new residents. Member states are quite heterogeneous with respect to their preparedness in terms of pre-existing rules and procedures, the scale of the problem they must tackle, and national attitudes towards migrants and refugees. Accordingly, the perceived need for reform varies substantially. Expert statements mentioned a variety of approaches and national deficiencies, but they are presumably selective to some extent and unable to give a comprehensive assessment of integration policies.

Since the early 2000s, Austria has offered an integration agreement with rights and duties for immigrants, but there are increasingly strict requirements and longer waiting times for naturalisation. More recently, language courses have been complemented by other efforts to teach national institutions and values ('Wertekurse', or value courses). Labour market integration starts with competence checks by the public employment agency. Current debate centres on whether labour markets should be open to asylum-seekers. Some experts see asylum law, family reunification and integration policies as mostly symbolic, and feel the need for more equitable access to education, labour market and social security systems. Refugees should have a right to family reunification, and integration measures (e.g. language courses) should be fully financed by the state. The perceived need for reform is above the European average. In Germany, integration policies developed and implemented after a great influx of people aim at registration, acquisition of language skills, housing, health care, places in school and employment. Experts suggest a better distribution of refugees among all parts of the country, in rural and urban areas, to avoid segregation. More involvement of the local population, along with more transparent and participatory local decision-making, is necessary to enhance their acceptance and improve the prospects of successful integration. A long-term problem is that the German schooling system contributes little towards the upward social mobility of socioeconomically disadvantaged children and adolescents. In general, according to experts, public debate is consumed with short-term problems. A holistic approach is being put off, and no systemic solution is in sight for coping with the next few years and the longer term.

In Denmark, the survey identified a need for reform which is significantly higher than the European average. Experts pointed to the above-mentioned changes in rules for family reunification and restrictions on social assistance. A very recent tripartite initiative between social partners and the government creates room for refugees to work below the usual wage levels for a two-year period (including some training) so as to raise their employment prospects. Experts perceived a need for more targeted programmes to increase integration, especially in housing and educational policies as well as general social programmes. They criticised the way that many initiatives launched to integrate foreigners and limit the number of refugees do not really address their needs, but rather are intended to satisfy the electorate in response to popular anxieties and national political sentiment. Experts expect that limiting financial resources and infringing upon the rights of target groups will not help integration. Finland adopted a non-discrimination act in 2014 that aims at better protection and easier access to an 'equality board' to prevent ethnic discrimination. According to experts, supervision of the non-discrimination act remains fragmented. Confronted with a large number of asylum-seekers in 2015, planned policies have been aimed at speedier asylum procedures rather than a fairer process. Access to language courses, further education and work is not what it should be, according to expert opinion. Plans for lower levels of social benefits for refugees are perceived negatively. Discussion has lately focused on making family reunification more difficult and on providing a reduced level of social benefits to asylum-seekers. Policies focus on keeping refugees away rather than on integrating those who have received residence rights.

The need for reform was rated above the European average for France and Italy, and substantially more so for France. Integration of migrants and

refugees in France rests upon signature of a ‘reception and integration contract’, but it is perceived as insufficient to provide skills – especially language skills – and access to rights. There is no specific assistance and follow-up for persons who have been residents for more than five years. Migrants and refugees face many obstacles to professional integration, as many jobs are forbidden to foreigners. Italy passed amendments to its citizenship law in 2015, linking citizenship to schooling and allowing foreign children born in Italy to acquire citizenship more easily. It set up a three-stage procedure for accommodating asylum-seekers, starting with emergency and screening centres, moving to regional hubs and, finally, settling in small centres for so-called secondary accommodation. Experts mentioned a need for more integrative activities in schools; more teachers with cross-cultural understanding; better training; facilitating vocational learning for young migrants and refugees for better labour market participation; and language courses for migrants of all ages. Having asylum-seekers work after two months is good in principle, but not feasible in practice due to insufficient language knowledge, the inability of the employment services to find a sufficient number of jobs, and the effects of the economic crisis.

In Lithuania, the Action Plan on Integration of Foreigners for 2015–2017 came into force in 2014 and is rated positively by experts. However, it doesn’t apply to refugees, but only to third-country nationals. Experts criticised the fact that it fails to establish concrete measures to tackle the weakest parts of integration (e.g. education, political participation and health care). They suggested amending the legislation to entitle asylum-seekers to work during the asylum procedure, to expand health care coverage and to guarantee basic facilities for welcoming new refugee pupils. It would be important to eliminate prejudice towards refugees, such as by organising awareness campaigns, educational programmes and mass media projects. Latvia hosts a large share of foreign-born ex-Soviet citizens, which is fast declining due to naturalisation, emigration and natural causes. In 2015, Parliament passed special measures for new migrants and refugees, but Latvia attracts very few of them anyway. The guaranteed minimum income is not connected to a subsistence minimum and is too low for survival, so only few are expected to stay. Labour market access requires a language certificate. The media pay a lot of attention to language skills and other useful experience. Apart from the usual integration measures, a Romanian expert mentioned diploma recognition to address certain labour market shortages, specifically in medicine and engineering.

A Spanish expert emphasised that integration is a two-way process, and that a change of paradigm is needed. It is necessary to pay more attention to the receiving society instead of exclusively focusing on migrants and refugees. In the same vein, a Swedish expert mentioned that integration policy is “about them”, but that it should be “for all of us”.

4.4 Young people not in education, employment or training

Of all 112 experts who answered questions on this fourth policy objective across the entire EU-28 (excluding those who stated ‘don’t know’), 81 per cent perceived a strong and 50 per cent a very strong need for improvement. Not surprisingly, the perceived need for reform is clearly above average in crisis-hit countries (e.g. Greece and Spain), where youth unemployment is very high. It is also above average in richer countries with high unemploy-

ment (e.g. France and Italy), while expert ratings indicated less of a problem – or much below the EU-28 average – in Austria, Germany and the Nordic countries. Perceptions are mixed in Eastern Europe: Whereas the economic prospects of the young seem to be in more urgent need of reform in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Romania, experts are much less concerned about those in Lithuania and Slovakia. A high perceived need for reform does not necessarily translate into actual reforms, even though governments seem to be more active in addressing the problems of the young generation compared to handling other dimensions of social cohesion and non-discrimination (see Figure S1). In the entire EU-28, only 55 percent of experts indicated some reform activity. After answering questions with regard to need and activity, a significant share of experts declined to evaluate the effects of policy reform. Out of 46 answers, a mere 7 percent reported a strong positive effect and 59 percent a positive effect (including strong positive).

Experts offered numerous remarks and various country-specific initiatives related to including young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The extent of the problem varies substantially, implying different policy priorities in different countries. Many member states nowadays offer some sort of youth qualification guarantee, often motivated by EU guidelines and recommendations. Other measures address schools, firms and individuals. Austria introduced a qualification and youth guarantee (*Jugendgarantie*) in 2014 to ensure that all young people under age 25 are offered employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The focus is on avoiding school dropouts, reintegrating young people into the labour market or the educational system, and providing support. The Austrian public employment service offers a variety of programmes, including intensified support for young people between the ages of 19 and 24, an apprenticeship programme for young people who cannot find an apprenticeship, and various forms of youth coaching. All young people have to attend school or training, or else their parents are sanctioned. These programmes, however, are not yet open to young people among the large number of recently arrived refugees. In general, experts in Austria expected these measures to have a positive effect. Even though Germany has one of the lowest NEET rates, experts pointed to groups with reduced labour market prospects, such as early school leavers or young people with no completed vocational training.

Italy passed a ‘Good School Law’ in 2015, forged an agreement to test a dual system, and offers a youth guarantee scheme. Experts mentioned elements of school reform, such as changes in the teacher-evaluation system, publication of assessment reports on schools, a national plan for a digital school, an operating guide for the design of training courses and professional experiences, and territorial laboratories that combine school and work. Experts recommended providing better support for low-income households with children between the ages of 15 and 18; introducing transfers to help cover the cost of education; collecting more and better data and information; and introducing more scholarships for tertiary education and low-cost housing for university students. France offers a ‘garantie jeunes’ with a minimum income and training for NEETs. Following the 2014 assessment of France’s anti-dropout strategy, there is now a national campaign against early school leaving. Experts recommended further developing apprenticeships and forging more links between vocational and general education as well as encour-

aging businesses to participate more in training. UK experts also mentioned attempts to rely more on apprenticeships as a way of tackling the problem of NEETs. The initiative is to be funded by a levy on businesses. At the same time, funding to institutions providing further education is being squeezed.

In Denmark, experts estimated that about one-fifth of a cohort does not get a labour market-relevant education. The social assistance scheme has been changed for the young (now defined as those up to age 30) and stresses the need to undertake education. The support for the non-educated is never significantly above that for students. Experts further recommended strengthening the incentives to companies to provide apprenticeships since market supply is inadequate. The number of NEETs in Finland was much lower before the recession and has now become a long-term problem. Experts mentioned soft-law measures (e.g. a youth guarantee) by the previous government to provide jobs for young people. Legislative amendments allowed cuts in the basic social benefit by 40 percent for those who do not apply for a job or get education. This amendment is now being used as a possible argument in favour of cutting the benefits given to asylum-seekers. The present government has cut youth guarantee funding. A Swedish expert pointed to the long-lasting effects of early education. The system creates stress for younger people because their choices during high (secondary) school affect their entire life.

In Hungary, young people need to stay in school even after 16. The government offers some support for the poorly educated who come from disadvantaged social backgrounds or minority ethnic groups (e.g. the Roma). Experts think that success will very much depend on whether there is sufficient demand for labour. Since most of these young people have little education, strong individualised training programmes would be more effective. A Romanian expert emphasised the need to reduce the dropout rate, provide vocational education and training, and diminish the existing mismatch between skills acquired in education and the needs of the labour market. Slovakia has adopted numerous initiatives, most of which have been inspired by EU policies and initiatives. One part of the National Employment Strategy consists of a guarantee for young people. Experts mentioned that the education system should be linked more effectively to the skill requirements of business and the labour market. They also pointed to the need to better integrate the young Roma population from marginalised communities into the labour market and education system.

Greece is burdened with enormous youth unemployment. Brain drain is the most alarming indicator. Experts mentioned job creation as the biggest challenge, suggesting solutions such as eliminating tax barriers for business start-ups (especially for people under 30) and creating financial and tax incentives for multinational companies to invest in Greece. This was neither a policy priority of the Greek government nor of the Troika. Consequently, many highly skilled young people have left (brain drain), while the semi- and unskilled stay and rely on family networks to survive. In Malta, NEETs were targeted as a group and given special attention through a youth guarantee and other measures. Experts mentioned that NEETs seem to live comfortably with their parents and are often not very motivated to move out and do something to improve their chances of finding work. Spanish experts recommended abolishing public subsidies to private colleges and, in turn, increasing the budget of the non-discriminatory public education system and ensuring higher quality there, in addition to compensating programmes for young people with learning difficulties. The young in Spain are in a very

bad situation. Youth unemployment is approaching 40 percent, and emigration has risen to unprecedented levels. It is quite common for young people to live in their parents' house until almost the age of 30.

5 Discussion

The survey respondents pointed to problems with social cohesion in all EU countries and across all the considered policy objectives: income and wealth inequality, gender, integration and NEETs. There is a call for policy initiatives, and only in about half of the countries do respondents indicate that policy initiatives are being undertaken, though very few find these to have strong positive effects. From a survey covering a relatively short span of time, it is impossible to assess whether policy initiatives are in the pipeline or whether political economy factors are barriers to such initiatives.

Heterogeneities across countries are displayed in both statistical measures and the responses from the experts. These country differences reflect different levels of economic development and structures, but also the division of labour between markets, civil society and the state (welfare state model).

Despite these differences, a common denominator for the social problems at hand is equality of opportunity – or, rather, inequality of opportunities. This, in turn, shows up in income and wealth inequality, gender differences, integration and disconnected youths (NEETs). These are differences which cannot solely be attributed to different choices, but also to different opportunities across the population. Equality of opportunity is a widely shared value across the political spectrum, but the evidence points to a need for reform and a lack of policy initiatives to reduce differences in opportunities across population groups.

Despite differences, the state plays an important role in all EU countries, raising the question of the role and scope of public intervention to address social problems. Recent developments show that if the welfare state fails to meet expectations (e.g. with unexpected cuts), it has detrimental effects on living standards and social cohesion, and puts pressure on civil society in general and families in particular.

Discussions on public intervention tend to focus on traditional redistribution policies acting via taxes and fiscal transfers as remedies to social problems. While such policies are – and will remain – very important, it should be noted that they are passive in nature in the sense that they repair rather than prevent outcomes which are considered unjust. Moreover, they are under pressure owing to tight fiscal budgets and ageing populations. A more active or preventive approach would be to reduce social barriers and increase social mobility to ensure that individuals can be self-supporting at decent living standards. This is closely linked to equality of opportunity. If social barriers for the young to participate in education can be reduced – thereby lowering dropout rates and the numbers of NEETs – this will make them more self-supporting, which in turn will have impacts on both inequality and public finances (more tax revenue and fewer social expenditures).

The difficulty with a more proactive approach like this is that the time lags are long, which creates the risk that such policies will be under-prioritised. This is especially the case in situations with tight fiscal room for manoeuvre, as preventive policies tend to have up-front costs and benefits that accrue in future.

Moreover, not all sources of inequality are well targeted by traditional redistribution policies. If problems arise in the labour market due to market failures, for example, the regulatory framework is more important. Widen-

ing income disparities, especially at the top (e.g. managerial salaries), due to market power, entry barriers etc. must be addressed with appropriate instruments and not with ex post redistribution. At the bottom of the income distribution, a minimum wage may prevent the phenomenon of the working poor, but it involves a trade-off between the conditions for those finding a job and those who do not. In a dynamic perspective, the qualification structure of the workforce has to match the distributional aims if these are to be consistent with a high employment level. Regulating wages and simultaneously taking steps to improve the qualification structure may thus be problematic. Likewise, legal rules (implementation, monitoring) play an important role in counteracting gender imbalances in the labour market.

6 Conclusions

Concerns that social cohesion is threatened are often voiced in public debates, and the issues are gaining more attention in academic research and at the level of the IMF, OECD and EU. This survey of experts confirms the concern and points to problems for all EU countries, although the specific areas and intensities vary across countries.

Social cohesion is difficult to define, and even more difficult to measure. Hence, indicators such as various statistical measures and surveys like the present one are useful in delineating key aspects associated with social cohesion and discrimination. However, there is a big leap from identifying problems requiring policy initiatives to prescribing effective policies and getting them approved and implemented. And this process is not made easier by the fact that, in many cases, there is a long lag between when such policies are implemented and when their full effects are seen.

This may also be part of the reason why problems of social cohesion are attracting more attention. In the past, such issues were not in the centre of policy discussions – perhaps in some cases because social cohesion has been taken for granted or because the consequences of societal changes (e.g. globalisation) have been underestimated. Irrespective of the causes, recent developments show that these aspects are not only important, but also need to be addressed urgently by policymakers.

While there is commonality in many of the problems across countries, the consequences are different owing to the variation in welfare arrangements and, specifically, the division of labour between civil society, markets and the state. For this reason, it is also difficult, if not impossible to point to universal policies in all countries.

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Findings by Dimension



Health

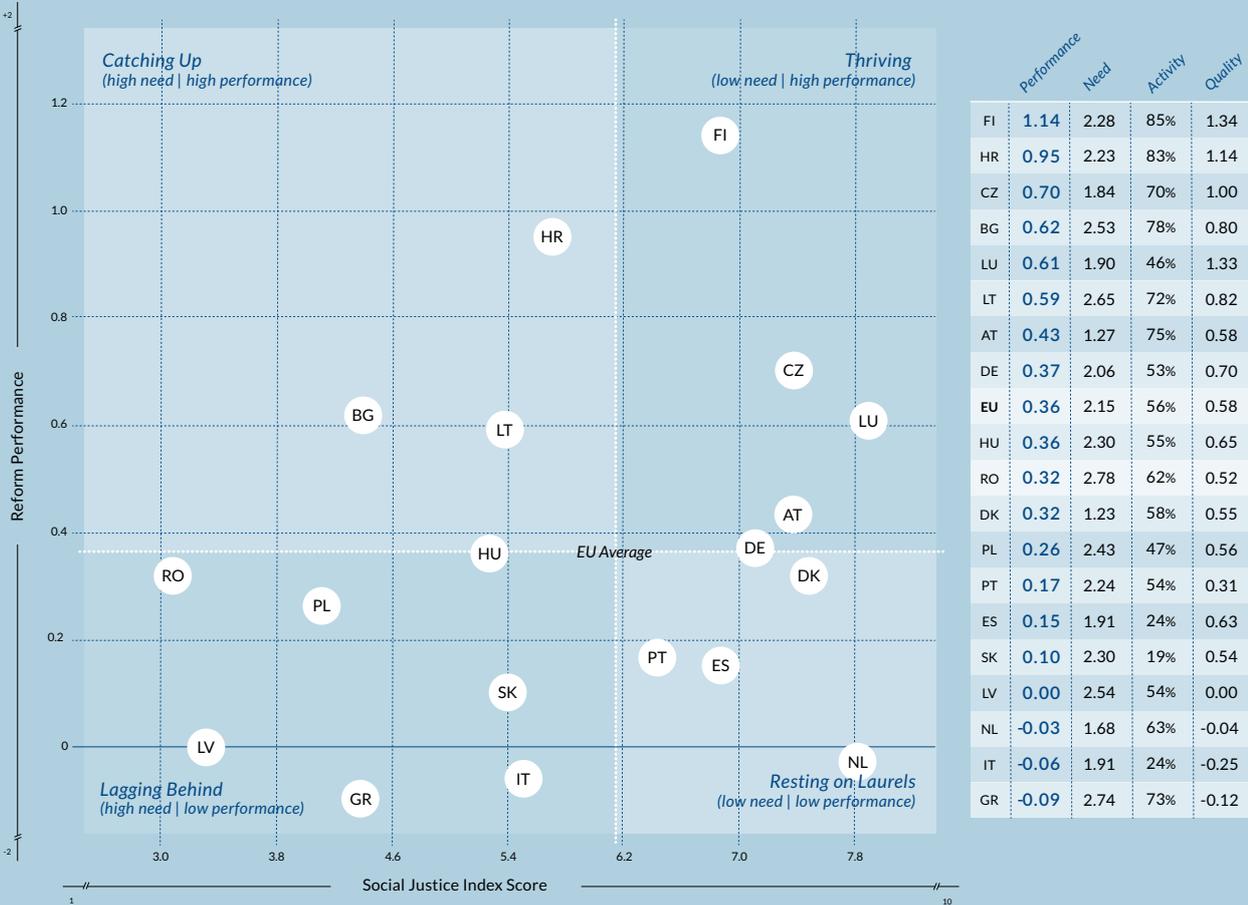


NOTABLE FINDINGS

... for the EU as a whole

- Health shows the highest rate of reform activity.
- The experts give the highest need scores to the policy objectives of improving public health and establishing sustainable and fair financing.
- The most strongly targeted objectives are the improvement of health system efficiency and of population health in general.
- The reduction of unmet needs for medical help is the objective that has both the lowest need score and activity rate.
- The most effectively addressed objective is health care quality.
- The least effectively addressed one by far is the improvement of health care governance (positive exception: Finland).

Social Justice and Reform Performance in Comparison



... for selected countries and regions

- The best reform performance here is found in Finland. The country shows the highest degree of reform activity (followed by Croatia, Bulgaria and Austria) and the highest reform quality (followed by Luxembourg).
- Romania, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria are rated as having the strongest reform need. While reform performance is fourth-best in Bulgaria, Greece scores last.
- Denmark and Austria have by far the lowest need scores here. In particular, the need to improve the accessibility and range of health services in Austria is assessed as being remarkably low.
- Greece’s activity rate here is substantially higher than in the other dimensions. According to the experts, the Greek government is fully addressing four out of the eight policy objectives, although rather ineffectively (with the exception of reducing unmet medical needs).
- Reform activity is lowest in Slovakia, Spain and Italy.

HEALTH: REFORMS APLENTY, BUT DOUBTS ABOUT IMPACT ON EQUITY FOR ALL

by Ulf-Göran Gerdtham and Christian Keuschnigg¹

1 Introduction: Priorities of health policy

Health is a prime determinant of individual productivity, happiness and welfare. As the Roman poet Virgil (70–19 BC) put it: “The greatest wealth is health.” Very poor health, such as chronic sickness or permanent disability, as well as risk factors such as obesity, drug addiction and stress are a source of individual hardship and social exclusion. Premature death often results from a lack of health. An increase or deterioration in health is in most instances not a one-off, but a gradual matter. One can have more or less of it. Given limited resources of individuals and society as a whole, health thus competes with important rival needs and creates difficult trade-offs for individuals as well as society. Undoubtedly, these trade-offs can sometimes present themselves in extreme form and may confront families and decision-makers with stark choices and tough moral dilemmas (for a philosophical discussion, see Sandel 2009) about questions such as: What is the value of life? How many lives should be saved? Which life should be saved? But spending more on health reduces resources that could be spent on other material comforts. In the public sphere, spending more on health means higher taxes and lower private welfare, or crowds out other valuable spending, such as basic research, education and social infrastructure, which are arguably of equal importance for the advancement of society. It may even turn out that generous spending on urgent health problems could create a true moral hazard by facilitating unhealthy lifestyles and diminishing the need for precautionary behaviour, leading to a deterioration of health in the future.

Judgments about the value of health and individual preferences for health spending may differ widely across society. Individuals can privately make different choices on health spending in line with their preferences and personal trade-offs with other urgent needs. In the public sphere, however, there can only be one decision about the way to organise health, which obviously cannot be tailored in the same way to each person’s individual needs. As a result, some groups tend to be served better while others find themselves in a neglected minority. Providing in-kind services which are available free or at low subsidised fees typically favours some groups over others and thereby involves an often very implicit and less transparent redistribution of welfare. Such redistribution can be more or less in line with the objectives that are enshrined in the tax transfer mechanism for redistributing income and wealth. There are seemingly important policy complementarities between equity in health and distribution of income and wealth. Bad health reduces labour market access, impairs career progress and reduces upward social mobility, which makes inequality very rigid. Some groups might be caught in a poverty trap arising from a vicious circle of health and income. Bad health can greatly undermine labour market prospects, which leads to poverty, unaffordable medical treatment and unhealthy lifestyles, causing even worse health. Social inclusion and equity in health thus require decisions with distributional consequences about questions such as: Who is given access to scarce health

¹ We are grateful to Brigitte Tschudi for excellent research support.

services? What should be the rate of private out-of-pocket copayment for health services and medicines? Who benefits from publicly funded hospital capacity?

Health policy must pursue equity and efficiency goals. Efficiency in the health domain more narrowly means achieving the best health outcomes with a given level of resources. In a wider sense, efficiency also requires allocating the right amount of resources to health care as opposed to other private and public uses. Health outcomes can be measured by multiple indicators, such as frequency of sicknesses, diseases and epidemics; measures of long-term health risks (e.g. obesity, drug addiction and stress); mortality rates differentiated by different health hazards; and life expectancy. Furthermore, good or poor health is significant beyond individual well-being as it can impose substantial costs on the productive sector and reduce economic performance. Inferior health outcomes may cause frequent absence from work because of sickness, lead to reduced performance on the job, impair the quality of labour supply, diminish access to the labour market, and create barriers to upward social mobility. For all these reasons, it can reduce aggregate labour productivity.

In a frictionless world, the market mechanism could achieve efficiency. Trading on competitive markets would lead households and firms to make the best possible uses of limited resources. But in health care, markets are fraught with frictions and sometimes do not even exist. To ensure desirable and affordable health outcomes, governments must thus step in to organise the health system where markets cannot work and to set appropriate market regulations where unregulated competition creates distorted and less-than-efficient outcomes.

Health outcomes result from the decisions and interactions of several players in the sector – patients, doctors, hospitals, insurers and the government – whose interests diverge and are difficult to align. Relationships are distorted by asymmetric information, which tends to make the overall system more expensive. Some agents know more than their counterparties and can use this informational advantage to their own benefit at others' expense. The need for treatment arises with consumers when a health problem pops up. They may rely on self-treatment, consult practitioners or directly turn to hospitals. Doctors may treat a larger or smaller fraction of more or less standard cases, or else refer their patients to specialists or hospitals. Hospitals are very expensive and may have a limited capacity, depending on prior long-term investments.

The financing of health services stems from out-of-pocket spending by consumers, private and public insurance companies, and the government. Ill-designed market or non-market rules for the interactions of these players can lead to rising health care costs in addition to exogenous determinants of health needs, such as demographic characteristics, pollution, occupational risks and shifting preferences. There are three sources of market failures that require public intervention to achieve better health outcomes: externalities, adverse selection and moral hazard. First, optimal decisions for efficient health outcomes can only result when externalities are absent and decision-makers take into account all relevant consequences of their actions. When consumers pay only a fraction of the cost and the rest is shifted onto taxpayers, one must expect more demand for services, leading to rising health expenditure for the country as a whole. When private hospitals and insurance companies get compensated for only part of the benefits they deliver, one must expect the supply of services to fall short of demand. One possible way to eliminate externalities among different decision-making entities is to merge them into larger integrated organisations.

Second, accidents and illnesses are often unforeseen shocks that require spending way beyond one's own means. Many people may be unable to afford expensive treatments and operations. The ability to smooth income allows one to enjoy economic security and is the key source of welfare gain from reliable insurance. Insurance works well as long as individual risks are statistically independent and offset each other. It does not work with epidemics, where a large part of the population is infected at the same time so that individual risks no longer cancel each other out. In this case, the government must step in and spread the huge costs of rare but large epidemics across time and generations. Private markets might not work well even in the absence of epidemics. Some groups are healthier, need fewer health treatments and are less costly than others. Private insurers naturally compete for good risks and try to avoid persons with frequent health incidents, leaving some of the insurers with an adverse selection of bad risks. If insurance is voluntary, unregulated competition might lead to partial market breakdown and leave some of the population without affordable insurance in spite of an urgent need for it. The key solution is to mandate compulsory insurance of basic risks for essential services, complemented by voluntary private insurance for supplementary services at an additional cost to serve special tastes and needs.

Third, bad health is not entirely a matter of fate, but also the result of individually chosen lifestyle and preventive efforts. While generous health care and insurance provide economic security and yield important welfare gains, they also create a moral hazard by reducing private incentives for precautionary behaviour. Ready access to health care and palliative drugs at little extra private cost makes people suffer less from a loss of health and accidents, allows for faster recovery, and thus impairs private incentives and the need for preventive measures. The consequent increase in the frequency of health incidents inflates costs and makes insurance and health care less affordable. The obvious measures to contain costs are to make people more cost-sensitive by limiting the extent of insurance and introducing deductibles and other forms of cost-sharing. In the end, the design of policy must strike a balance between incentives and insurance.

For reasons of equity and efficiency in health, the public sector must step in to regulate private markets and to offer public services where markets cannot work. Policymakers face difficult challenges and trade-offs in designing non-market organisations, in replacing the price mechanism by regulating access with quantity rationing (e.g. the gatekeeper function of practitioners), and in deciding about the right mix between private and public provision of health care. However, the problems leading to market failure do not simply disappear with nationalisation and public decision-making. Public supply of health care and mandatory insurance suffer in the same way from moral hazard. Adverse selection in private insurance results from cross-subsidisation across more or less healthy groups, which continues to be a problem even with compulsory public insurance. It leads to redistribution among groups that is less transparent and may run counter to or magnify in an unwanted manner the desired redistribution via the tax transfer mechanism. And externalities among different decision-making units might lead to distorted choices in the public sector, as well.

International comparisons show a huge variety in the size and organisation of health sectors (see e.g. Gerdtham and Jönsson 2000; Moreno-Serra 2014; De la Maisonnette et al. 2016; OECD 2015; and WHO 2015). Health systems respond to external trends in demand and changes in supply caused by the

availability of new drugs and technological improvements. The autonomous development of the system is interrupted and corrected by larger attempts at reform when budget pressure builds up and calls for cost-containing action. Health systems are thus shaped more by an evolutionary process of trial and error and political compromise, and rather less by the outcome of a big, systemic policy design. Even if there existed an optimal system design, it would certainly not be a one-size-fits-all solution, but would necessarily reflect different country characteristics. Even within a country, optimal design could never be a once-and-for-all solution, but would still need to be continuously adjusted in response to a changing environment. Health policy must sooner or later adjust to the availability of new technology and drugs; the emergence of new diseases and epidemics; gradually evolving population characteristics; changing resource constraints due to economic developments; changing lifestyles and attitudes; varying political consensus; and, last but not least, new empirical evidence with regard to policy consequences.

A country's health policy thus needs to be continuously re-evaluated and revised. Cross-country comparisons can help identify good practice in health policy and thereby lead to new insights and policy innovations in other countries. In light of the permanent need for reform, the SIM Europe Reform Barometer aims to shed light on the capacity of EU countries to achieve reform, as evidenced by recent activities or the absence of reform in the past. In the realm of health policy, this chapter proceeds by briefly describing EU activity in Section 2, and then reporting the results of the expert survey across member states and policy objectives in Sections 3 and 4. The reform activity assessed by the experts spans the period from July 2014 to January 2016. Section 5 provides a summary discussion, and Section 6 conclusions.

2 EU activity in the field

Health outcomes are measured by various indicators, such as child mortality rates, life expectancy, frequency of certain diseases and risk indicators (e.g. rates of obesity, burnout and drug use). These health measures vary substantially across countries. Most importantly, the level of income determines the amount of available resources for spending on health, with higher levels having an obviously more positive effect on the quality of health. In fact, empirical research has shown that 80 to 90 percent of the total variance in international health spending per capita is explained by GDP per capita. Also, the share of public health in total health spending tends to be positively related to GDP per capita. As shown in Table 1 (see Haigner et al. 2016 for more discussion and statistical cross-country documentation), per capita income in the EU-28 varies, from €46,200 in Denmark to €5,900 in Bulgaria. The cost of health care determines relative prices and thereby influences how much of income is spent on health as opposed to other things. Observed differences also reflect other determinants, such as diverging preferences, attitudes and lifestyles of the population; pollution and other environmental risks; demographic characteristics (e.g. age and skill structure); and adoption of technological progress in medicine. Countries thus differ substantially in the amount of money they spend on health. Sweden and Romania spend the largest and smallest shares of GDP on private and public health care (at 11.9 and 5.6%, respectively). Countries also differ in terms of the relative shares of public and private health care provision (e.g. public spending is 87% in the Netherlands, but only 45% in Cyprus) as well as in terms of institutional char-

Table H1

Cross-country comparison of health sector in EU-28

	GDP per capita, 2014, in €	Total health expenditure in percent of GDP, 2014	Public health expenditure in percent of total health expenditure, 2014	Dependency ratio (>64 in percent of population 15-64), 2014	Life expectancy at birth, 2014	Heart diseases per 100,000, 2013 (or nearest year)	Obesity rate, percent of adults, 2013 (or nearest year)	Unmet medical needs, percent of population, lowest quintile	Unmet medical needs, percent of population, highest quintile
LU	87,600	6.9	83.9	20.1	82.2	65.6	22.7	2.5	0.1
DK	46,200	10.8	84.8	28.7	80.6	70.6	14.2	1.6	0.7
SE	44,400	11.9	84.0	31.0	82.0	104.7	11.7	3.2	1.0
IE	41,000	7.8	66.1	19.3	81.2	135.9	23.0	3.8	1.5
NL	39,300	10.9	87.0	27.0	81.3	49.8	11.1	0.8	0.3
AT	38,500	11.2	77.9	27.7	81.3	139.5	12.4	1.0	0.2
FI	37,600	9.7	75.3	31.0	81.1	153.9	24.8	6.0	2.3
DE	36,000	11.3	77.0	31.9	80.8	115.2	23.6	3.3	0.8
BE	35,900	10.6	77.9	27.7	80.6	62.6	13.7	5.5	0.1
UK	34,900	9.1	83.1	27.0	81.1	97.6	24.9	1.5	1.3
FR	32,200	11.5	78.2	29.7	82.4	42.5	14.5	5.7	0.7
EU	27,500	8.7	73.4	27.1	79.5	97.3	18.0	5.7	1.4
IT	26,500	9.3	75.6	34.3	82.7	84.1	10.3	14.6	1.8
ES	22,400	9.0	70.9	27.7	83.1	55.9	16.6	1.6	0.2
CY	20,400	7.4	45.2	17.8	80.1	–	–	–	–
MT	18,900	9.8	61.2	28.0	81.7	–	–	–	–
SI	18,100	9.2	71.7	26.0	80.5	93.9	18.3	–	–
PT	16,700	9.5	64.8	31.1	80.7	50.5	15.4	5.1	0.9
EL	16,300	8.1	61.7	32.4	81.3	83.3	19.6	14.9	1.0
EE	15,200	6.4	78.8	28.2	77.2	259.5	19.0	10.8	6.3
CZ	14,700	7.4	84.5	25.9	78.3	260.0	21.0	1.9	0.7
SK	13,900	8.1	72.5	18.8	76.7	404.4	16.9	2.9	1.3
LT	12,400	6.6	67.9	27.8	74.0	–	25.7	4.6	2.0
LV	11,800	5.9	63.2	29.1	74.2	–	23.6	25.4	4.3
PL	10,700	6.4	71.0	21.4	77.3	106.4	15.8	11.8	6.3
HU	10,600	7.4	66.0	25.8	75.9	297.4	28.5	6.5	0.3
HR	10,200	7.8	81.9	28.0	77.3	–	–	–	–
RO	7,500	5.6	80.4	25.1	75.1	–	–	–	–
BG	5,900	8.4	54.6	29.8	75.4	–	–	–	–

Eurostat (2016), OECD (2015) and World Bank (2016)

acteristics, regulatory approaches and incentives, all of which shape the relations and interactions between patients, practitioners, hospitals, insurers and the government. Such differences obviously result in equally large differences in health outcomes. Life expectancy at birth is 83 years in Spain, but only 74 in Lithuania. Slovakia records 404 cases of heart disease per 100,000 residents, while the analogous figure for France is only 42. Statistics indicate that 25 percent of the lowest income quintile of the population faces unmet medical needs in Latvia, while it is 0.8 percent in the Netherlands.

Substantial empirical research has identified key drivers of health spending, the effects of policy interventions on health outcomes, and best practice measures for cost containment (see e.g. Gerdtham and Jönsson 2000; Moreno-Serra 2014; and De la Maisonnette et al. 2016). A robust result of cross-country

comparisons is that higher income (GDP per capita) explains a large part of the increase in health spending, with elasticity estimates varying around one. Institutional variables significantly shift health spending, as well. The use of primary care 'gatekeepers' results in lower health spending. Systems in which patients must first pay providers and then seek reimbursement have lower health spending on average than other systems. Remunerating physicians in the ambulatory care sector with a capitation system leads to lower spending compared to fee-for-services systems. A higher share of inpatient relative to total health expenditure is associated with higher spending since inpatient care is rather more expensive than ambulatory care. Some evidence finds that public-sector provision of health services, using the ratio of public beds to total beds as a proxy, tends to be somewhat cheaper (although Gerdtham and Jönsson (2000) note that this finding must be interpreted with caution since many 'private' beds in the voluntary sector are quasi-integrated into the public sector or face the same fixed reimbursement rates). The organisation of ambulatory care – the first point of contact with the health system for most people – is particularly important in containing health expenditure. This conclusion is supported by evidence of the cost-saving effects of the gatekeeper role, capitation-based remuneration systems for practitioners, and up-front payments by patients with subsequent remuneration by insurers.

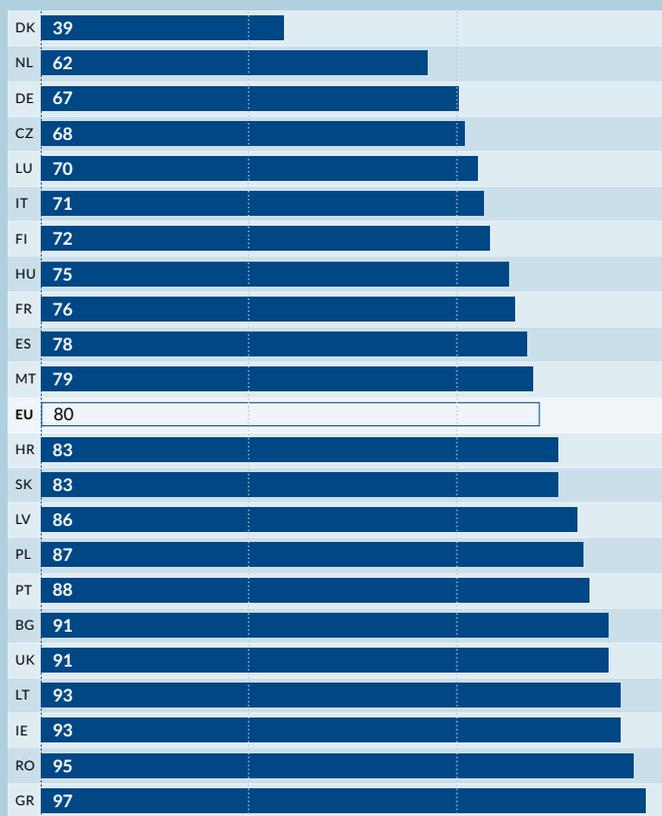
Health policy in the EU is predominantly the responsibility of member states. The role of the European Commission is mainly supportive and complementary. Its 2007 white paper on health introduces the pillars of the EU health strategy, and the follow-up document from 2013 extends the strategy to the 2014–2020 period (European Commission 2007, 2013). Major health threats (e.g. epidemics, pollution or climate change) have consequences beyond national borders. National health policy can have cross-border spillovers and may create costs or benefits for other member states. Such externalities require transnational coordination and information exchange, which naturally defines responsibilities at the level of the EU. The coordinating role starts with the collection of comparable data and exchange of health-related information. Innovations in national policymaking are often encouraged and initiated by comparisons with best practices in other member states, which requires a system of comparable health indicators.

The common market principle of free movement of goods, services, capital and people naturally extends to the health sector. A common market in medical goods and services needs harmonised regulations on product safety; an effective process of one-time product admission that is valid in all member states; and an EU competition and antitrust policy to prevent market barriers for pharmaceutical and other medical products and services. Health companies and organisations need unrestricted market access in all countries so that competition can result in better services and products for patients at competitive prices. Access to a large common market supports the entry, growth and innovation of firms in the pharmaceutical and medical appliances industries. Tighter competition imposes market discipline, resulting in the benefits of larger quality improvements and cost savings in the health sector. Innovation is key to achieving larger productivity gains and is supported by a common EU patent policy. The availability of big data on patients, the possibilities of the internet, and the use of robots for diagnostics and standard medical services will greatly expand the use of e-health. A common legal and technological infrastructure that connects the entire EU is required to reap the full potential of productivity gains.

Good health improves the employability and productivity of people. The free movement of people in an unrestricted common labour market boosts opportunities for citizens, increases the opportunities for firms to hire the most suitable workers with the right mix of skills, and thereby raises productivity and growth in the entire EU. One critical factor of support for the mobility of labour is the portability of social security benefits, which must allow unrestricted access to health services in other countries independently of where patients are insured. Common rules for charging and reimbursing health expenditures and a well-functioning and cost-efficient settlement system are key for labour mobility, as are common standards for health and safety at work. Clearly, the European Commission plays a substantial coordinating and supportive role in the health sector. The major share of health spending, however, addresses national needs and has local effects only. The subsidiarity principle thus implies that most spending decisions are taken at the national level, as well.

Figure H1

Need for improvement in health, strong and very strong
(in percent)



Not included due to insufficient data:
AT, BE, CY, EE, SE, UK

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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3 Survey results across member states

To draw an overall picture of the results of the expert survey, Figure H1 first reports averages over all eight policy objectives. Survey results indicate a substantial need for reform, although with considerable variation across member states. In the EU-28, 80 percent of experts believed that the current situation requires strong or even very strong improvement, implying that 20 percent consider reform less than urgent (assigning a value of only 0 or 1).² Almost half of them stated that reform is indeed very urgent (i.e. 48 percent marked the maximum value of 3, for very strong need, which is not reported in Figure H1). The SIM Europe Reform Barometer 2016 seems to suggest that the health sector has been denied ‘urgent treatment’ and consequently suffers from a ‘high temperature’. Not very surprisingly, the need for reform is perceived to be highest in Eastern European member states, where per capita income is low and the health sector is underdeveloped and still in need of post-transition modernisation. For example, 95 percent of the experts in Romania, 93 percent in Lithuania and 91 percent in Bulgaria perceived a strong or very strong need for reform. The Czech Republic and Hungary are exceptions and fare better than the EU average. Cohesion and convergence in Europe make it a priority to invest in the health, productivity and well-being of Eastern European member states.

² In this chapter, such percentages refer to shares among all experts regardless of the country for which they answered the respective question.

More surprising is the sense of urgency felt in the UK, which enjoys a per capita income that is way above average. The high levels of dissatisfaction in Greece, Ireland and Portugal – which are still much richer than Eastern European countries – may be a legacy of the financial and economic crisis. A country-specific investigation of the performance in different policy areas of health should clarify the sources and validity of that judgment. Expert opinion rated the health sectors in Germany and the Netherlands quite favourably, where the need for reform was perceived to be much less urgent. At the top of the league was Denmark, for which only 39 percent of the experts considered reform to be urgent or very urgent.

With regard to the question of whether reform actually happened between July 2014 and January 2016, the frequency of ‘don’t know’ answers was relatively high. On average, about half of all respondents (excluding those who marked ‘don’t know’) reported that reform had taken place (see Figure H2b). In Croatia and Bulgaria, 81 and 82 percent of experts, respectively, and 79 percent in Finland reported that there was ongoing reform activity. Croatia and Bulgaria are also countries with large perceived need for reform. In principle, one would expect that reform happens where the need for reform is highest, and that less happens where there is little perceived need for it. But this expectation might not hold true: While reform takes a long time – from design to democratic decision-making to implementation – the time frame of this survey is quite short. In consequence, the survey yields a number of answers that seem surprising at first sight. For example, 67 percent of German experts perceived a need for reform, but only 44 percent of them actually recognised some reform activity. More worryingly, the perceived need for reform was among the highest in Poland, Portugal and Romania (87, 88 and 95%, respectively), but reform activity in these countries was at best average or even below average (47, 54 and 57%, respectively). Even more startlingly, the very high perceived need for reform (83%) in Slovakia contrasts sharply with actual reform inactivity (only 23% answered ‘yes’), according to expert opinion.

Finally, experts were asked to rate the effectiveness of any health care reform. On average, 66 percent of the experts reported positive or even strong positive effects, implying that 34 percent considered actual reform to yield no effect or even to be counterproductive. Variation across member states is large. One could, in principle, and somewhat speculatively, postulate a law of ‘decreasing returns from reform’, meaning that reform should have the largest effect in a country where the health system is underdeveloped and the need for reform is perceived to be urgent. Again, the effects of recently enacted reforms probably take a long time – and much longer than the survey period – to fully unfold. Hence, one must expect the law of decreasing returns to come through tenuously at best. A leader in terms of policy effectiveness seems to be Finland, where 91 percent of experts believed that reform has had positive effects even though the need for it is below average. In Poland, Portugal and Romania, reform is urgent, but the effect is slightly less than the EU average even though it should be large. Experts in Latvia pointed out an even larger discrepancy between need for reform and policy effectiveness; while 86 percent of them recognised a high need, only 33 percent could identify some positive effect of reform. For many countries, not enough answers were available on this last survey question to support a reliable discussion.

4 Survey results across policy objectives

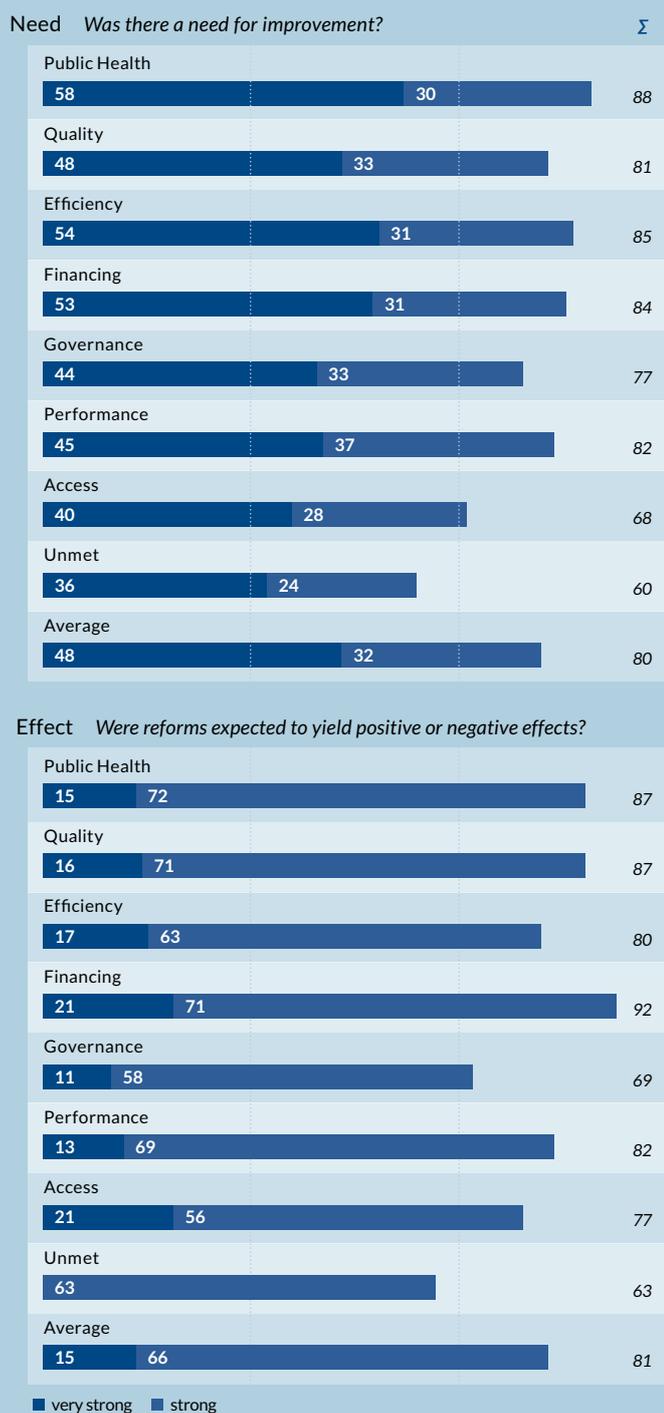
The overarching objectives of efficiency and equity in health are made operational by specifying a number of more concrete objectives. The SIM Europe Reform Barometer lists eight objectives for health policy: H1 Improvement of public health; H2: Quality of health care; H3: Health system efficiency; H4: Sustainable and fair health financing; H5: Health care governance; H6: Outcome performance of health; H7: Accessibility and range of health services; and H8: Unmet needs for medical help. For each of these eight policy objectives, experts answered the three survey questions separately: Was there a need to improve the situation? Were there any policy reforms addressing the specific objective? Are these reforms expected to yield positive or negative effects? Figure H2a summarises expert ratings on average across Europe.

The survey also included open comments, both in general and specifically relating to the policy objectives. Several general comments are noteworthy. Some experts felt that health prevention should receive a larger policy priority. Health education and information for consumers about health risks could facilitate prevention and strengthen the patient's role in the system. Health systems might also become more migrant-friendly. Migrants are new to the system and thereby particularly in need of being informed about their health-related rights as well as their personal responsibilities to protect the system's financial sustainability. The large regional inequalities in Europe can encourage people to migrate and lead to a brain drain of nurses, doctors and medical scientists in poorer countries, slowing down the process of catch-up and convergence in health.

Similarly, the financial and economic crisis has given rise to a surge in unemployment and poverty and tightened public budgets, leaving disadvantaged groups more vulnerable. Fighting inequality and social exclusion has become more urgent, but also more difficult to reconcile with the need to allocate more resources to investment and growth in the economy so as to strengthen the financial solidity of the system. In some countries, experts felt that the health system has become too fragmented and complex, creating all kinds of cost-inflating and quality-reducing distortions in the relationships between patients, doctors, hospitals, insurers and the government. Harmonisation of service subsystems could make the health system more simple, transparent and efficient.

Figure H2a

Summary of expert ratings on average and across policy objectives. Averages across 28 EU member states (in percent)



4.1 Improvement of public health

The first health policy objective is rather general and calls for a summary evaluation. Of all 186 experts who answered this question in the entire EU-28, 88 percent perceived at least a strong need, and 58 percent even a very strong need for improvement. Figure H3 shows large variation across member states. One should note that more expert answers are available for large member states, while only a few answers are recorded for small ones. The judgments for small countries might to some extent be subjective and reflect a personal bias, while ratings in large countries are probably more reliable as a larger number of experts tends to even out individual bias.⁴ Keeping these limitations in mind, one finds in Figure H3 a pattern that is roughly similar to the one plotted in Figure H1, which averaged over all eight health policy objectives. This might partly reflect the general nature of the question, leading to similar ratings. Experts perceive a high need for improvement in public health in Eastern Europe as well as the UK. Portugal switched from an above-average need for reform in general to a below-average need for improvement in public health, based on 13 expert opinions. Improvement seems least urgent in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Spain, which are rich countries with seemingly well-developed health care systems. Spain's income per capita is below the EU average but still substantially above those in Eastern Europe.

A policy objective with a strong need for improvement should receive more attention and priority from policymakers and trigger more reform activity. In the entire EU, 69 percent of experts reported active reform, with substantial variation across countries. It appears that reform comes discretely and infrequently so that a short time period cannot capture the true zeal for reform. For example, no concrete reform might be introduced in the reporting period even though the government is heavily engaged in expert hearings, investigations and negotiations to prepare a new initiative to be launched in the following period. Regarding the impact, many experts who rated the need for improvement declined to evaluate the effect of policy reform. Out of the much smaller number of answers, 72 percent⁴ indicated a positive and only 15 percent a strong positive effect. There seems to be no clear statistical pattern in how reform activity and the effect of reforms are related to the perceived need for improvement.

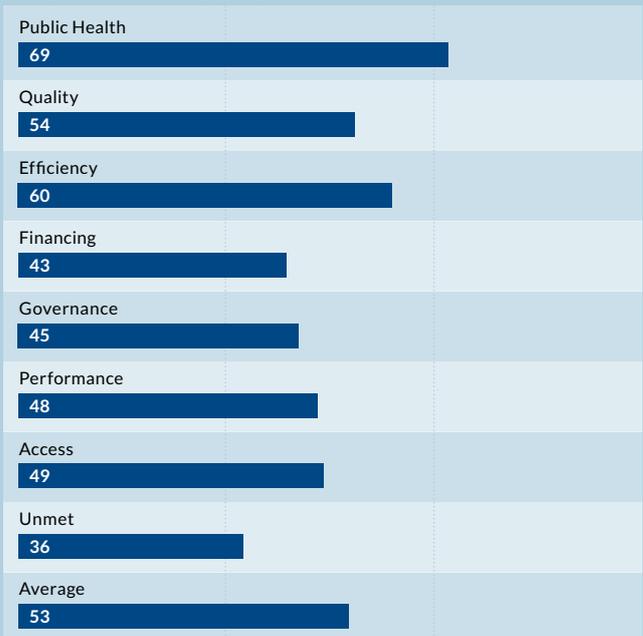
Quite a number of survey participants added written comments. Some experts criticised a lack of evidence-based decision-making. Governments need to prioritise this policy objective and should

³ For this reason, we neither comment on nor plot any country-specific results with fewer than three responses. All our qualitative statements about health reform in individual countries are based on expert comments. They are neither complete nor based on independent analysis of new legislation, and should only be viewed as informative examples of different policy solutions and reform gaps across EU member states.

Figure H2 b

Summary of expert ratings on average and across policy objectives. Averages across 28 EU member states (in percent)

Activity Were there any policy reforms?



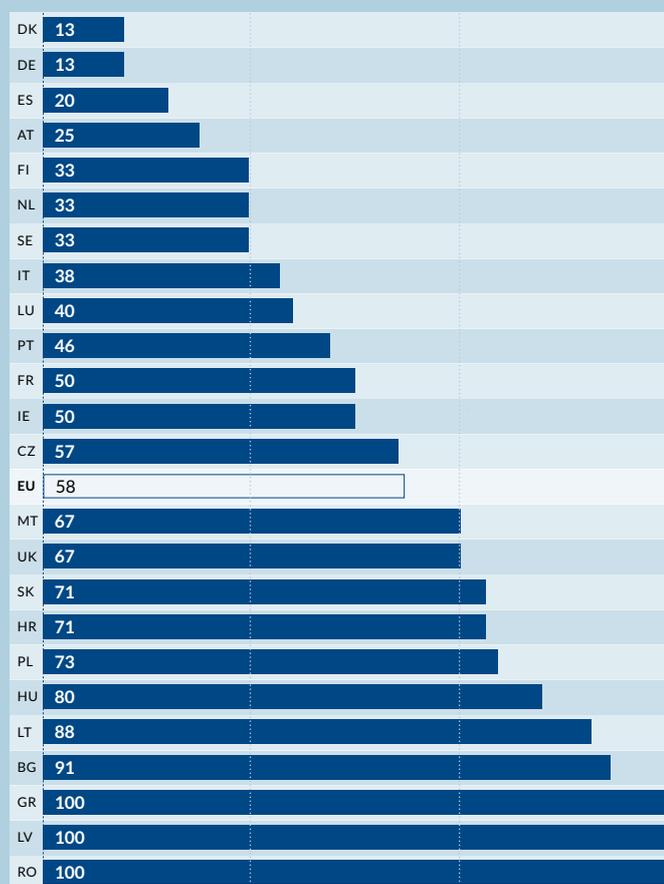
■ yes

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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Figure H3

Very strong need for improvement in public health
(in percent)



Not included due to insufficient data:
BE, CY, EE, SI

SIM Europe Reform Barometer expert survey 2016

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be willing to invest significant resources for strong positive effects to be realistic. In some countries, it appears to be easier to overcome inactivity and resistance to reform if the EU exerts pressure or provides incentives. In Bulgaria, a very strong need for reform is perceived, and 100 percent of the 11 experts reported reform activity. In 2015, Bulgaria launched a new national strategy, 'Health 2020', which includes a variety of measures, such as a special tax on unhealthy food and drugs, development of e-health, regulations on regional health inspectorates and a mix of other preventive and curative measures to improve the amount of effective care for vulnerable groups. The strategy seems to address public health in a systemic and comprehensive way. Adoption of the strategy was one of the prerequisites for EU funding. Of all eight Bulgarian experts providing an answer, 75 percent rated reforms to have positive and 38 percent strong positive effects, which is way above the EU average.

In 2014, the Romanian government also adopted a 'National Health Strategy 2014–2020', which covered development of public health and health services as well as system-wide measures. All experts from Romania perceived a very strong need for reform, but only 71 percent reported reform activity, presumably because the decision was slightly prior to the reporting period of the survey. Respondents were somewhat less frequently optimistic about the prospects of success, with 60 percent expecting positive and 0 percent strong positive effects. They mentioned a severe shortage of financial resources and a lack of specialised human resources, partly

due to a medical brain drain to Western Europe. EU regulation could improve prospects for better outcomes by countering the negative influence of political instability and lack of enforcement. In the Czech Republic, the perceived need for improvement was near the EU average; 57 percent of experts reported reform activity, and 67 percent of them expected positive effects. In 2014, the Czech government reduced out-of-pocket fees and co-payments, even fully eliminating them in some cases. The following year, it also approved a 'Health 2020' national strategy and adopted 20 action plans to implement the strategy. In Finland, a major social and health service reform is in preparation and should go into effect by 2019. Not surprisingly, 100 percent of the Finnish experts reported reform activity, and 100 percent expected positive effects (though none of them expected strong positive effects). Experts located problems at the municipal level, with municipalities being too small to efficiently organise services that are equally available.

⁴ Here and in the remainder of this chapter, this percentage includes all respondents who indicated that they expect a positive or a strongly positive effect of reforms.

4.2 Quality of health care

The same survey questions were posed with regard to quality of health care, but the frequency of answers was substantially lower compared to the first policy objective (136 instead of 186 in the entire EU-28). There are more countries now with no responses. For the entire EU-28, 81 percent of experts perceived at least a strong and 48 percent a very strong need for improvement, and 54 percent reported reform activity to improve quality in health care. Substantially fewer answers were provided to rate the effects of reforms, with no ratings available in quite a number of countries. From all responses collected over the entire EU-28, 71 percent expected some moderate quality improvements, while only 16 percent expected strong positive effects.

Experts offered numerous written remarks. In Bulgaria, 88 percent of experts felt there is a need for improvement, and 67 percent reported reform activity (eight ratings). The health ministry issues standards of care. Based on these standards, the National Health Insurance Fund decides on payments to health care providers. A point of criticism is the poor methodology of measuring patient satisfaction. In 2015, Romania created a National Authority for Quality Management in Health Care that is supposed to elaborate and draft legislative proposals relating to compliance with international regulations, accreditation standards, payment methods for health care providers, training and technical consultancy, the accrediting and re-evaluating of health providers, and the monitoring of quality standards. In the Czech Republic, an Act on Health Services was passed in 2011 that obliges hospitals to introduce internal quality assurance, and was subsequently complemented by guidelines and rules to provide a standardisation of quality management and assure implementation. Experts rated the need for improvement below average; 67 percent of the answers indicated reform activity, and all of those answering expected a positive outcome. Hungary introduced a new system of provider accreditation, but experts opted not to predict effects at this early stage of implementation. Latvia has a new mandatory quality assurance system for general practitioners comprising 14 quality criteria. Some hospitals have internal quality assessment schemes. In Lithuania, infrastructure is being modernised. In 2015, the government approved the public health care development programme for the 2016–2023 period, whose specific objectives are strengthening health through healthier lifestyles and health literacy. A health restructuring plan aims to further reduce the number of hospital beds and strengthen out-patient care, but measures to strengthen primary health care seem to be insufficient. Lithuanian experts noted that quality needs to be better operationalised, and that policy should attach higher priority to professional and peer expertise instead of to excessive regulation. The e-health system is unfinished and needs to be improved. In Poland, accreditation is not obligatory, and certified hospitals do not get any financial reward in terms of contracts with public payers. The biggest problem of hospital directors, however, is not how to increase quality, but how to stop the emigration of qualified personnel. Long waiting times for publicly provided services make wealthier people migrate to the private sector, resulting in growing inequality in terms of access to health. Polish experts identified a need for improvement that is urgent and clearly above the EU average. Nevertheless, only 33 percent of the respondents recognised reform activity, and out of these only a third perceived any positive effect (and none perceived a strong positive effect).

Among the 'healthier' countries, Finland is planning a comprehensive health care reform whose priorities include, among other things, reducing the differ-

ences in quality of primary care services. One problem is the poor access to primary care given by health centres which seem to mainly serve the economically inactive population, as opposed to occupational health services. Experts indicated above-average activity and effects of reforms, even though the need for improvement is felt to be below the European average. In France, survey participants noted the importance of training, professionalisation and research to take people's special needs into better account. Experts noted some need for improvement but a lack of reform. Austria would need a better culture to deal with errors in hospitals and elsewhere, according to expert opinion, and policy measures should be systematically evaluated. The 'Inpatient Quality Indicator' project is yielding comprehensive results, but only a few are publicly accessible. Such indicators should facilitate benchmarking exercises to allow comparison with the best practice of successful peers. In 2015, Germany introduced a law on hospital reform which includes the introduction of an option to use quality elements in future financing arrangements. An expert noted that existing research finds that establishing pay-for-performance, including pay for quality, is extremely difficult to achieve. More experiments and research might have helped identify effective solutions. In 2015, the Netherlands introduced a new financing system for general practitioners, specifying payments for integrated care, pay-for-performance and innovation. The system should improve quality by promoting coordination and innovation in care. A critical issue is that competing health insurance companies purchase health care even though information about quality of care is insufficient and often lacking. Experts mentioned that the definition and measurement of quality is a concept under construction, and that the main focus must be on clients.

4.3 Health system efficiency

The frequency of answers to the survey questions on this policy objective dropped further, from 136 to 125 in the total EU-28, and only 59 provided a rating on the impact of reforms, leaving a number of countries with no rating at all. For the entire EU-28, 85 percent of experts perceived at least a strong and 54 percent a very strong need for improvement; 60 percent reported at least some reform activity to improve system efficiency, of which 63 percent expected some moderate improvements, while only 17 percent expected strong positive effects. Problems and proposed improvements to health system efficiency vary widely across member states. A number of aspects were already discussed in the preceding two policy objectives and therefore not repeated. In many countries, fiscal budget pressure and the need for cost containment motivated various attempts to improve efficiency.

In Bulgaria, the national health insurance benefits will be split by 2016 into basic and complementary parts. Regional health maps are being implemented to better address the needs of the population for outpatient and inpatient care. In 2015, there was the introduction of compulsory centralised bargaining over discounts for medicines in the national health insurance reimbursement list. The government also aims at efficiency gains by expanding the use of e-health. Romania started with electronic health cards to obtain a clearer picture of health services provided to patients and avoid fraud, but the service is still not fully functional. It recently initiated a number of cost-saving reforms, such as modifying the reference price system, moving to the e-prescription of drugs, expanding the use of e-health services, and introducing monthly monitoring of health care expenditures. The Croatian state insurance agency HZZO started in

2015 to manage mandatory health insurance payments to health providers based on key performance indicators. In 2016, the Czech Republic will start having competitive public procurement for health devices, making contracts publicly available. Latvia is embarking on a gradual reform of the hospital payment system as global budget allocations seem to be effective in cost containment, but arguably do not provide good incentives for greater efficiency and higher quality. Lithuania introduced some new quality indicators for primary health care (e.g. avoidable hospitalisation) and launched some preventive programmes. Experts criticised the fact that a clear concept and transparent decision-making as well as an independent and trusted evaluation process were missing. In 2015, Poland introduced a regulation for developing a regional health needs map to gain better planning of hospital bed capacity and to avoid unnecessary duplication of investments in neighbouring hospitals. One expert called for an open discussion about sensible rationing methods when resources are tight, and pointed out the apparent policy contradiction in guaranteeing broad services while having inadequate funding.

The Austrian health system is more complex and fragmented than those of other OECD countries. Experts reported that new legislation adopted in 2013 is now being implemented to enhance efficiency, for example, through better balancing of care provision across providers based on relative efficiency and by promoting new primary care models. The Netherlands transferred long-term care from a centralised to a decentralised system in 2015; only inpatient long-term care remains centrally organised, based on the idea that municipalities are in closer touch with the needs and desires of citizens and can organise related matters more efficiently. The reform also involves a major budget cut. Experts expected that new players will need time to develop the required competencies. Decentralisation might also lead to substantial differences between municipalities and thereby create regional inequalities in health care.

4.4 Sustainable and fair health financing

The response rate on this policy objective dropped further, to 121, and left only 41 ratings on the impact of reforms. For the entire EU-28, 84 percent of experts perceived at least a strong and 53 percent a very strong need for improvement; only 43 percent noted some reform activity, of which 71 percent expected moderate improvements in fair and sustainable health financing, while only 21 percent expected strong positive effects. Answers varied substantially across member states. Clearly, budget constraints are tighter in some countries than others, necessitating more or less drastic reform for cost containment and efficiency improvements, and imposing on governments and decision-makers a difficult equity/efficiency trade-off in health. Equity and distribution involve value judgments which cannot be unanimous and tend to create distributional conflicts. A number of selected comments by experts illustrated diverging priorities and necessities in different member states.

In 2015, Bulgaria increased state contributions to non-insured individuals covered by state budgets, such as children and pensioners. At the same time, developing the health map for better coordination of regional expenditure and measures pushing for e-health, reinforcing outpatient care and putting a greater focus on prevention and health promotion are expected to yield efficiency gains and make health financing more sustainable. Croatia separated the compulsory health insurance fund from the state budget in 2015, which is expected to yield positive financial effects and yield more

resources for the hospital and primary health care sectors. Competitive public procurement for hospitals generates additional savings. The Czech Republic, among other measures, aims at more efficient hospital reimbursement by improving the DRG (diagnosis-related group)-based payment system, which should be fully functional by 2017. The debate in Latvia is about moving from tax financing to compulsory health insurance since government financing of health care in the last few years has been inadequate. Experts feel, however, that the government should rather stick to the tax-funded system, but allocate more resources to health and work on improving efficiency. Other recent reforms resulted in higher co-payments and reduced access to health care, thereby undermining equity in health. Experts from Malta indicated that tax revenue is an insufficient source for financing public health services and should be supplemented by compulsory health insurance. In Poland, to the contrary, experts criticised the high share of private out-of-pocket spending, which already accounts for 30 percent of all spending, limits access and thereby reduces equity in health. Another Polish expert, however, found payroll-tax funding neither sustainable nor fair, and suggested instead strengthening the insurance principle in addition to increasing pay-as-you-use and the individual responsibility for health with co-payments.

Experts suggested that Italy should update the basic benefit package as well as reduce the financing of private occupational welfare schemes, shifting resources to public health care services instead. In Portugal, the crisis dictated spending cuts for purely financial reasons, and there was not much assessment of potential health outcomes. Similar arguments on the equity/efficiency trade-off in health care were reiterated in many other member states, depending on the level of income, the generosity of the health system inherited from the past, and the tightness of individual and aggregate resource constraints.

4.5 Health care governance

For the entire EU-28, 77 percent of experts indicated at least a strong and 44 percent a very strong need for improvement. However only 45 percent noted some reform activity, of which 58 percent expected moderate improvements, but only 11 percent expected strong positive effects. Thus, the picture for this policy objective is somewhat more pessimistic. A mechanical summary of results shows the same heterogeneity across member states, but results are difficult to interpret since only few expert ratings (or even none at all) are available at the individual country level. The written expert statements shed some light on the challenges of health care governance in different countries, but were also somewhat scarcer than they were for other objectives.

Good governance in any organisation requires clearly stated goals and well-defined rules that lead autonomous decision-makers to internalise and take account of all the benefits and costs of their actions. This will often require incentives, such as performance pay, combined with monitoring and sanctions when evaluation is unsatisfactory. To attract talent and qualified human resources and prevent brain drain, salaries and career prospects must be competitive. The health care sector poses particularly difficult governance problems. Experts all over Europe reiterated that good governance in health care starts with clearly stated goals that derive from a systemic approach of policymaking that favours equity and efficiency in health. They emphasised the need for better inter-agency cooperation and coordination between hos-

pitals and the extra-mural sector (mentioned by experts from Austria and Lithuania), which should be the result of a mutually consistent, systemic design. Policy initiatives and legislation should be consistent (Bulgaria). A lack of a long-term plan leads to erratic decision-making and policy reversals (Poland). Political instability often favours reform inactivity and a lack of implementation and enforcement, which can be mitigated by pressure from the EU (Romania). A coherent long-term plan with broad backing needs an extensive reform dialogue (Latvia) that brings all stakeholders and affected groups to the negotiating table. In practice, systems are often strongly driven by special interests of the involved organisations, but such ‘closed-shop behaviour’ must be eradicated (Germany).

The design of rules should assign clear responsibilities and disentangle joint responsibilities shared with different units. Health management is difficult if responsibilities are intertwined and require the consent of many persons in daily management affairs. In reality, the organisation of the health sector is often too complex (Finland). One aspect of governance is the right level of decentralisation. A decentralised system is closer to the needs of citizens and could involve less bureaucracy and better cooperation between services and departments (France, Netherlands). Apart from the design and governance of the system, experts mentioned the need for human resources development through training; the introduction of an appraisal system; monitoring and performance evaluation; and, last but not least, competitive wages aimed at retaining talent and preventing brain drain (Portugal, Poland, Romania). Politics should not interfere in management autonomy, including the selection of directors of local health agencies (Italy). Exploiting the possibilities of information systems and e-health, imposing health care quality assurance, improving on DRG payment systems for hospitals, and insisting on open procurement for hospitals (Latvia, Slovakia) also help boost the efficiency of the health sector.

4.6 Outcome performance of health

Regarding this policy objective, 82 percent of all EU-28 experts perceived at least a strong and 45 percent a very strong need for improvement; 48 percent recognised reform activity, of which 69 percent expected moderately rising outcome performance of the health system, while only 13 percent expected strong positive effects of reform. These ratings varied substantially across member states. Instead of using graphical plotting, as was done with Figure H1 and Figure H3, we discuss written survey statements to illustrate diverging priorities and necessities in different member states. Expert statements almost unanimously agreed on the need for performance evaluation, but noted varying government activities in this direction. Comments predominantly centred on how to measure performance and organise the evaluation process.

First of all, performance evaluation requires extensive and easily accessible data. If there are no data, there cannot be any reliable performance measurement. An expert in Slovakia criticised the fact that outcome indicators are not regularly reported, that the statistical system is obsolete, that health insurance data are not accessible, and that the oldest oncology register is dysfunctional. Health providers must also be willing to provide data and information, but might be hesitant to do so. In the Netherlands, for example, hospitals often refuse to publish mortality rates. Furthermore, the relevant stakeholders must agree on which outcome measures are chosen. Otherwise,

there cannot be a commonly accepted assessment of whether performance is good and the proposed measures are successful. In the Netherlands, for example, several initiatives to improve outcome performance have been proposed, according to expert opinion, but not one major reform has addressed this issue. The sector is struggling with how to develop outcome measures and improve performance along these measures.

To obtain unbiased results, the tasks of monitoring and performance measurement should be allocated to an independent agency. Policy-makers should not rely on self-evaluations of health providers (Czech Republic). Further, undistorted decision-making requires a unified or at least comparable performance measurement of different health outputs. In reality, outcomes are measured more frequently and reliably in some parts of the health system than in others, making relative judgments and priority-setting difficult. In Austria, expert opinion indicated that the Inpatient Care Indicator Project measures performance at the level of hospitals, while ambulatory care quality is poorly monitored. Finally, the results of performance measurement should be publicly available so that all stakeholders can draw conclusions. The first-ever health system performance assessment in Malta was executed with the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO) and completed by mid-2015, but the government still has not published the report. An Italian expert similarly argued that outcome evaluation in primary and hospital care should not only be reinforced, but also have public reporting as an integral part of it.

A German expert felt that there is a lack of incentives for competitive innovations that explore alternative solutions, but noted some attempts among private hospital providers. In Hungary, relevant statistical data proved the poor health status of the population. Experts noted a strong influence of social status on health outcomes. In Ireland, centres of excellence are working well, while the performance of general hospitals is poor. The expert noted a lack of hospital capacity and of community-based services that could prevent the need for hospital access. A huge problem in Poland is waiting times. A waiting list regulation was proposed in 2014 as a first step towards a national strategy for reducing waiting times for specialist care in Poland. The goal is to shift patients to the lowest-possible level of care. The initiative triggered heavy protests among primary care doctors, who criticised the fact that additional tasks were allocated to them without additional funding. In the end, the regulations implemented in 2015 focused on oncological care alone. Patients who were believed to have cancer could immediately receive diagnosis and treatment. Since no additional funds were made available, this improvement for (presumed) cancer patients came at the expense of other patients. In general, experts criticised a lack of understanding of the need for preventive care and positive health promotion in Poland.

4.7 Accessibility and range of health services

On average across all member states, 68 percent of experts perceived at least a strong and 40 percent a very strong need for improvement; 49 percent recognised reform activity, of which 56 percent saw moderately rising outcome performance of the health system and 21 percent expected strong positive effects of reform. Experts noted that inadequate accessibility of health services differs across geographical areas and socioeconomic groups, and that it may partly arise from a lack of information, as well.

In remote areas, a lack of infrastructure, financial resources and motivation on the part of health care providers can impair accessibility. In Romania, an objective of the National Health Strategy 2014–2020 is to ensure equitable access to health services. For reasons of cost-effectiveness, the government closed a number of municipal hospitals and ambulatory clinics, but failed to plan for alternative solutions in the affected regions. The gap in health care accessibility between large urban communities and small towns in rural areas increased. The health map introduced in Bulgaria is a basic tool to identify regional bottlenecks and allow better planning of access and availability of medical services. Croatia started emergency helicopter services for remote areas, such as the islands and the Adriatic coast. The new government cut the service owing to its high costs and will partly rely on the military. The shortage of doctors and nurses in the entire Czech Republic escalated in border areas, where the few doctors available are retiring at a high rate. Long waiting times for examinations and surgeries, as well as long distances to health care providers, lead to unequal access. As a partial solution, an expert mentioned more cross-border cooperation and incentives for graduating medical students to settle in border regions. Experts report that Denmark similarly faces a problem of incentivising general practitioners to establish practices in fringe areas. Specialisation and efficiency call for centralisation, but they come at the cost of more restricted access in less populated areas. Due to deprivation and an unfavourable demographic composition, the population in fringe areas tends to have more need and at the same time more problems accessing health care. Accessibility of health services is getting worse in France. Indeed, more and more people are giving up on health treatment because of difficult and frustrating access problems. Limited access for deprived people may also result in part from a lack of information. According to expert opinion, accessibility and regional health inequalities in Hungary have got worse since poor working conditions and low pay encourage many doctors and nurses to migrate to Western Europe.

Experts mentioned that more than 50 percent of health care services in Latvia are paid for out-of-pocket due to an underfinanced public health system. One possibility to be evaluated is the introduction of mandatory health insurance. In 2015, daily inpatient fees were cut, but access may not improve owing to very restrictive quotas, and it cannot improve as long as the government fails to invest more in health care capacity. An expert in Luxembourg argued that the development of e-applications could improve accessibility of health services and relieve some bottlenecks. In general, accessibility depends on social position. Problem areas to be addressed include, for example, long-term housing for medically fragile people and basic access to health for homeless drug addicts. In the Netherlands, fiscal pressure led the government to restrict long-term care to people who need 24-hour supervision, which shifts a large burden onto informal carers (e.g. families) for the remaining cases.

Governments must balance generous access to services with affordable capacity. An expert in Slovenia stated that the range of promised services became too wide, led to much longer waiting times and thereby diminished effective access. Offering too much to keep up the fiction of universal access ultimately results in offering effectively nothing when needy people simply give up. Long waiting times are the key problem in Poland, as well, though there was some relief in 2015 in the field of oncology. In turn, access remains limited and has even worsened in other fields. Relying on the expansion of the private sector improves access only for the better-off, leading to more

inequity in health. One expert concluded that “the state cannot guarantee everything to everybody”, and that the accessibility of health services relative to real possibilities in a relatively poor country are not that bad.

4.8 Unmet needs for medical help

The response rate on this policy objective dropped to 106 for the entire 28 member states and left only a total of 26 ratings on the impact of reforms. On average, 60 percent of experts perceived at least a strong and 36 percent a very strong need for improvement; only 36 percent noted some reform activity, of which 63 percent expected moderate improvements in unmet needs for medical help, but none anticipated strong positive effects. We discuss a number of selected expert comments to illustrate the diverging priorities and necessities in different member states.

Many statements on long waiting times and regional disparities overlap with preceding policy objectives. Czech experts further mentioned that some insurance funds have set better reimbursement rates for ambulatory doctors who settle in border areas. There is no general regulation, though, and experts were sceptical that slightly higher reimbursement rates alone will have a big effect. Some gaps were perceived with respect to long-term care of the elderly and disabled. In general, unmet medical needs are more likely when insurance is not compulsory or when there are significant gaps in coverage (Poland). In Lithuania, only a very low percentage (not more than 2 percent) of the population is not covered by national health insurance. Unmet needs for medical consultation thus seem not to be a big problem, although slightly more so for dental treatment. Copayments are a substantial hurdle, particularly for vulnerable groups. In Latvia, there have been attempts to reduce patients’ copayments, but probably not effectively enough to make a difference. More state financing should primarily address the needs of patients and the salaries of doctors to retain medical talent rather than going towards new equipment purchases. Experts identify a need for more auditing of spending. The basket of available services also needs an adjustment.

Experts mention an alarming demographic situation in Bulgaria. An improvement in maternal and child health will decrease child mortality and should alleviate problems with low fertility and chronic diseases. Experts suspect that people in the Netherlands refrain from seeking care owing to an increase in mandatory deductibles in insurance, which leads to higher private costs. About 27 percent of those living in underprivileged neighbourhoods do not follow up on a referral to secondary care, though it is not known whether this is due to financial reasons or other hurdles. Unmet needs among migrants and ethnic minorities are seldom even investigated. In the same vein, a Romanian expert emphasised that a lack of data leads to uninformed decision-making and unsolved problems, and suspected that the most vulnerable group is the Roma minority. They have to struggle with social, financial and ethnic barriers when accessing health care, but it seems very difficult to address and engage this group.

5 Discussion

Health is a prime determinant of individual welfare. Given obvious market imperfections and the difficulties that low-income individuals and families face in affording acceptable standards of medical protection, the government must

step in to organise the health sector by designing appropriate market regulations, mandating compulsory insurance and providing public services. Tight resource constraints confront decision-makers with difficult equity/efficiency trade-offs. What is spent on health cannot be spent on other valuable private or public uses, such as education, research or culture, which are arguably of equal importance to the advancement of society. Like distribution in general, equity in access to health involves widely diverging value judgments. To support social cohesion, society must arrive at a compromise that is acceptable to all and widely supported. The results of the expert survey illustrate these trade-offs in the presence of tight budget constraints, and reveal diverging national approaches and substantial heterogeneity across member states. Reform is a matter of priority and political will. While health is predominantly a national responsibility with a limited and mainly coordinating and supportive role for the EU, it turns out that EU pressure and the conditionality of EU funds can help overcome barriers to reform at the national level.

Better health requires preventive and curative investments. Where there is little money, there is little investment and little improvement in health. Empirically, per capita income explains a large part of a country's health expenditure as well as the share of public spending within total health spending. This correlation appears in the expert survey, as well. With some exceptions, experts from low-income countries in Eastern Europe and the southern periphery considered the need for reform to be much more urgent than their colleagues from high-income countries, such as Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the Nordic states. A logical implication of such differences in a country's resources is that convergence in health will depend in good part on the convergence of per capita income in Europe.

Still, ensuring equity in health remains a challenge even in rich member states. Governments must balance generosity in access with affordable capacity. Clearly, higher out-of-pocket expenses and co-payments might be needed for incentive-related reasons to prevent over-consumption and contain expenditure growth. But such solutions are a much bigger problem for low-income people. Mandatory insurance for basic protection helps ensure access to health services. But even if insurance coverage is universal and public health care financing dominates, long waiting times owing to limited affordable capacity may effectively ration access to health care relatively more for low-income groups. Given pressing alternative needs for public and private resources, low-income countries can afford substantially smaller health capacity. Long waiting times thus appear on a much larger scale. Some member states have responded by offering guarantees for treatment to everyone within a maximum waiting time, which must, of course, be supported by sufficient capacity. In any case, the better-off parts of the population frequently buy supplementary private insurance to ensure that they receive faster, higher-quality treatment. Demand-driven differences undermine, to some extent, equity and inclusiveness in health. Such differences extend the inequality in income and general living standards to the realm of health care. This begs the question of whether inequality in health protection is more or less acceptable than inequality in income and general living standards, and of whether redistribution should be in terms of money or in-kind services.

Health outcomes are not just a matter of health spending, but may also be influenced by environmental factors, working conditions, lifestyles and cultural habits. Risk factors are thus endogenous to preventive efforts, such as work safety regulations, information campaigns, health education and

regular health checks for the early identification of risk factors. This resonates well with the emphasis of many experts on the need for preventive rather than only curative health spending. A lack of preventive efforts may lead to high and mostly curative health spending without substantially improving outcomes, such as healthy years of life. Indeed, the Social Justice Index of the Bertelsmann Stiftung (Schraad-Tischler and Kroll 2014, Figure 32) reports healthy life expectancy with rather high rankings for some low-income countries. Malta scores rank 1 and 72.1 years of healthy life; Spain rank 5 and 65.2 years; Greece rank 7 and 64.9 years; Bulgaria rank 9 and 63.9 years; Croatia rank 11 and 63.3 years. This means that all of them exceeded the EU average of 61.9 years of healthy life. In contrast, some high-income countries – which tend to spend more on health care and are often endowed with better-developed health systems – fare substantially worse than the EU average in terms of this measure of health outcome. For example, Austria scores only rank 15 and 61.4 years of healthy life; the Netherlands rank 16 and 61.2 years; Denmark rank 18 and 61.0 years; and Germany rank 23 and 57.7 years. Hence, rankings of health outcomes are only imperfectly correlated with actual health expenditure and income per capita as well as the expert ratings of the survey with regard to the need for reform.

6 Conclusions

Health significantly influences individual well-being. In affecting work capacity in firms, absence from work and individual career prospects, health can have a great impact on a country's economic performance. Health spending competes with other valuable private and public needs. Limited resources, unequal access to basic health services and market imperfections call for government to play an important role in regulating the private health sector and supplying public services. Health policy is thereby confronted with difficult equity/efficiency trade-offs. Ageing populations create new challenges, such as long-term care.

National health systems are diverse, reflecting different policy priorities and levels of economic development. To inform policymakers about alternative solutions in health policy, cross-country comparisons based on statistical data and empirical evidence are indispensable. However, they may also be limited by a lack of hard data and the simple fact that not all aspects of health policy and institutional characteristics are easily captured with quantitative measures. The key aims of the present expert survey are to provide a valuable complement to data collection by capturing much more institutional detail beyond a simple statistical portrayal, and to more fully inform policymakers. Comparing best practice and learning about alternative solutions in other member states should arguably stimulate policy innovations in Europe.

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Findings by Country

Country Overviews

On the following pages, you can find the main survey results for 27 EU countries.¹ They show:

- the overall reform need, activity and quality for the respective country
- in which dimensions/for which policy objectives the experts saw the highest need for government action = Need score, from 0 (no need at all) to 3 (very strong need)
- how much of the reform need has been addressed by the respective government in order to improve the situation = Activity rate, from 0 to 100 percent
- which effects the experts expect the initiated reforms to have = Quality score, from -2 (very negative) to +2 (very positive)
- some of the experts written comments and recommendations

As the data coverage differs quite strongly among the countries, the overviews do not necessarily cover all dimensions and all policy objectives of social inclusion.

Overall Findings

The overviews start with the overall survey results regarding the aggregated average reform need, average reform activity and average reform quality over the covered dimensions for the country.² The overall aggregated findings are not presented if fewer than three of the five dimensions have been covered.³ This applies to Belgium, Estonia, Ireland and Slovenia. Furthermore, the findings include the averages of reform need, activity and quality for the dimensions in which at least 50 percent of the related policy objectives have been covered. In most cases, the overall findings contain additional information about the policy objectives with the highest need (when clearly identifiable) and about the related reform activity and quality for these objectives, if available.

Dimension Findings

Here, you can find the results for the average reform need, activity and quality for the included policy objectives of each dimension in which at least 50 percent of the included policy objectives have been covered.⁴ The following table shows the dimension coverage for the 27 countries.

High coverage (all 5 dimensions covered)	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Spain
Medium coverage (3 or 4 dimensions covered)	Croatia, Finland, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom
Low coverage (1 or 2 dimensions covered)	Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Slovenia

¹ Due to very limited expert responses, there is no overview for Cyprus.

² For general information about methodology, see Chapter Methodology.

³ Here, a dimension is 'covered' if a need score is available. However, it can still be the case that the corresponding quality score is not available.

⁴ Here, a policy objective is 'covered' if a need score is available. However, it can still be the case that the corresponding quality score is not available.

The results for a dimension or a policy objective are (mostly) not reported if the assessed reform need (and also the related activity rate) was rather low (low relevance). Furthermore, regarding the policy objectives, we do not report these whenever:

- less than 50 percent of the primary policy objectives have been covered (for composite policy objectives composed of policy objectives)
- fewer than three experts indicated a need score (for primary policy objectives) or fewer than two experts indicated a quality score (N.B. Significantly more experts answered the questions regarding reform need and activity than reform quality.)
- the results were ‘extreme’ and the written answers did not provide explanations for the assessment (e.g. if the experts assessed the reform activity as 100 percent without explaining what the government had done.)

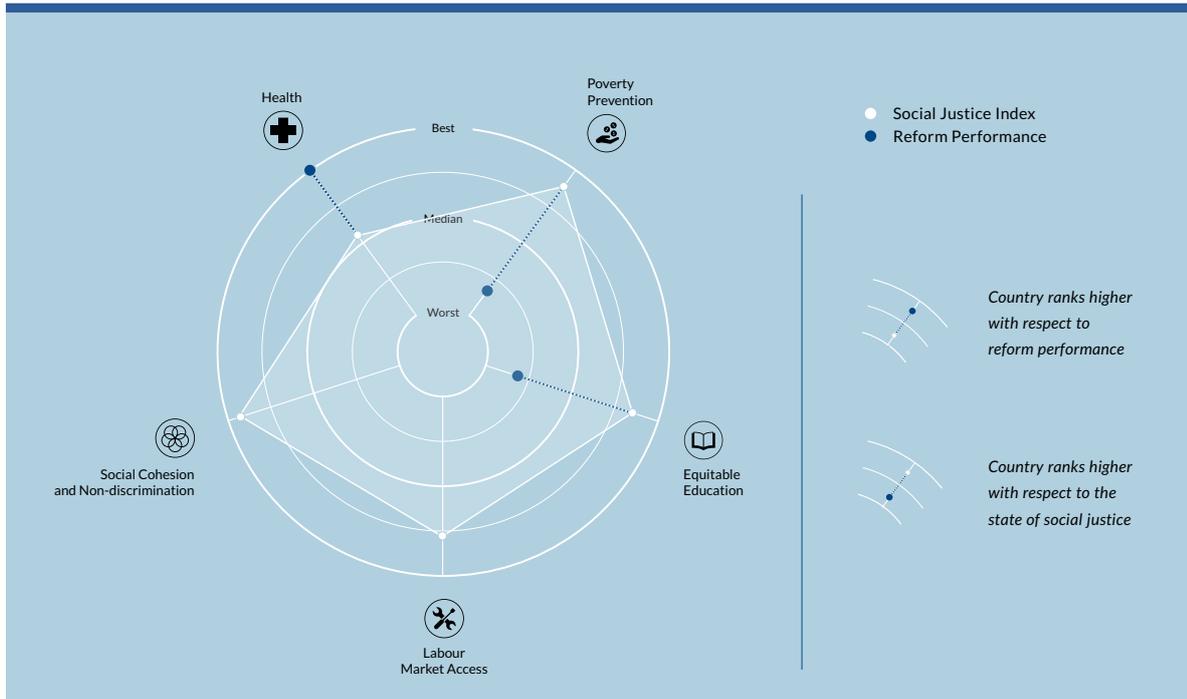
The following table shows which dimensions are reported for which country:

	Overall Findings	Poverty Prevention	Equitable Education	Labour Market Access	Social Cohesion + Non-discrimination	Health
AT	■	■	■	■	■	
BE		■		■		
BG	■	■	■	■	■	■
HR	■	■	■			■
CZ	■	■	■	■		
DK	■	■	■	■	■	
EE		■				
FI	■	■	■	■	■	■
FR	■	■	■	■	■	
DE	■	■	■	■	■	
GR	■	■	■	■	■	
HU	■	■	■	■	■	■
IE		■		■		
IT	■	■	■	■	■	
LV			■		■	■
LT	■	■	■	■	■	■
LU	■	■	■	■		■
MT	■	■	■			■
NL	■	■		■	■	■
PL	■	■	■	■		■
PT	■	■	■			■
RO	■	■	■	■	■	■
SK	■	■	■	■	■	■
SI		■	■			
ES	■	■	■	■	■	■
SE	■	■	■	■	■	
UK	■	■	■	■	■	

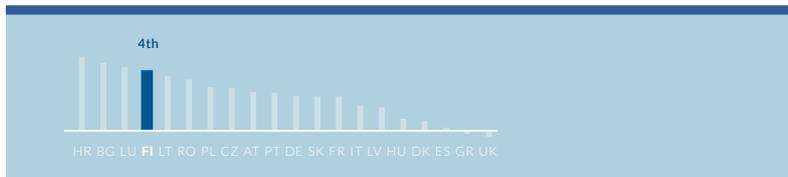
The experts were not only asked to assess reform need, activity and quality, but also to provide a written explanation for their assessment as well as to share what they believe should be done to improve the situation. Some of their comments are included in the findings in quotation marks. We tried to include all those that had a clear message and/or gave an explanation of the experts' assessment. As their comments are of very different quality, length and completeness, we could not include all of them. The authors of some quotes are cited by name in the footnotes. This is the case if the expert gave us permission to quote him or her in this report.

Recurring Graphics

Each country overview starts with a radar chart depicting the country's rank within the EU with respect to the state of social justice (measured by the Social Justice Index scores from the 2015 edition) and with respect to the reform performance (measured by the Reform Barometer reform performance scores from the current edition) for each of the five dimensions analysed in this report.



In addition, the country's rank with respect to the overall social policy reform performance is indicated by a small bar chart.



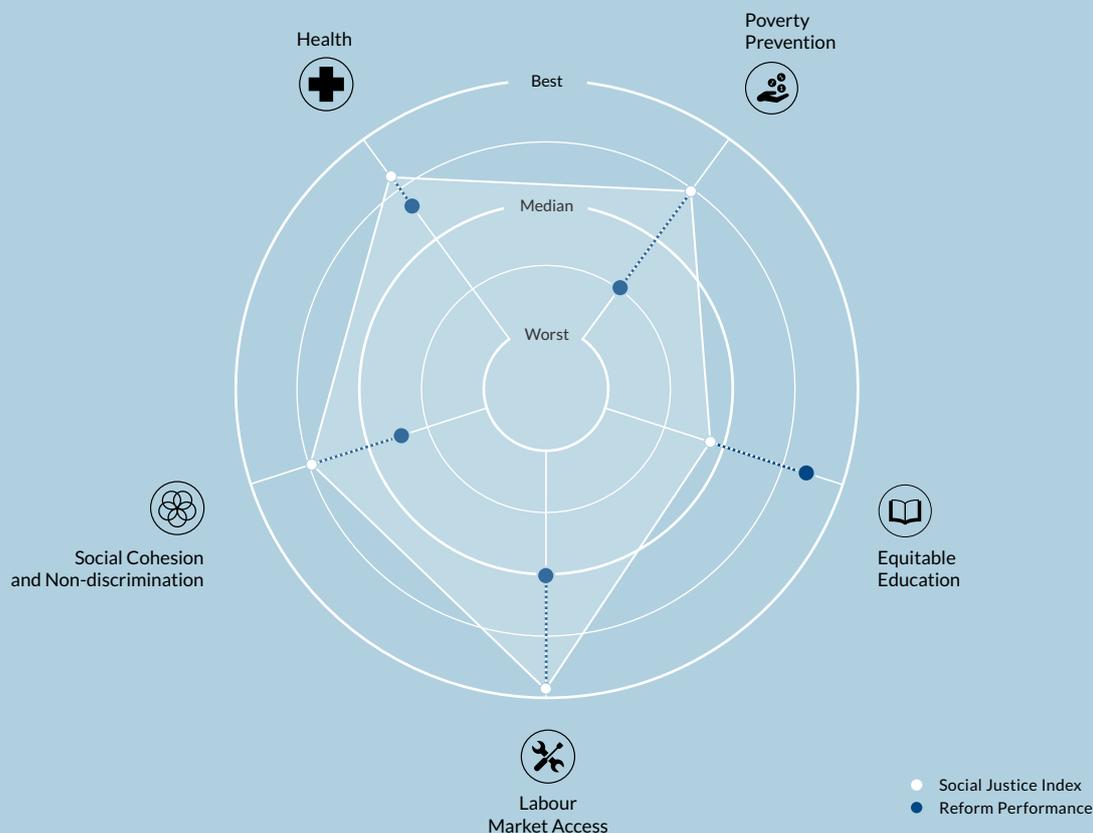
A table summarises all available Reform Barometer scores at the overall and the dimension levels.

Findings by Country



Austria

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need With an overall score of 1.91, Austria ranks 7th among the 23 EU countries examined regarding the need for social reforms. This clearly reflects its good performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country ranks 6th. Looking at the dimensions, the experts see a more or less pressing need to ensure Equitable Education (2.24, rank 14/22) and to improve social Cohesion (2.31, rank 14/18). On the other hand, they see quite a low need for improvement with regard to Health (1.27, rank 2/20). The need for reforms in the dimensions of Poverty Prevention (1.87, rank 9/27) and Labour Market Access (1.87, rank 5/19) is mediocre in absolute terms, but relatively low compared to other countries, which again reflects Austria's good performance in the SJI, where it comes in 8th in the dimension of Poverty Prevention and 2nd in the Labour Market dimension.

Regarding all dimensions, the most pressing challenges for the Austrian government are to:

- safeguard independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (2.83)

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- increase employment levels among senior citizens (2.81), refugees (2.50), the foreign-born population (2.47) and low-skilled people (2.40)
- improve integration of refugees (2.71) and reduce poverty among them (2.43)

Activity According to the experts, 46 percent of the overall reform need has been addressed in order to improve social inclusion in Austria. This is exactly the EU median, ranking the country 12th out of 23 and way behind the leading countries (e.g. Luxembourg's is 65%). Looking at the individual dimensions, the activity rates do not differ significantly. With regard to Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education and Labour Market Access, the related activity rates are about 40 percent, for social cohesion about 50 percent.

When considering the most required reforms, the experts' opinions on how these are being addressed differ somewhat. With regard to the policy objectives 'improve integration of refugees' (63%, rank 4) and 'increase job chances for elderly people' (74%, rank 5), activity rates are quite high. For 'safeguarding educational mobility' (41%, rank 7) and 'reducing poverty among refugees' (37%, rank 5), activity rates are mediocre in absolute terms, but quite high relatively. The rate in improving labour market access for refugees is rather low (20%), but still higher than in many other countries (rank 7).

Quality The experts assess the overall reform quality as (slightly) positive with a score of 0.65 (rank 12/20). The reforms aimed at ensuring Equitable Education (1.22, rank 3/21) and improving Labour Market Access (0.83, rank 4/17) are expected to have quite positive effects. For Poverty Prevention (0.36, rank 19/24) and Social Cohesion (0.35, rank 8/12), the assessed reform quality is much lower. Looking at the main pressing challenges, the reform quality differs very strongly. While the reforms aimed at ensuring educational mobility (1.14, rank 3/16), improving integration of refugees in the education system (1.0, rank 1/15) and increasing job chances for elderly people (0.85, rank 5/14) are expected to have quite positive effects, the experts think the initiatives concerning the integration of refugees (-0.42, rank 10/11) and poverty among refugees (-0.52, rank 12/13) will exacerbate the situation.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The experts reported a high need to reduce poverty among refugees (2.43, rank 21) and single parents (2.22). On the other hand, the need for reforms to tackle poverty among the total population (1.22, rank 5) and young people (1.63, rank 3) is rather low. For seniors (1.71) and foreign-born people (2.0), the need is modest.

Activity In this dimension, all activity rates are between 28 percent (children, foreign-born) and 58 percent (total population). With regard to poverty among refugees, the activity rate is 37 percent, ranking Austria 5th. The experts report several government activities aimed at reducing poverty. One of these is a “tax reform lowering the lowest tax rate and increasing tax-free income, in force since the beginning of 2016.” Another is a payment to seniors (Ausgleichszulage), which serves as a de facto minimum pension. One expert reports that, in 2016, some regional states started capping the needs-based minimum benefit (Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung, BMS), a nationwide unified social assistance programme targeting refugees and the foreign-born population. Furthermore, he observes that there are “several social assistance programmes in cash and kind at the regional state level.”¹

Quality The quality scores in this dimension differ greatly. On the one hand, the experts think the reforms initiated so far will have positive effects for single parents (1.17), elderly people (0.96), children (0.81) and the total population (0.66). On the other hand, the measures aimed at tackling poverty among refugees (-0.52) and the foreign-born population (-1.06) are expected to significantly worsen the situation, ranking Austria second to last (refugees) and last (foreign-born).

One expert thinks that “the capping of the BMS will hit first and primarily the refugees, but also the migrant population and, finally, all recipients.” Another expert explains that “the reforms do not target specific groups, like foreign-born or refugees; they benefit the general population.”

Many experts recommend introducing an unconditional basic income for all population groups. One expert explains that this “would help those who

¹ Max Preglau, Department of Sociology, University of Innsbruck

are outside collective agreements.” Another expert observes that “the opposite is discussed (cutting back guaranteed minimum income, especially for refugees).” A third expert has several ideas about what should be done: “Create decent jobs and pay for work already done unpaid (e.g. in care, integration of refugees, education etc.); raise rather than lower unemployment subsidies; taxation of wealth, capital gains, inheritance and gifts; promote access to social assistance (reducing non-take-up) by different measures (positive campaigning, easy and decent access, information in foreign languages); enhance social housing for low-income groups and poor people; higher minimum pensions.”²

Equitable Education

Need The overall need in this dimension is 2.24 (rank 14/22), which reflects Austria’s performance in the 2015 SJI, where the country ranks 16th with regard to Equitable Education. The most pressing need is seen as safeguarding independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background (2.83). But the experts also see a more or less pressing need for government action for the policy objectives ‘ensure equal opportunities’ (2.14), ‘improve structural conditions’ (2.09), ‘reduce the number of early school leavers’ (2.25) and ‘improve integration of refugees’ (2.42). With regard to educational mobility, one expert explains that “secondary schools in Austria are still de facto segregated between a track leading to higher education (Gymnasium) and a track almost excluding students from higher education (Hauptschule). This split reflects social segregation – children from families with a higher (material, non-material) status have a significantly higher chance of going to university.”

Activity The activity rate to improve structural conditions is rather low (23%). For the other five policy objectives, the rates are mediocre but relatively high compared to other countries (between 37 and 50%). One expert explains: “In November 2015, the government presented plans for a national educational reform. Part of the reform is to take action to improve upward educational mobility, which Austria is regularly criticized for in international comparative studies. This should be achieved by increasing the share of joint schools for pupils aged 6 to 14 and by postponing the selection of children in the education system.” Another expert sees “first steps to improve the education of kindergarten teachers with the purpose of providing an academic education for kindergarten educators.” Furthermore, an expert reports the introduction of a mandatory and free kindergarten year, with a second compulsory year under discussion. With regard to structural conditions, one expert reports that “additional national money was provided when doubled by the states for improving the quality of kindergarten.”

Quality The experts expect the activities in this dimension to have (strong) positive effects on Equitable Education (1.22, rank 3/21). This is true for all policy objectives, as all quality scores are > 1.0, ranking Austria between 1st and 5th for each of them. The best effects are expected with regard to the

² Helmut P. Gaisbauer, Centre for Ethics and Poverty Research, University of Salzburg

policy objectives ‘improve structural conditions’ (1.58) and ‘reduce number of early school leavers’ (1.45). A rather low reform quality is seen in ensuring equal opportunities at the secondary stage (0.37), as many experts are quite sceptical that the new school organisation will lead to any significant improvement. One expert recommends establishing “a real joint school, meaning that all pupils from 6 to 14 visit the same school type – without differentiating between ‘new middle schools’ and ‘grammar schools’.” Another expert recommends that “schools with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds should get more funding from the state. Distributing financial resources to schools based on a ‘social disadvantage index’, which is based on the socioeconomic background of pupils, parents’ educational level, migration background and non-native speakers in a school.” A third expert would like to “abolish early streaming in the Austrian school system, as it is of great disadvantage for young people from a poor social background.” Yet another recommends compulsory education until the age of 18 in order to prevent early school leaving.

✳ Labour Market Access

Need The overall need for reforms in the Labour Market dimension is rather modest (1.87, rank 5). This is not surprising, as Austria comes in 2nd in the 2015 SJI Labour Market dimension. With regard to the policy objective ‘increase employment/decrease unemployment’, the experts see only a small need to increase employment levels among the total population (1.56, rank 5). On the other hand, they report a pressing need to improve job chances for elderly people (2.81, rank 21/22) as well as for refugees/foreign-born people, the low-skilled, the long-term unemployed and young people (all need scores between 2.13 and 2.50). For the latter two, the need scores are somewhat surprising, as they are quite high in absolute terms even though Austria ranks 1st (long-term unemployment) and 2nd (youth unemployment) in the SJI. On the other hand, the need scores are rather low compared to those of other countries, ranking Austria 5th (long-term unemployment) and 3rd (youth unemployment) in this reform barometer. For the policy objectives about tackling ‘precarious employment’ (1.73, rank 3/16) and ‘in-work poverty’ (1.64, rank 3/18), the experts see a relatively low need for government action.

Activity The highest activity rates in increasing employment levels can be observed with regard to young people (89%) and senior citizens (74%). For the foreign-born population (53%), the long-term unemployed (55%) and women (62%), government activity is rated modest in absolute terms but relatively high for women (rank 4) and the foreign-born (rank 6). This is also true for refugees, where the activity rate was 20 percent, ranking Austria 7th. Furthermore, 34 percent of the need to tackle precarious employment have been met; for in-work poverty this rate was 17 percent. Concerning elderly people, one expert reports that “a policy was taken up to try and retrain people, instead of retiring them, if they are no longer able to work in their old profession (because of health reasons).”

Quality The overall quality score for Austria in this dimension is 0.83 (rank 4/17), which means that the experts expect the reforms to have positive effects. This is also true for most of the specific subgroups of the labour market,

such as seniors (0.85), young people (0.81) and the long-term unemployed (1.0). On the other hand, the experts think the reform initiatives aimed at increasing job opportunities for foreign-born people will only have slightly positive effects (0.30). One expert has some suggestions for improving labour market access: “Refugees: programme for a step-by-step labour market integration process, accompanied by tailor-made support offers. Women: improved child care infrastructure; implementation of a child care allowance reform (e.g. introduction of a child care allowance account); Low-skilled citizens: extension of basic education, special counselling offers; appropriate training programmes with special principles of didactics.” With regard to precarious employment, one expert recommends introducing “incentives for employers to reduce overtime work and to change temporary contracts into regular contracts.”

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need According to the experts, there is a pressing need to improve integration policies (2.43), especially with regard to refugees (2.71). Furthermore, they see a more or less urgent need to tackle income inequality and gender inequality (2.4 each). With regard to NEETs, the related need score is also rather high in absolute terms (2.0) but otherwise relatively low (rank 4), reflecting Austria’s good performance in the 2015 SJI, where it also comes in 4th regarding the number of NEETs.

Activity The overall activity in this dimension is 52 percent, ranking Austria 5th out of 18 countries. Looking at the four policy objectives, activity rates do not differ that much, as they are between 43 and 63 percent, putting Austria between rank 3 (integration of foreign-born population) and rank 11 (income inequality). With regard to the latter objective, some experts report that there is a small tax reform for labour incomes. Measures aimed at ensuring gender equality are the expansion of institutional child care, the introduction of a law governing sexual offences, and making the child allowance more flexible. With regard to integration policies, the experts report that “several measures have been introduced to help refugees to be able to find a job”, such as language courses and skill evaluations at the public employment service.

Quality The quality scores differ strongly with regard to Social Cohesion. While the experts expect the initiatives in tackling income inequality (0.40) and gender inequality (0.75) as well as preventing early school leaving (1.0, rank 1) to have (slightly) positive effects, they think the measures concerning integration policies will worsen the situation (-0.47).

With regard to gender equality, one expert explains that the “reforms will contribute to the redistribution of paid labour and unpaid care work and to the work-life balance. They will improve the career prospects of women and enrich fatherhood.”³

Some experts recommend changing income distribution as a way of tackling income inequalities, for example, with the help of taxes on capital, wealth and inheritance. One expert explains: “There is a serious gap in gender-re-

³ Max Preglau, Department of Sociology, University of Innsbruck

lated income inequalities, and the same goes for nationals/non-nationals. My main point would be more equal opportunities on the labour market (fight against precarious, atypical and half-time jobs) etc.”

With regard to integration policies, the experts are quite critical. One explains that “the government was in a first phase open to a fair policy. But, under the pressure of a successful right-wing party, the government turned around 180 degrees.”⁴ Other experts think that “these reforms have been mainly restrictive for newcomers and asylum-seekers” or “the measures taken often seem to be much more a punishment than supportive.”

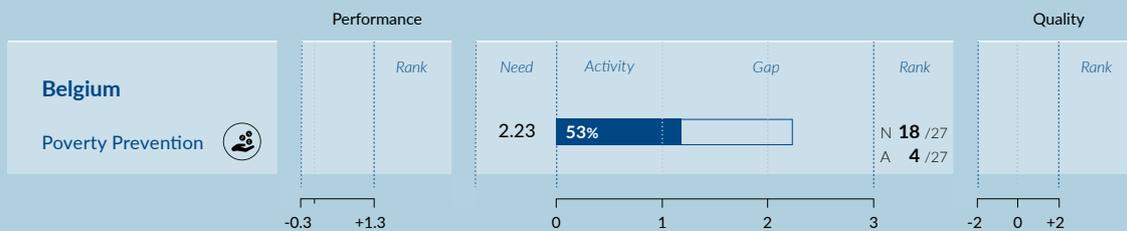
⁴ Paul M. Zulehner, University of Vienna

Findings by Country



Belgium

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The experts see an urgent need to reduce poverty among single parents (2.57), refugees (2.54) and the foreign-born population in general (2.64). The need to combat poverty among the total population (1.93) and senior citizens (1.54) is assessed as being significantly lower.

Activity The experts saw the highest reform activity directed towards reducing poverty among seniors (83%), even though this is a non-urgent need. Two-thirds of the reform need to improve the situation for single parents has been addressed by relevant government action, whereas only one-third of the need for policy reforms regarding refugees and the foreign-born population has been tackled.

Quality The experts expect the reforms concerning poverty among senior citizens to have slightly positive effects (0.66). One expert explains: “Owing to the welfare adjustments of the pensions and of the social assistance allowance for the elderly, their real disposable income has increased.”

Looking at government strategy, one expert states that it “can be generally described as a conservative-liberal agenda: cut taxes and cut government expenses (including social expenditure) in order to create jobs in the private sector. This should lead to less unemployment and poverty as ‘derived’ effects. Rather than strengthening social protection, access to benefits has been restricted (mainly in unemployment insurance). Modest increases in benefits have been offset by price increases.”

 Labour Market Access

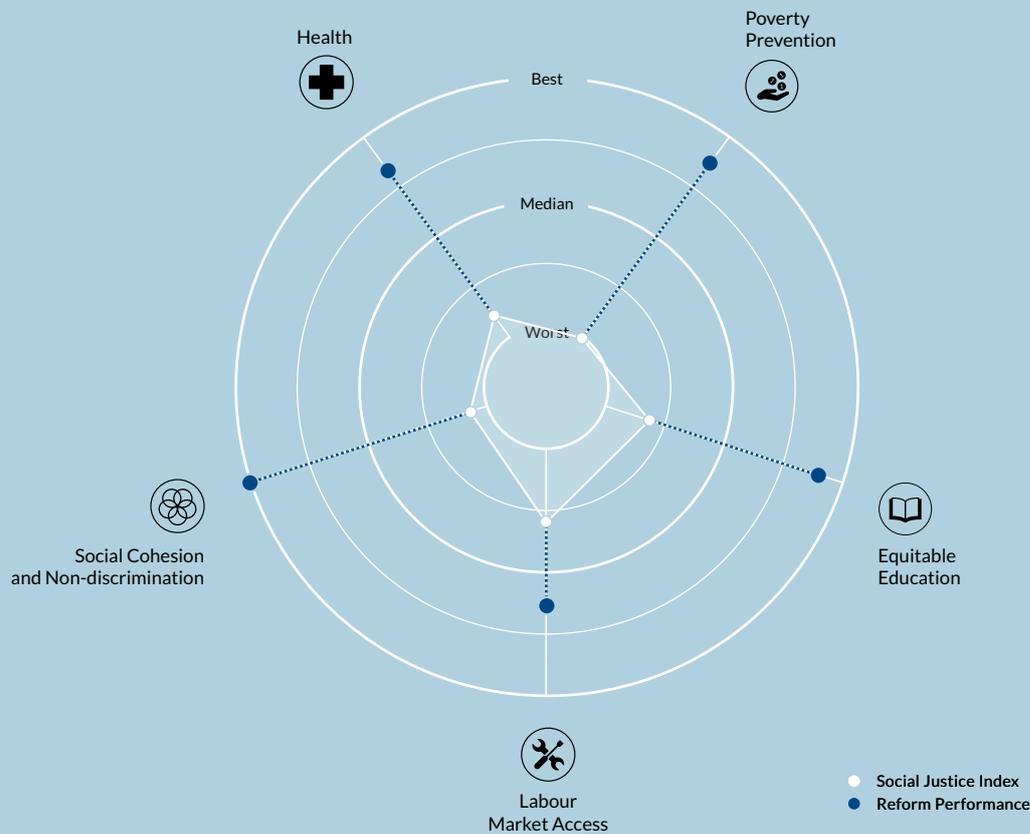
Need The experts see an urgent need to improve Labour Market Access in Belgium (2.69). As in most other EU countries, this need to improve access for the total population (2.25) is assessed as being significantly lower than it is for the specific subgroups of the labour market, such as senior citizens and young people (3.0 each), the long-term unemployed (2.75), the low-skilled (2.75), refugees (2.75) and the foreign-born population in general (3.0).

Activity According to the experts, the activity undertaken with regard to specific subgroups of the labour market differs strongly. While 100 percent see relevant reform activities to improve labour market chances for the elderly and young people, no expert reported initiatives to improve the situation for refugees or the foreign-born population in general. Two out of three experts reported activities to reduce long-term unemployment.

Findings by Country


Bulgaria

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need The experts assess the overall need for social reforms in Bulgaria to be the second-highest in Europe; only in Greece is the need higher. This clearly reflects Bulgaria's poor performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country comes in third to last, ranking in the bottom five on the dimensions Health (25), Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (26) and Poverty Prevention, where Bulgaria ranks last.

The most urgent reform need is seen in the Health dimension (2.53, rank 16/20), first of all in order to improve public health (2.9) and health system efficiency (2.9) and to safeguard a sustainable and fair financing of the health system (2.8). A strong reform need is furthermore seen to reduce poverty (2.44, rank 27/27), especially among senior citizens (2.96), children (2.67) and single parents (2.63). In the other dimensions, the need is only slightly lower, with scores around 2.3. In these dimensions, the main pressing issues are: improving structural conditions in the education system (2.61); improving the quality of teaching (2.64); improving labour market access for young people (2.77) and the long-term unemployed/low-skilled (2.69 each); and reducing the number of early school leavers (2.67) and NEETs (3.0).

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Activity According to the experts, 60 percent of the overall reform need in Bulgaria has been addressed (rank 2/23); only in Luxembourg is this rate higher (65%). The country shows activity rates above 50 percent in all dimensions and therefore belongs to the five most active countries in four dimensions (Health, Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education and Social Cohesion). The highest activity rate can be found in the Health dimension (78%, rank 3/20). In the other four dimensions, the activity rates range between 51 and 59 percent.

Looking at the major pressing challenges, the experts reported quite high activity rates for nearly all of them: 83 percent of the reform need to improve Labour Market Access for young people has been addressed. For the long-term unemployed (89%) and low-skilled people (94%), activity rates are assessed as being even higher. Quite high activity rates are also reported with regard to early school leavers (79%) and NEETs (75%). In the Health dimension, between 82 and 100 percent of the reform need has been tackled in order to improve public health/health system efficiency and to safeguard a sustainable and fair financing of the health system. In the Poverty dimension, as well, the reported activity rates are quite high. According to the experts, 70 percent of the reform need to reduce poverty among senior citizens

and children has been addressed by the Bulgarian government. For single parents, this rate was significantly lower (50%).

Quality The overall quality score of 0.88 (rank 3/20) shows that the experts expect the reforms initiated so far to have quite positive effects on social inclusion in Bulgaria. Looking at the dimensions, the best quality is seen in the areas Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (1.06, rank 1/12), Equitable Education (0.95, rank 5/21) and Poverty Prevention (1.03, rank 8/24). In the dimensions Health (0.80, rank 6/19) and Labour Market Access (0.62, rank 8/17), the expected effects are lower but still positive.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need Not only for the total population (2.5), but also for specific societal sub-groups – such as seniors (2.96), children (2.67) and single parents (2.63) – the experts see a strong or even very strong need to reduce poverty. This is hardly surprising, as an alarming 48 percent of Bulgarians are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (EU average: 28%), ranking the country last in the 2015 SJI. For children (51.5%) and seniors (57.6%), the poverty rates are even higher.

Some experts claim that the at-risk-of-poverty rate does not adequately reflect the rate in the country, as absolute poverty is higher than relative poverty. As one expert puts it: “The at-risk-of-poverty rate – equivalent to 60 percent of the national median disposable income – does not reflect the poverty rates in the country due to the quite low average incomes. The rates of material deprivation depict more clearly the intensity and depth of poverty. First, there is a need to clearly define poverty on the basis of income necessary for survival. Then, policy actions have to be identified following this. Instead, the national anti-poverty strategy continues to be based on the politically preferable at-risk-of-poverty rate.”¹ Indeed, 33.1 percent of the total population in Bulgaria suffers from severe material deprivation. For children (38.4%) and seniors (40.3%), these rates are even higher, which puts Bulgaria at the bottom of the ranking in this respect in the 2015 SJI.

Activity The highest activity rates can be reported with regard to reducing poverty among children (70%) and senior citizens (69%). For the total population (61%) and single parents (50%), the observed rates were slightly lower. In contrast, only 30 percent of the need to reduce poverty among refugees have been addressed.

Though the activity rates are quite high, the experts complain that “policy measures are extremely fragmented – they have to do with some symbolic increase in pensions, including social pensions; some uncertain steps with regard to taxation; some small increase in care for children etc.”, and they recommend a comprehensive and integrated approach to reduce poverty for the most vulnerable groups. As one expert explains: “For many years now, there has been a need for a general revision of the social protection system, which has not happened in the last six to seven years. The system was to a large extent ‘frozen’ since the start of the global crisis in 2008/2009. Little has been done since then to provide the necessary social security for the most vulnerable during these hard times.”

¹ Maria Jeliaskova, Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

Quality The experts expect the implemented reforms to have quite positive effects for the total population, children, seniors and single parents, as the respective quality scores are between 1.0 and 1.16. For refugees, the reform quality is assessed as being significantly lower (0.21).

Looking at the written answers, the experts are more or less sceptical that the changes put in place will reduce poverty significantly. As one writes: “Although there have been increases in social payments, they are far below the necessary means for normal consumption of basic goods.”

Another expert remarks: “The reforms are not successful because they do not address the poverty generators. The poverty rates in Bulgaria are not natural phenomena; they are generated by two types of policies:

- a) those of distribution – inadequate levels of salaries and wages. They are inadequate even if we have in mind labour productivity (around 45 percent of EU average) while minimum salaries are around 20 percent of average EU minimum salaries and the average salaries in the country are around 10 percent of the average EU salaries. The distorted level of salaries results in very low incomes of all work-related incomes [and] social benefits.
- b) distorted taxation policy – very high share of indirect taxes; regressive tax wedge etc.”²

Another expert describes the situation as follows: “The first and the most important reform should be to introduce adequate minimum standards in order to improve the effectiveness of social transfers and services in reducing poverty and social exclusion. These social standards should be elaborated jointly by policymakers, academia and NGOs, and should be made mandatory (through changes in the relevant legislation).”

Equitable Education

Need Looking at the policy objectives in this dimension, the experts see a strong need to improve the structural conditions of the education system regarding financial and human resources (2.61), especially at the level of pre-primary education (3.0) and primary education (2.83). Similarly high need rates are seen with regard to improving the quality of teaching (2.64), to reducing the number of early school leavers (2.67) and to safeguarding independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background (2.5). Concerning the latter aspect, Bulgaria ranks second to last in the 2015 SJI. Only a small need for improvement is seen with regard to ensuring equal opportunities in the education system (1.38).

Activity The activity rate in the education area is 51 percent; only three countries were more active than Bulgaria in this respect. Looking at the policy objectives embraced, the related activity rates differ quite strongly. While 79 percent of the need to reduce the number of early school leavers and 75 percent of the need to improve the quality of teaching have been addressed, this rate was only 17 percent regarding the issue ‘safeguard independence between socioeconomic background and learning success. Forty-six percent re-

² Maria Jeliazkova, Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

ported relevant initiatives aimed at improving the structural conditions in the education system.

Quality The activity rate aimed at improving the structural conditions in the education system is 46 percent. With regard to the first issue, the experts especially expect the policies aiming at improving structural conditions at the primary-education stage to have strong positive effects (1.67, rank 1/17).

Labour Market Access

Need As in many other countries, the experts see an urgent need to improve Labour Market Access for specific subgroups, such as young people (2.77), the long-term unemployed and the low-skilled (2.69 each).

A similarly strong need is seen in order to tackle in-work poverty (2.42). One expert described the situation as follows: “One of the main problems is not unemployment, but the ‘working poor’; the salaries and/or pensions are insufficient and not enough to cover often even basic needs of the population.”

Activity The highest activity rates undertaken to raise employment levels can be stated for the low-skilled and the long-term unemployed (94 and 89%, respectively). The activity rate to increase job chances for young people is also high (83%), as there were measures undertaken to facilitate the transition to work by stimulating cooperation between education and business in addition to the introduction of concrete dual education programmes, which were implemented in 2015 with the new education legislation.

One expert reports: “An individual action plan is made for every registered unemployed young person on the day of registration with the labour office. The individual plan contains a profile of the young person, according to which are determined his training needs, employment opportunities, barriers for his entry to the labour market and others.”³ Another expert reports: “There have been attempts to introduce dual education since 2014, and some concrete programmes were implemented in 2015 with the New Law on Education.”

However, no relevant activities were seen to improve job opportunities for refugees, while the rate is slightly higher (26%) for the foreign-born population. With regard to in-work poverty, 68 percent of the reform need has been addressed by government actions, such as a slight increase in minimum income levels.

Quality Looking at the individual policy objectives, the expected effects of the reform initiatives differ strongly. While the initiatives to tackle long-term/low-skilled unemployment (both about 0.7) and to address youth unemployment (1.2, rank 3/17) are expected to have quite positive effects, the measures to tackle in-work poverty are expected to worsen the situation slightly (-0.09, rank 12/14). One expert said that labour market chances for young people cannot be improved significantly because “there is not enough economic growth and quality work to be offered to the young.”

With regard to in-work poverty, the experts report a slight increase in the

³ Iskren Angelov, Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Sofia

minimum wage, but “the low-wage level is still drastically low and will not remove the risk of poverty”, according to one expert.

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The highest needs for reform seen in this dimension are to reduce income inequality (2.4), cut the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (3.0) and improve the integration of refugees into society (2.33). This clearly reflects Bulgaria’s poor performance in this dimension in the 2015 SJI, where the country ranks third to last.

Activity While the activity rate in tackling income inequality is seen as being 59 percent, 75 percent of the reform need to reduce the number of NEETs has been addressed. With regard to the integration of refugees, the activity rate was significantly lower (38%).

Quality The reform activities aiming at a reduction of NEETs are expected to have quite positive effects (1.0, rank 1/11).

Health

Need As Bulgaria ranks 25th in the 2015 SJI in this dimension, it is no surprise that the experts see strong or even very strong needs for all policy objectives. The highest need is seen as being improving public health in general (2.91), improving health system efficiency (2.86), providing for a sustainable and fair financing of the health system (2.83) and improving the quality of health care (2.63).

Activity According to the experts, Bulgaria has been very active in improving its health system. All experts say there were relevant actions to improve public health in general. The activity rates to improve health system efficiency and to nurture sustainable and fair financing of the health system were also very high (82% each). With regard to the quality of health care, 63 percent of the reform need has been tackled.

In autumn 2015, the Bulgarian Parliament adopted a ‘National Health Strategy 2014–2020’, which includes a program for the development of e-health in Bulgaria, changes in the law on health establishments, new regulations for the structure of regional public health inspectorates, a new law on a public health tax, and new regulations for studying patient satisfaction with medical activities.⁴

As one expert explains, one concrete measure was the “introduction of the National Health Map as an instrument for defining needs of the population for quality and accessible out-patient and in-patient care. Based on the health maps, the National Health Insurance Fund can selectively sign contracts with health care providers using defined criteria.”⁵ In addition, the expert continues, “in October 2015, the Ministry of Health announced a draft

⁴ Klara Dokova, Medical University Varna

⁵ Antoniya Dimova, Department of Health Economics and Management, Medical University Varna

law on a public health tax. Foods and drinks containing salt, sugar, trans fats, caffeine and taurine should be taxed above the pre-defined quantity. The main goal of the law is to improve population health by nudging dietary habits and limiting the production of unhealthy food, thereby saving health expenditure in the long-term.”

Quality The experts expect the reforms to have positive effects, as the quality scores for the four above-mentioned policy objectives are between 0.8 and 1.21.

On the one hand, the experts assess the new health strategy as being a step in the right direction, as it “addresses public health problems in a systematic and comprehensive way.” On the other hand, the experts lament that public health is still “underfinanced and underestimated by the health politicians.” One expert says: “Shifting the focus from curative to preventive medicine is one of the solutions to reduce the ever-growing expenditures for drugs and medical services in the long run. Elaboration of national preventive programmes and ensuring the financing would help achieve tangible results in that area.”

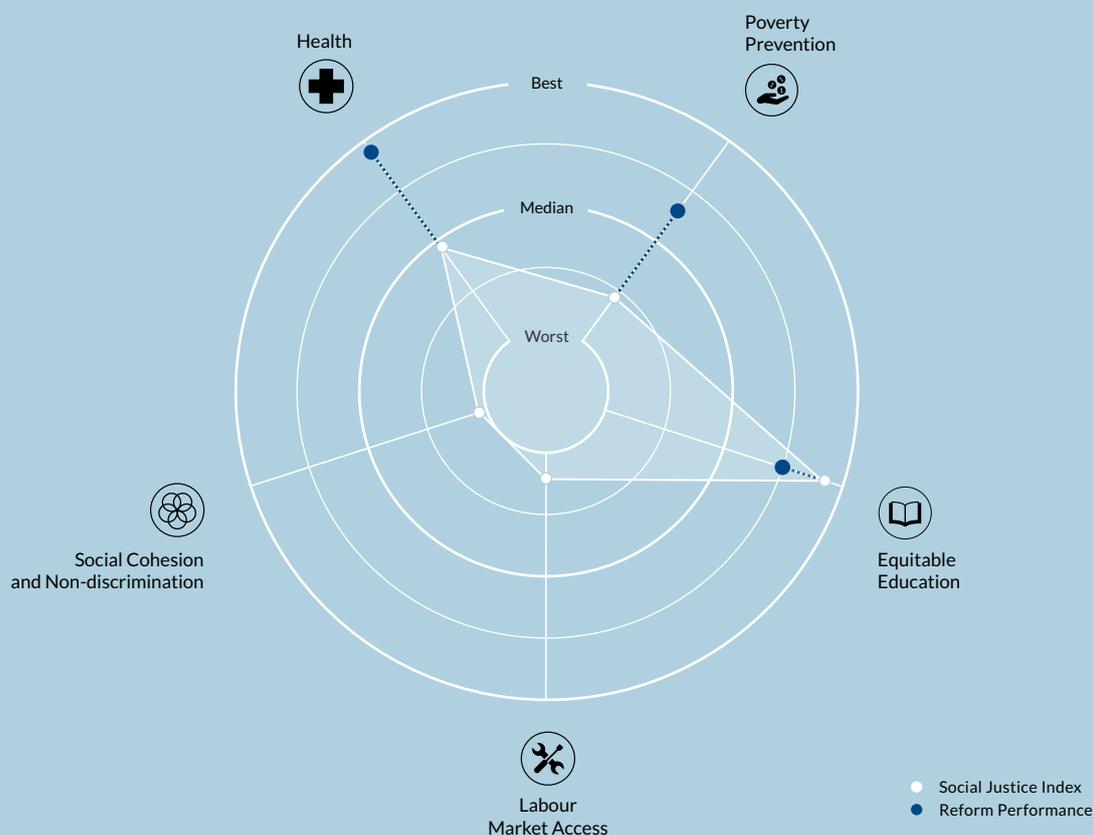
Another expert is optimistic that “the optimization of the expenditures would reduce the deficit of the Health Insurance Fund, [that] the improvement of the quality of care and reduction of under-the-table payments will increase taxpayers’ trust in the system, and [that this] will reflect positively on solidarity.”

Findings by Country



Croatia

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

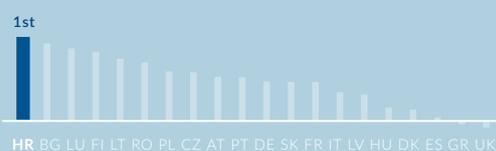
Need Though Croatia ranks 22nd in the 2015 Social Justice Index, the experts see a relatively low need for social reforms (2.06, rank 8/23), which is even slightly lower than the EU median (2.18).

Quite pressing reform needs are seen in the Health dimension (2.23, rank 9) and in the Poverty dimension (2.22, rank 17). Unsurprisingly, the experts see a rather low need to safeguard Equitable Education (1.74, rank 6), as Croatia ranks 3rd in the Social Justice Index's education dimension. Looking at the related policy objectives, the most pressing issues for the Croatian government are to:

- reduce poverty among seniors (2.63), single parents (2.5) and children (2.44)
- improve public health (2.57)
- safeguard independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (2.75)

While the first two issues are unsurprising, an urgent need of 2.75 to ensure educational mobility is somewhat surprising, as Croatia ranks 7th in this regard in the 2015 Social Justice Index.

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Activity The experts say that 56 percent of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in Croatia has been addressed, ranking the country 3rd in this regard – behind the leaders in this respect, Luxembourg (65%) and Bulgaria (60%). The highest activity rate in Croatia can be reported in the Health dimension (83%, rank 2/20). The biggest reform gap is assessed in the Education dimension (36%, rank 10/22). With regard to Poverty, the related activity rate is slightly higher (46%, rank 11/27).

Looking at the main pressing challenges mentioned above, the activity rate differs strongly: While 100 percent of the experts reported there was government action to improve public health, none said there were any initiatives to safeguard social mobility in the education system. The activity rates aimed at reducing poverty are between 41 percent (children) and 67 percent (single parents).

Quality An overall quality score of 1.02 (rank 1/20) shows that the experts expect the introduced reforms to have a positive effect on social inclusion in Croatia. Looking at the individual dimensions, the reforms related to Health (1.14, rank 3/19) and Poverty reduction (0.79, rank 13/24) are both expected to have positive effects.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need In Croatia, as in other EU member states, some population groups are more likely to become income poor than others. Thus, it is no surprise that the experts saw an urgent need to combat poverty among senior citizens (2.63), single parents (2.5) and children (2.44).

Activity Looking at these specific subgroups, the experts said that the activity rate to reduce poverty among single parents was 67 percent, while this rate was significantly lower with regard to seniors (49%) and children (41%). With regard to poverty among refugees, the activity rate was very low (10%), though the need was assessed relatively high (2.0). Some experts report on a Social Welfare Act introduced in 2013: “The aim of this Act is to direct monetary payments to the most vulnerable socially deprived citizens through the introduction of a guaranteed minimum benefit (GMB), consolidating the four former social benefits.”

Quality The initiatives to improve the situation for single parents and children are expected to have quite positive effects, as scores of 1.06 (children) and 1.0 (single parents) show. The respective quality score for the activities aimed at reducing poverty among senior citizens is significantly lower (0.62) but still positive. One expert explains why he is not satisfied with benefits for families and veterans: “These programmes are either means-tested (excludes non-taxable incomes and assets) or are categorical and act discriminatorily compared to means-tested benefits for the vulnerable and poor (like GMB).”¹ Another expert complains about missing pressure for politicians to really take care of the most vulnerable groups: “There is too much political compromise or accountability to special interest groups with political power and voting capacity, while the groups at real risk of poverty are neglected because they have no social and political bargaining power.”² Another expert claims: “Generally, more resources should be found for poverty alleviation and for well-targeted policies for the most vulnerable groups. Currently, substantial resources are distributed as category benefits which are often not reaching the poor.”³



Equitable Education

Need The highest need in this dimension is seen as safeguarding independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background (2.75). This is somewhat surprising, as Croatia ranks 7th in this regard in the 2015 Social Justice Index. Furthermore, the experts see a more or less urgent need to ensure equal opportunities in the education system (2.25) and to improve the structural conditions regarding finances and human resources (2.25). A low need (1.0) is only seen for reducing the number of early school leavers, which is not surprising as Croatia ranks 1st in this regard in the 2015 Social Justice Index. For a better integration of refugees in the education system, the experts see practically no need at all (0.33).

¹ Sanja Madzarevic Sujster, World Bank Office, Zagreb

² Stjepan Oreskovic, University of Zagreb

³ Daniel Nestić, Institute of Economics, Zagreb

Activity Looking at the policy objectives, the related activity rates differ strongly. While 84 percent of the reform need to ensure equal opportunities in the education system has been addressed, the activity rate aiming at improving the structural conditions regarding finances and human resources was extremely low (7%). No expert could report initiatives to safeguard social mobility in the education system. On the other hand, the activity rate to improve the quality of teaching is 90 percent, though the respective need was only modest (1.85).

One expert reports: “In February 2015, the Croatian government began the realisation of a new Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (2014) by forming an expert group on curriculum reform. The reform includes all [levels] of the educational system up to tertiary education, and is aiming at deep changes in the structure and content of pre-tertiary education. In September 2015, the national expert group for enhancement of the social dimension in higher education was formed, also following the Strategy’s aims and goals.” Another expert reports a more concrete reform with regard to higher education funding: “Whereas, prior to 2013, the funding system was based on input factors, such as number of staff and students, over the last two years it has changed to an output-based system. Higher education institutions have to choose several goals they plan to achieve over the three-year funding period. From an equal-opportunities perspective, their choices include ensuring access to higher education for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and students with disabilities, as well as mature students (first enrolment above the age of 25).”

Health

Need Looking at the policy objectives embraced, the experts see a more or less urgent need for reforms in all of them, as no policy objective shows a need lower than 2.0. The highest needs are measured with regard to improving public health (2.57) and caring for a sustainable and fair financing of the health system (2.4). As one expert explains: “[The] majority of publicly-sourced finance comes from the mandatory health insurance system, but with lowering rates of employment, the health system needs an extra-large amount of public money from the state budget.”

Activity According to the experts, 100 percent of the reform need to improve public health has been tackled. Also for most of the other policy objectives, the reported activity rates are quite high, as between 69 and 79 percent of the reform need to improve health care governance, to improve the quality of health care, and to ensure a sustainable and fair financing of the health system has been addressed by the Bulgarian government. With regard to health system efficiency, the activity rate is significantly lower (36%). One expert reports: “There are a lot of health policies in the area of prevention for sustaining public health, such as no smoking campaigns or public invitations for checking blood pressure, early diagnosis of various cancers and so forth.”

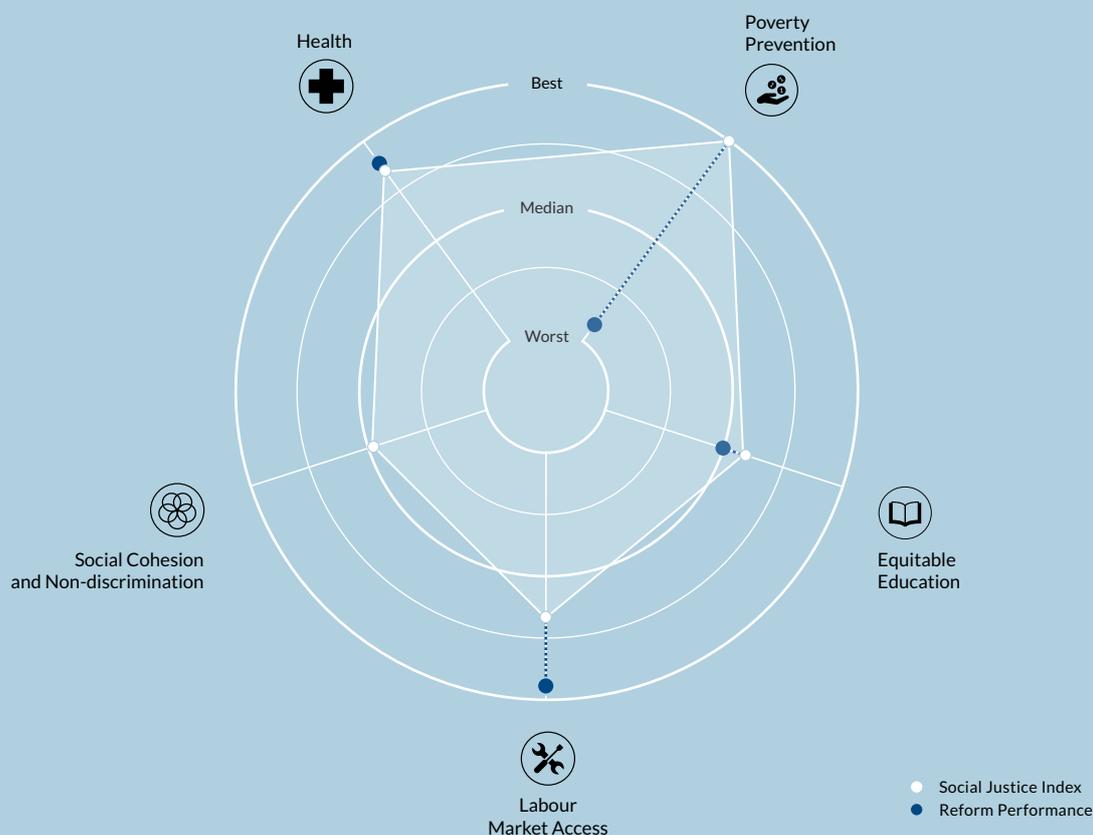
Quality The experts expect the reforms aiming at a sustainable and fair financing of the health system to have strong positive effects (1.37, rank 3/13). The respective reform quality with regard to improving public health (0.83, rank 8/19) and to improving health care quality (0.58, rank 14/19) is assessed as lower.

Findings by Country



Czech Republic

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need The Czech Republic ranks a respectable 5th in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI). Thus, it comes as no surprise that the experts see a relatively low need for social reforms (1.64, rank 2/23). Looking at the dimensions of Social Inclusion, all need scores are below 2.0. Within the six dimensions, the highest need is seen in Health (1.84, rank 4), Labour Market Access (1.82, rank 3) and Poverty Prevention (1.74, rank 4). With regard to Education (1.5, rank 2) and Social Cohesion (1.28, rank 1), the assessed needs for reform are even lower. The latter results are, however, somewhat surprising given the country's performance in the 2015 SJI, where the Czech Republic ranks 15th in the Social Cohesion dimension and 12th in the Education dimension.

Looking at the relevant policy objectives, the main pressing issues for the Czech government are to:

- tackle poverty among single parents (2.77)
- improve public health (2.43) and health system efficiency (2.4)
- improve labour market access for the long-term unemployed (2.25) and low-skilled people (2.38)

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- safeguard independence of children's learning success from their socioeconomic background (2.25)

Activity The experts say that 46 percent of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in the Czech Republic has been addressed (rank 11/23), which is exactly the EU median. The highest activity rate can be discerned in the Health dimension (70%, rank 7/20). The biggest reform gap is perceived in the dimension related to Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, where only 23 percent of the reform need has been tackled (rank 16/18). With regard to Equitable Education, the activity rate was 33 percent (rank 13/23), whereas in the dimensions of Poverty Prevention and Labour Market Access, activity rates were around 50 percent, ranking the country 10th in both dimensions.

Looking at the main pressing challenges mentioned above, the related activity rates are fairly disappointing. Admittedly, at least 59 percent of the reform need to improve public health has been addressed. But, for the policy objectives 'safeguard independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background', 'reduce poverty among single parents' and 'improve labour market access for low-skilled people', activity rates are only about 33 percent. The activity rate aimed at improving job opportunities for the long-term unemployed was even lower (19%).

Quality The experts assessed the overall reform quality positively (0.71, rank 9/20) and slightly above the average quality in the EU (0.69). This shows that the experts expect the reforms introduced to have a (slightly) positive effect on social inclusion in the Czech Republic. Looking at the dimensions, the assessed reform quality differs strongly. The reforms related to Labour Market Access (1.19, rank 1/17) and Health (1.00, rank 4/19) are expected to have quite positive effects. In the Education dimension, the assessed quality is significantly lower (0.47, rank 14/21), whereas the activities designed to reduce Poverty are expected to have very slightly negative effects (-0.09, rank 24).

Dimension Findings

Poverty Prevention

Need According to the experts, the need to tackle poverty in the Czech Republic is lower than in most other EU countries (1.74, rank 4). This is no surprise, as the country ranks 1st in the 2015 SJI's Poverty dimension. Looking at specific societal subgroups, the need seen by the experts differs strongly. An urgent need is seen to reduce poverty among single parents (2.77). Also for seniors (2.08) and children (2.0), the experts see a rather pressing need, though the country ranks 3rd and 4th, respectively, in this regard in the 2015 SJI. For the total population, refugees and foreign-born people in general, the experts report a rather low need to improve the situation.

Activity Looking at these specific subgroups, the activity rates differ quite strongly. The highest rate was identified with regard to poverty among senior citizens (85%). The respective activity rates for the other groups were significantly lower, at 56 percent (children) and 39 percent (single parents). The experts observed increases in the minimum wage and pensions. Meanwhile, another expert reports that "basically the benefit cap for non-permanent housing was introduced. This was very harmful, mainly for families with children housed in substandard homes. Single parents who do not receive alimony from their partner do not need to wait for the court decision, but receive full minimum-income benefits also during the court deliberations."

Quality The experts expect the reforms to have positive effects on the total population (1.0) but (very) slightly negative effects on the social situation of seniors (-0.25), children (-0.14) and single parents (-0.07). With regard to refugees, the experts think the reforms will significantly worsen the situation (-1.29).

Equitable Education

Need As the Czech Republic ranks 24th with regard to social mobility in education in the SJI, it is no surprise that the experts see the highest need in this dimension to be in weakening the link between children's socioeconomic background and learning success (2.25). For the policy objectives 'ensure equal opportunities', 'improve structural conditions' and 'improve the quality of teaching', the need is modest, with scores between 1.67 and 1.83. With regard to the latter objective, it differs quite strongly between the stages of education. While the need to improve the quality of teaching at the secondary stage is assessed as quite pressing (2.4), the need at the early-childhood stage is rather low (1.2).

Activity The experts say that 65 percent of the need to ensure equal opportunities have been addressed. For the other policy objectives ‘safeguard educational mobility’ (37%), ‘improve the quality of teaching’ (34%) and ‘improve the structural conditions’ (24%), the activity rates are much lower.

✖ Labour Market Access

Need As in most other EU countries, the need to improve Labour Market Access for the total population is quite low (1.13), while the experts see a rather urgent need for specific subgroups of the labour market, such as the low-skilled (2.38), the long-term unemployed (2.25), young people (2.0) and women (2.0). As regards reducing in-work poverty, the experts reported a rather high need for reform (2.0).

Activity With regard to the improvement of labour market access for the specific subgroups, all activity rates are below 50 percent. One expert reports on the introduction of ‘short-time working’, writing: “The amendment to the Employment Act was adopted in August 2015 and came into force in October 2015. Permission at the time of partial unemployment (Kurzarbeit) motivates employers in times of economic crisis or a natural disaster not to lay off employees and employ them part-time. Employees receive at least 70 percent of wages, of which employers pay 50 percent [and] the state pays the remaining 20 percent (from the state budget).”¹

Looking at the specific subgroups, the highest activity rate can be stated for women (44%) and low-skilled people (32%), including some measures of Active Labour Market Policies. For the other groups, rates are lower (between 19 and 23%). On the other hand, the activity rate in tackling in-work poverty was very high (86%). All experts report there was a significant increase in the minimum wage, from 8,500 CZK in 2015 to 9,900 CZK.

Quality The initiatives undertaken to raise the employment level of women are expected to have (very) positive effects (1.38, rank 1/16), which gives hope that the country can improve its poor position (24th) in the SJI in this regard. Despite this, some experts recommend expanding child care facilities so as to increase employment chances for women. The activities aimed at reducing in-work poverty are assessed quite positively (1.17), as the increase in the minimum wage is likely to help the working poor, while some experts recommend a further increase in it.

⊕ Health

Need The need score of 1.84 is the highest of all five dimensions. On the other hand, the score is still relatively low compared to other countries (rank 4/20). This comes as no surprise, as the Czech Republic ranks a respectable 5th in the SJI’s Health dimension. But, looking at the eight policy objectives, the reform need differs quite strongly. The experts see a more or less pressing need to improve public health (2.43) and health care efficiency (2.40), to provide for a sustainable and fair financing of the health system (2.0), and to address unmet needs for medical help (2.0). For the other four policy objectives, the need scores are rather modest (between 1.2 and 1.75).

¹ Magdalena Kotýnková, University of Economics, Prague

Activity The activity rates concerning the four pressing issues are quite promising, as they are between 59 percent (improve public health) and even 100 percent (improve health care efficiency). One expert reports that most of the co-payments for patients that had been introduced/increased in 2008 have subsequently been cancelled, writing: “In October 2014, the Czech Parliament passed [an] amendment of the Public Health Insurance Act repealing most regulatory fees. From the beginning of 2015, only 90 CZK per visit in emergency care units is paid out of pocket. All other regulatory fees were definitively cancelled. Hospital co-payment was cancelled even earlier (from the beginning of 2014), as [the] Constitutional Court considered it socially insensitive.” Another expert observed a “Health 2020 National Strategy for health protection and promotion and disease prevention approved by the government in 2014” and “20 national action plans for [the] implementation of the National Strategy approved by the government in 2015”.² With regard to health system efficiency, the experts observed that “health insurance payment by [the] state for economically inactive citizens has been slightly increased”, and that “starting [in] 2016, public procurement on health devices would be made publicly available.”

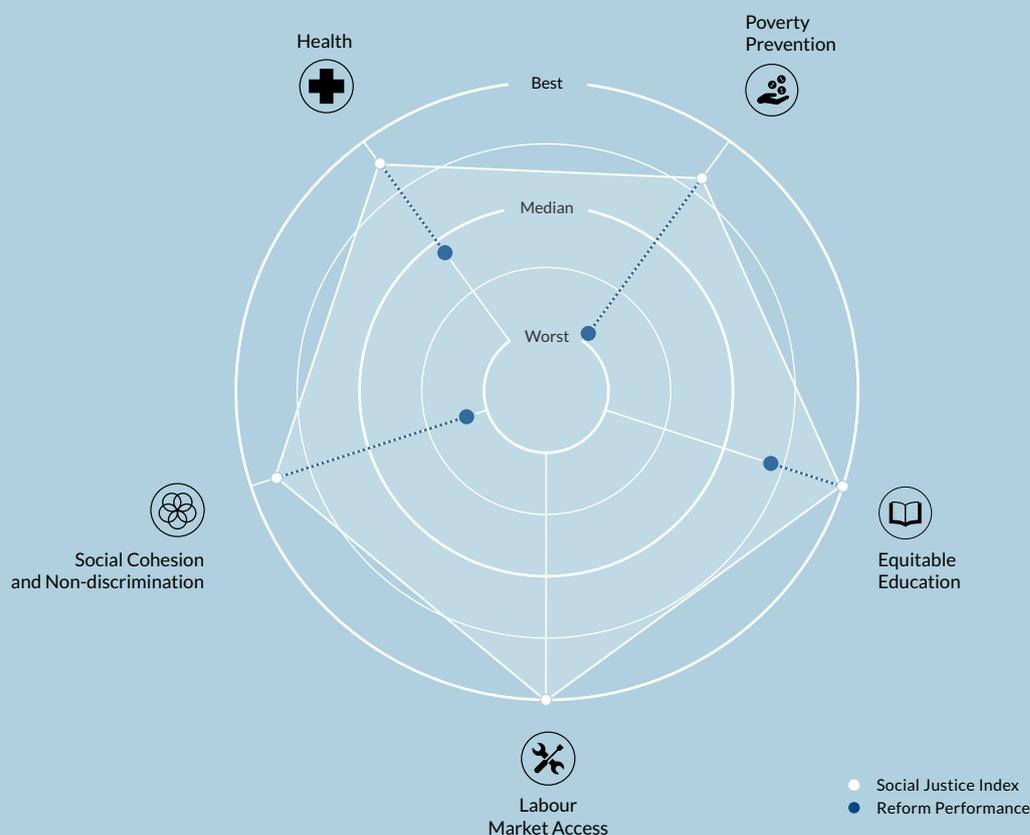
Quality The experts expect the reforms to have quite positive effects, as the overall quality score in the Health dimension is 1.0 (rank 4/19). This is also true for the policy objectives ‘quality of healthcare’, ‘health care efficiency’ and ‘unmet needs for medical help’ (1.0 each). The effects on health care access (0.5) and public health (0.4) are assessed less positively; on the other hand, the experts think the reforms will lead to a fairer and more sustainable financing of the health care system (2.0).

2 Marie Nejedla, The National Institute of Public Health, Prague

Findings by Country

Denmark

How does the country rank in the EU?



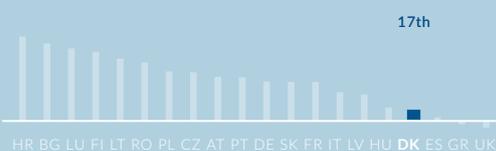
Overall Findings

Need The overall need to improve social inclusion in Denmark is the lowest across Europe (1.55, rank 1/23). This clearly reflects Denmark's outstanding performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index, where the country ranks 2nd in five of the six dimensions. Looking at the different categories of social inclusion, only in the dimension Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination do the experts see a rather pressing need for reforms (2.16, rank 10), whereas in the other dimensions, the need is only modest and far below the EU median.

Still, looking at the individual policy objectives, the experts see a strong or even very strong need for improvement for some of them. With regard to Poverty Prevention, this applies to refugees (2.18) and the foreign-born population in general (2.0). In the Education dimension, the experts see a more or less pressing need to improve the integration of refugees (2.38), to reduce the number of early school leavers (2.0) and to safeguard independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (2.0), where Denmark ranks 20th.

With regard to improving Labour Market Access, the experts see an urgent need to improve job chances for the foreign-born population (2.89) and

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



for refugees (2.67), with a relatively high need for the ‘usual suspects’, such as young people (2.22), low-skilled people (2.22) and the long-term unemployed (2.0). Bearing these results in mind, it is no surprise that – with regard to social cohesion – the experts see a pressing need to improve integration policies for refugees and the foreign-born population in general (2.6). Furthermore, the experts would like to see government action aimed at tackling income inequality (2.2) and reducing the number of NEETs (2.33).

Activity According to the experts, 45 percent of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in Denmark has been addressed (rank 13/23). With regard to the dimensions Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination, and Health, all activity rates are between 41 and 58 percent, whereas in the Poverty dimension, only 26 percent of the identified reform need has been met.

Looking at the most pressing policy objectives, the respective activity rates for most of them are relatively high or even very high. Between 71 and 87 percent of the reform need to raise employment levels for the above-mentioned ‘problem groups’ has been addressed. A high activity rate was also

reported with regard to the policy objective ‘improve the integration of refugees in the education system’ (81%). However, very little has been done to reduce poverty among refugees (33%) and the foreign-born population in general (22%). With regard to income inequality, only 10 percent of the reform need has been tackled.

Quality The experts assessed the overall reform quality as slightly positive (0.17, rank 17/20) but significantly worse than the median quality in the EU (0.69). Looking at the dimensions, the reform quality differs strongly. With regard to Education (0.54, rank 12/21) and Health (0.55, rank 12/19), the experts expect the initiated reforms to have positive effects, whereas for the dimensions of Social Cohesion (-0.29, rank 11/12) and Poverty Prevention (-0.35, rank 24/24), the experts expect the reforms to worsen the situation slightly. Especially the measures concerning the integration of refugees and the foreign-born population into society as a whole are expected to have quite negative effects (-0.77/-0.93). On the other hand, the activities aimed at improving Labour Market Access for these groups are rated as having quite positive effects (1.2/1.0).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need Denmark has the second-lowest need (1.38) for Poverty Prevention in the EU. The experts reported a very low need to reduce poverty among the total population (0.55), with a low need as well for most of the specific societal subgroups. Only with reducing poverty among refugees (2.18) and the foreign-born population (2.0) do they see a quite pressing need to improve the situation.

Activity Looking at the latter groups, the activity rates are quite disappointing, with 33 percent for refugees and 22 percent for the foreign-born population.

Quality The measures taken to reduce poverty are expected to have slightly negative effects on all of the examined subgroups of Danish society (quality scores between -0.23 and -0.59). Concerning refugees, the experts’ written answers provide some explanations for this rating. They report that there were “cuts in economic support and conditions to stay and get family members to Denmark”, “benefits were lowered” and “social assistance was reduced for newcomers, which might, ceteris paribus, increase poverty among immigrants and refugees.”

Another expert explains: “A residence requirement has also been reintroduced, and this mainly affects immigrants. If not satisfying the residence requirement, there is no eligibility for social assistance, but for a so-called start-aid, which is significantly lower than social assistance.” One expert reports that “the liberal government which took over in 2016 has introduced a so-called modern minimum income ceiling that reduces benefits for families the more children they have”, which “also affects many ethnic Danish families.”

Furthermore, he laments that “in general, minimum incomes and other public benefits have been reduced every year since 1992 compared to the de-

velopment in wages and prices by a so-called rate adjustment. Social benefits are seen, even in Denmark now, as expenditures, not as investment, even if the historical fact is that Denmark is among the richest societies. ”

One expert, who thinks the reforms will have positive effects, explains that “they are connecting social benefits with education (this goes for the general population on social transfers below the age of 30). There is an ongoing political dispute regarding whether the effect of lowering welfare benefits will induce work motivation. In my opinion it will, if it is part of a holistic approach towards persons being very far away from the labour market.”¹

Equitable Education

Need As Denmark ranks a clear first in this dimension in the 2015 Social Justice Index, the experts see only a low need to ensure equal opportunities (1.21), to improve the structural conditions regarding finances and human resources (1.29), and to improve the quality of teaching (1.15). On the other hand, they report a more or less strong need to better integrate refugees within the education system (2.38), to reduce the number of early school leavers (2.0), and to weaken the link between children’s socioeconomic background and learning success (2.0).

Activity Of the reform need to improve the integration of refugees, 81 percent has been addressed by the Danish government. For the policy objectives ‘reduce the number of early school leavers’ (48%) and ‘safeguard social mobility’ (57%), this rate was significantly lower. For the latter policy objective, and “to a certain degree for refugees”, one expert reports on a “reform of primary education in Denmark: New Nordic School introducing longer school days aimed at helping less advantaged children to manage academic demands during the school day and having all children be more physically active.” He or she thinks that this “to a certain degree addresses the question about independence of learning success and socioeconomic background by introducing longer school days, with teachers being available during the whole day with both lessons and help for children’s homework.” Another expert reports that “as part of the reform of primary education and a result of investigations, it was suggested that bi- and multilingual children should possibly follow normal teaching.”

Quality The measures aimed at improving social mobility in the education system are expected to have quite positive effects (1.11). On the other hand, the experts assume that the initiatives to improve the integration of refugees will not change the situation at all (0.0). One expert thinks there is a “lack of focus on these groups and a lack of knowledge among teachers within this area.” Another comment goes in the same direction: “Some of the bi- and multilingual children might need further support – in terms of language, culture and social relations – which has not been offered.”

¹ Sidse Thygesen, Think Tank DEA, Copenhagen

✳ Labour Market Access

Need The experts see a low need to reduce in-work poverty (1.33) and a very low need to tackle precarious employment and/or temporary contracts on an involuntarily basis (0.5). With regards to the policy objective ‘increase employment’, the need differs strongly when looking at the specific subgroups of the labour market. For the total population (1.56), senior citizens (1.44) and women (1.44), the need is relatively low. On the other hand, the experts see an urgent need to improve job prospects for the foreign-born population (2.89) and for refugees (2.67), and they see a relatively high need for the ‘usual suspects’, such as young people (2.22), the low-skilled (2.22) and the long-term unemployed (2.0).

Activity Looking at these groups with a high or even very high need, between 71 and 87 percent of the reform need has been addressed to improve the situation. One expert reports that there were “numerous changes in labour market policy (activation) and the unemployment insurance scheme. A shortening of the duration of unemployment benefits from four to two years (and tighter eligibility conditions) have been very controversial, and there has been a number of ad hoc measures to mitigate the effects.”

Quality The measures aimed at improving job opportunities for the above-mentioned groups (young people, long-term unemployed, low skilled, refugees and foreign born population) are expected to have quite positive effects, with scores between 0.77 (low-skilled people) and 1.2 (refugees). On the other hand, the experts think the reforms will have slightly negative effects on the job chances for women (-0.17). One expert thinks that success “depends on the economic conditions. The reformed system is fine, but jobs still need to be there.” Another one thinks the possibility to “work at a wage somewhat lower than the relatively high general Danish wage level is likely to increase employment prospects for refugees.”

⊗ Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need Though Denmark ranks a respectable 4th in this dimension in the Social Justice Index, the experts see a rather high need for improvement regarding the policy objectives of integrating refugees and the foreign-born population into society in general (2.6), reducing the number of NEETs (2.3) and tackling income inequality (2.2). With regard to gender equality, the need is only modest (1.5).

Activity According to the experts’ assessment, the activity rates in this dimension differ strongly. While about 60 percent of the reform need concerning the objectives ‘better integration of refugees/foreign-born population’ and ‘reduce the number of NEETs’ has been addressed, the activity rate to tackle income inequality was extremely low (10%). With regard to the latter aspect, one expert complains that “despite growing inequality, more is done to give the rich tax breaks and the poor a tougher time ‘in order to prepare them for the labour market’. Refugees are the worst off.” With regard to NEETs, one expert reports that “the social assistance scheme has been changed for young people (now defined as up to the age of 30), stressing the need to undertake education.”

Quality The measures aimed at reducing the number of NEETs are expected to have slightly positive effects (0.29). On the other hand, the experts think that the activities aimed at improving the integration of refugees (-0.77) and the foreign-born population (-0.93) will have quite negative effects. As one expert explains: “There were a number of reforms limiting rights of refugees and foreign-born populations. The aim of the reforms has been to prevent more refugees from coming to Denmark and, thus, not really to promote social cohesion and non-discrimination. One example is Bill No. L87 adopted by the Parliament on 26 January 2016, which includes the right to family reunification only after three years in Denmark and confiscation of valuables of entering asylum-seekers.” Another one argues: “More targeted programmes are needed to increase integration into society of people with an immigrant background. Especially housing policies, educational policies and a strengthening of general social programmes are needed.”

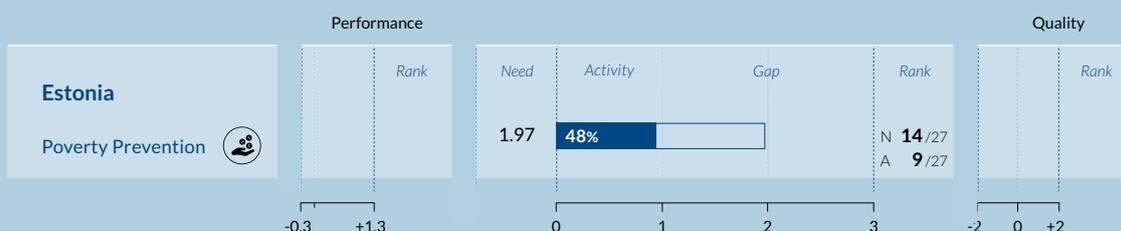
In order to reduce the number of NEETs, one expert thinks that “it would be highly relevant to increase subsidies for private companies that provide apprenticeships, as there is a strong need for skilled labour and a need for better incentives for companies to provide apprenticeships in these fields. The market does not adequately provide for this.”

Findings by Country



Estonia

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need As in most other EU countries, the experts see a rather low need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.25), but a very urgent need to tackle poverty among specific societal subgroups, such as single parents (3.0), children (2.75) and senior citizens (2.5). The need to improve the situation for the foreign-born population is assessed as being modest (1.67), while tackling poverty among refugees is seen by the experts as a very low need (0.67).

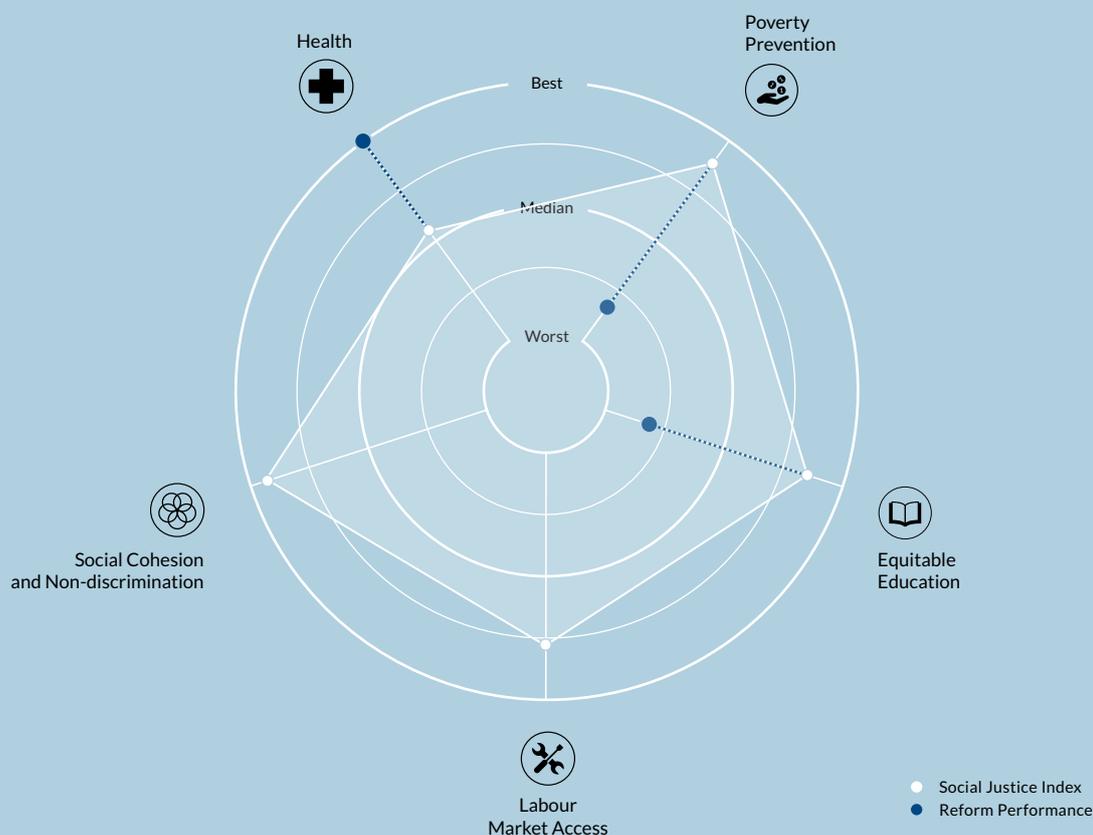
Activity The experts report that 67 percent of the need to tackle child poverty has been addressed. For refugees (50%) and the foreign-born population in general (58%), the activity rates were lower. With regard to poverty among single parents, only one-third of the reform need has been tackled. Concerning poverty among senior citizens, the activity rate was 40 percent. One expert reports that “the amounts of universal child benefit and means-tested family benefit have been increased three times [since] 1 January 2015. In the formula for calculating the means-tested family benefit, the child coefficient has been increased to 1 (previously 0.8). The step-by-step lowering of basic income tax is going on (in 2015, from 21 to 20 percent), with the simultaneous increase in tax-deductible income.” Another expert reports that “in case of retired people, the indexing of pensions increases the levels that support the population at an advanced age.”

Findings by Country



Finland

How does the country rank in the EU?

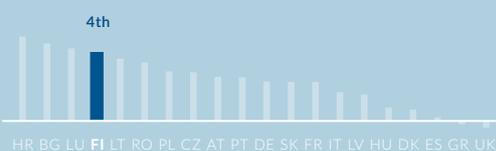


Overall Findings

Need The overall need to improve social inclusion in Finland is the 6th lowest across Europe (1.89). This clearly reflects Finland's respectable performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country ranks 3rd among the top five countries in four of the six dimensions. Looking at the different categories of social inclusion, the experts see a relatively low need to improve Poverty Prevention (1.74, rank 5/27) and to safeguard Equitable Education (1.57, rank 3/22). The need to improve Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination is slightly higher (1.98) but still relatively low, as there are only three countries for which the experts see an even lower need for improvement. On the other hand, they see a high need to improve the health system (2.28, rank 12/20) and to increase employment levels (2.3, rank 15/19).

Looking at the individual policy objectives, the picture becomes more differentiated. Especially in the dimension of Labour Market Access, the experts see a very urgent need to improve job opportunities for young people (3.0), refugees (2.67) and the foreign-born population in general (3.0). Equally, they would like to see government action to improve the integration of ref-

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



ugees into the society (2.5). Furthermore, they are not at all satisfied with the outcome performance of the health system, as the need score of 3.0 underlines.

Activity According to the experts, 47 percent of the overall reform need in Finland has been addressed (rank 10/23). Looking at the most pressing dimensions, the reported activity rates differ strongly. While 85 percent of the reform need to improve the health system has been met (rank 1/20), the reported activity rate in increasing employment levels is only 11 percent (rank 22). Equally, the dimensions Poverty Prevention (24%, rank 23/27) and Equitable Education (20%, rank 15/22) reveal government activity at a very low level. For Social Cohesion, the activity rate is 44 percent (rank 8/18).

With regard to the main pressing challenges mentioned above, the relevant activity rates are (very) disappointing on the whole. As for Labour Market Access, the experts report there are no relevant activities at all to improve job prospects for the long-term unemployed, refugees and the foreign-born population in general. The activity rate concerning youth unemployment is

also very low (25%), as is the rate for improving the integration of refugees within society (20%). In contrast, the experts report that a major reform of the health system is underway, and that it aims at addressing all policy objectives in the Health dimension.

Quality The overall quality score of 1.01 (rank 2/20) shows that the experts expect the reforms initiated so far to have quite positive effects on social inclusion in Finland. While the reforms aimed at improving the Health system are expected to have strong positive effects (1.34, rank 1/19), those aimed at reducing Poverty are expected to have only slightly positive effects (0.21, rank 21/24). With regard to Education, the experts think the reforms will not change anything at all (0.0).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need According to the experts, the need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.25) is much lower than for specific societal subgroups. A more pressing need is seen in reducing poverty among single parents (2.19) and refugees (2.08). For children (1.69) and senior citizens (1.5), the need for reforms is modest.

Activity The activity rates concerning the most pressing issues of Poverty Prevention are pretty well disappointing, at just 34 percent (single parents) and 17 percent (refugees). In terms of reducing poverty among the foreign-born population, there is reportedly no activity at all.



Equitable Education

Need Here, the experts see a rather modest need for government action (1.57, rank 3/22). This reflects Finland's good performance in the 2015 SJI, where the country comes in 5th in the Education dimension. Exceptions can be seen with regard to 'safeguarding equal opportunities' at the level of early childhood (2.09) and tertiary education (2.0), 'improving structural conditions regarding finances and human resources' in tertiary education (2.0), and 'improving integration of refugees in the education system' (2.2).

Activity Regarding the above-mentioned challenges, the related activity rates are unpromising. The activity rate in ensuring equal opportunities within early childhood education is 27 percent, and in tertiary education 33 percent. With regard to early childhood education, one expert reports: "Fees will be increased and the right to full-time early childhood education (children under 7) will be cut to only 20 hours per week if one of the parents is at home on parental leave/child home care leave, unemployed or on disability pension. Many municipalities, such as Helsinki and some other big cities, have, however, decided that they will not follow these cuts."

Another expert reports: "While over 90 percent of children aged 6 had already been participating in preschool, in 2015, it was made mandatory to participate. This ensures that all municipalities are obligated to offer preschool education to children aged 6, and all children are obligated to attend."

No expert has seen government action to improve structural conditions within tertiary education. Rather many experts report that the government has (continued to) cut resources at all educational levels.

Quality The experts' written answers give an impression of what they think about the above-mentioned changes. With regard to early childhood education, one expert explains: "I think that making preschool compulsory for all is an important move towards more equality. The removal of the child's right to full-time early education (and basing it once again on the parents' employment status) is a move back 20 years into the past."

The cuts in funding are seen as critical for several reasons. One expert wrote: "Funding cuts in adult, tertiary and early education endanger equity." Another stated: "The financial decreases will have huge social costs in 20 years; the lack of education will be reflected in increased demand for unemployment benefits." And another criticised: "Our conditions in the educational sector were good until the 1990s – and got worse since then."¹

Labour Market Access

Need While the experts see a low need to increase employment levels among women (1.25) and senior citizens (1.25), they see a more or less urgent need to improve labour market access for the 'usual suspects', such as young people (3.0), the long-term unemployed (2.75), the foreign-born population (3.0) and refugees (2.67). The high need to reduce long-term unemployment is somewhat surprising, as Finland ranks 5th in the 2015 SJI in this regard.

Activity As for the policy objective 'increase employment/decrease unemployment', activity rates are extremely low. According to the experts, no reforms have been introduced to increase job chances for refugees, the foreign-born population and the long-term unemployed. For young people, this rate is only slightly higher (25%). One expert reports: "An attempt to increase youth employment was made with the Youth Guarantee Programme. This included various parts, such as officials that help find jobs for young, newly graduated people; benefits for employers if they employ someone in the Youth Guarantee scheme; and various intake-meetings to determine the need for further specific education."

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The overall need for improvement with regard to social cohesion is quite high in absolute terms (1.98) but quite low relatively, as there are only three countries in which the experts see a lower need for government action. This reflects Finland's good performance in the SJI, where the country ranks 3rd in this dimension. In contrast, the need scores for the individual policy objectives are not in line with the 2015 SJI results. While the experts report a rather mediocre need to reduce the number of NEETs (1.5, rank 10 in SJI), they see a significantly higher one to tackle income inequality (2.17, rank 6

¹ Arto Ahonen, University of Jyväskylä

in SJI), safeguard gender equality (2.0, rank 2 in SJI) and improve integration policies (rank 1 in SJI) concerning refugees (2.5) and the foreign-born population (2.0).

Activity The highest activity rates in this dimension can be observed with regard to the policy objectives ‘income equality’ (52%), gender equality (55%) and ‘integration of the foreign-born population’ (50%). On the other hand, those aimed at ‘reducing the number of NEETs’ (33%) and ‘integration of refugees’ (20%) are quite low.

With regard to income equality, one expert reports: “A new Non-discrimination Act came into force on 1 January 2015. The purpose of the act is to foster equality and prevent discrimination, as well as enhancing the legal protection of those who have been discriminated against. Authorities, education providers and employers now need to conduct an equality assessment in their organisations. What will be done with the assessments is another thing altogether. It remains to be seen to what extent equality will be actively promoted and victims of discrimination compensated.” Other experts report a reform concerning gender equality adopted at the end of 2014 “by adding more precise provisions on a form of equality planning, so-called pay mapping. Bigger companies must study pay structures to make certain there are no discriminatory elements in them.” Regarding integration policies, the experts report a reform of the Non-Discrimination Act (2014) that improved provisions on ethnic discrimination.

Quality On the integration of refugees, the experts are sceptical, as there are some negative comments. One expert writes: “The policy changes concerning asylum procedure have been negative rather than positive. The policies that are planned aim at more rapid procedures rather than a fairer process. The plans to introduce a lower level of social benefits for the refugees than for general citizens are negative changes of legislation.” Another complains: “The efforts are too weak. Access to language courses, to further education, to work are clearly not what they should be.” A third writes: “The policies aim at keeping refugees away from Finland rather than integrating those who receive residence permits.”

Health

Need Experts see the need for reforms as rather high with regard to all policy objectives in this dimension, as most need scores are about 2.0. A very urgent need is seen in improving the outcome performance of the health system (3.0). One expert explains: “The present organisation of health care is disjointed and inequitable, both socially and regionally. In Finland, primary care is the main problem, whereas the hospital sector functions fairly well. Still, an unequal regional distribution is a problem.”

Activity The experts report that a major reform which will address all policy objectives in this dimension is still ongoing. For this reason, all activity rates are very high, between 80 and even 100 percent. One expert explains: “The government has worked during the whole period on health and social care as well as local government/administration reforms. The objectives of the care reforms are related to improving access to services, a more equita-

ble system, integration of health and social services, sustainable funding etc. The previous government drafted a similar bill, but due to constitutional issues (independent position of the municipalities), the reform failed. The current government continues to prepare a reform with a somewhat different administrative structure based on autonomous counties as a new administrative level organising health and social services.”²

Quality The experts expect the above-mentioned reform to have strong positive effects, as the quality score in this dimension is 1.34, ranking Finland 1st among 19 countries. One expert explains: “If the reform in preparation is successful, the organisation of services would be based on larger administrative units, which may improve sustainability, leadership etc. The integration of services and reform of the funding system may also correct structural imbalances and irrational incentives in the system.” Another one writes: “This is a major reform which is badly needed. The reform as planned is huge, covering not only all activities in social and health services, but also in provincial administration.” One expert thinks the reform should go even further, stating: “Any reform that guarantees better and more just coverage will be an improvement. However, the basic problem of Finnish health care, i.e. an unequal distribution of health (bad situation of the poor and less educated, health problems in old age – we have too few healthy old people), gender differences (women live much longer than men) and problems caused by heavy alcohol use among men and old people are not sufficiently addressed in the reform.”

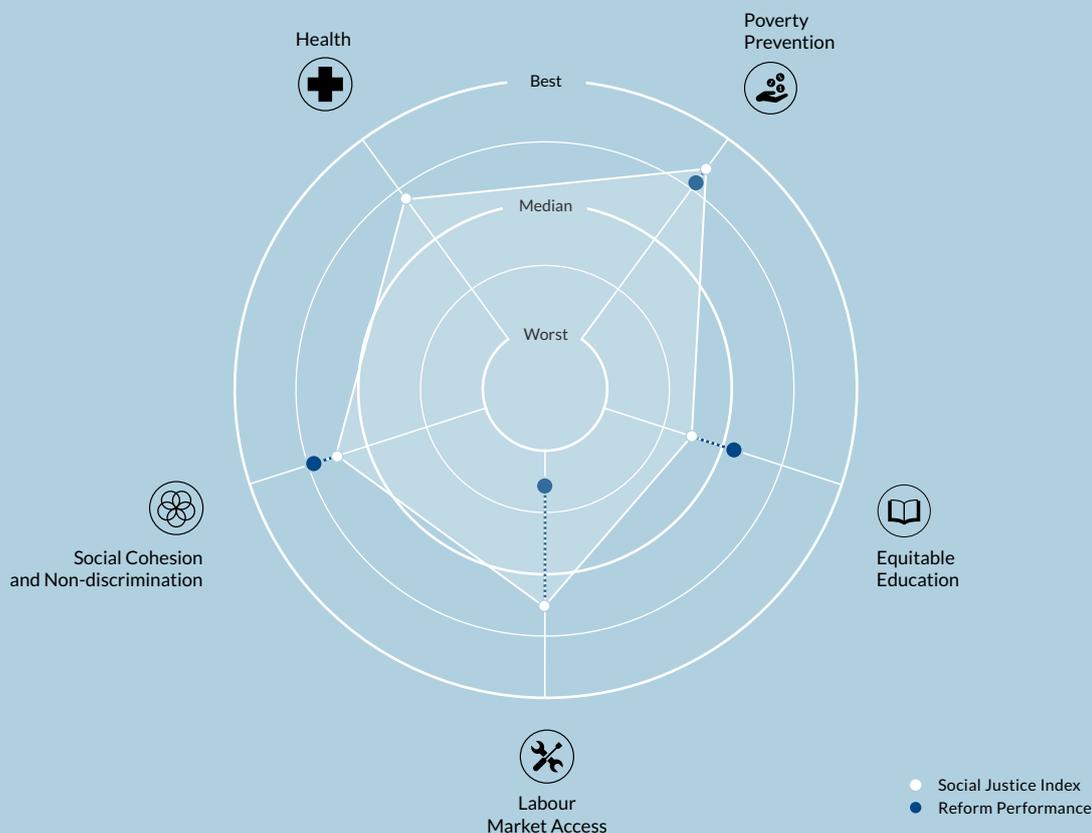
It is seen positively that the reform “aims to revise the (unequal) quality of primary care services. One of the main sources of inequality in the Finnish system is the division between occupational health services and primary care given by health centres. The quality itself does not differ too much; the main difference lies in the poor access to the latter that serves mainly the economically inactive population.”

² Ilmo Keskimäki, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, and University of Tampere

Findings by Country


France

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need According to the experts, the overall need to improve social inclusion in France is the 3rd highest; only in Bulgaria and Greece do the experts see an even stronger need to foster social inclusion. This is somewhat surprising as, after all, France ranks 12th in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI). Most pressing seems to be improving Social Cohesion, where the need for reforms is the highest among the countries examined (2.74, rank 18/18). Equally, in safeguarding Equitable Education (2.29, rank 17/22) and improving Labour Market Access (2.33, rank 11/19), the experts report a rather high need for government action. For Poverty Prevention, the need is slightly lower (1.95, rank 12/27), reflecting the country's good performance in the 2015 SJI, where France ranks 5th in that dimension.

Across all dimensions and policy objectives, the most pressing issues for the French government are to:

- safeguard independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (3.0, rank 26 in SJI)
- reduce the number of early school leavers (2.75)

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- improve job prospects for the long-term unemployed (2.88) and young people (2.75)
- tackle income inequality (2.75)
- improve integration policies for refugees (3.0) and the foreign-born population (2.75)
- reduce the number of NEETs (3.0)

Activity Overall, 42 percent of the reform need in France has been addressed (rank 17/23), which is slightly below the EU median (46%).

Looking at the dimensions, the experts report relatively high activity rates with regard to Poverty Prevention (60%, rank 3/27), Equitable Education (39%, rank 7/22) and Social Cohesion (46%, rank 7/18). Regarding Labour Market Access, the activity is much lower (24%), ranking France last of all in this respect (19/19).

With regard to the main pressing challenges mentioned above, the related activity rates differ strongly. The experts report high activity rates in safeguarding educational mobility (67%, rank 2), reducing the number of early

school leavers (64%, rank 3) and cutting the number of NEETs (75%, rank 3). The activities aimed at improving job prospects for the long-term unemployed (37%) and young people (39%) are mediocre in absolute terms but relatively low, as here France ranks 18th and 19th, respectively. Regarding integration policies, the experts have seen no activity at all in better integrating refugees; for the foreign-born population, the activity rate is also low (33%).

Quality The overall quality score of 0.63 (rank 13/20) suggests that the experts expect the initiated reforms to have slightly positive effects on social inclusion in France. This is also the case with regard to Poverty Prevention (0.73, rank 14/24) and Equitable Education (0.56, rank 10/21).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need As in most other countries, the need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.46) is much lower than for specific societal subgroups. A more pressing need is seen in reducing poverty among the foreign-born population (2.33) and refugees (2.38) as well as among children (2.15) and single parents (2.0).

Activity The related activity rates are (very) high both in absolute terms and compared to other countries, particularly with regard to child poverty (82%, rank 5), poverty among the foreign-born population (71%, rank 1) and poverty among refugees (66%, rank 2). On the other hand, the activity rate concerning poverty among single parents is quite low (36%). The experts report that a multi-year plan was adopted in 2013 to tackle poverty and foster social inclusion (Plan pluriannuel de lutte contre la pauvreté et pour l'inclusion sociale).

Quality The experts expect the measures aimed at reducing child poverty to have slightly positive effects (0.48). The activities designed to reduce poverty among refugees and the foreign-born population are assessed better, with a score of 1.0 for each. In absolute terms, this means that the experts think the reforms will have quite positive effects, but that they see some room for improvement. But compared to other countries, with a quality score of 1.0, France ranks 1st regarding poverty among the foreign-born population and 2nd with regard to poverty among refugees.



Equitable Education

Need The need score of 2.29 (rank 17) reflects France's performance in the 2015 SJI, where the country ranks 18th in the Education dimension. Looking at the policy objectives in this dimension, the experts see a rather mediocre need to improve the structural conditions regarding finances and human resources (1.77) and the quality of teaching (1.45). On the other hand, the need for government action concerning the policy objectives 'safeguard equal opportunities' (2.3), 'improve integration of refugees' (2.5), 'reduce the number of early school leavers' (2.75) and 'safeguard educational mobility' (3.0)

is (very) urgent. With regard to ‘equal opportunities’, the most pressing need is seen within primary education (2.67) and lifelong learning (2.67).

One expert thinks that “the French system is characterized by instability and by a constant flux of changes. However, most of these changes are piecemeal, incremental, partial and not always fully implemented, as the system is extremely centralized, controlled by the unions and partly dependent on the goodwill and support from local authorities, which are responsible for the funding of most non-core activities.”

Activity The activity rates with regard to the most pressing policy objectives differ greatly. While about two-thirds of the reform need in safeguarding educational mobility and reducing the number of early school leavers have been addressed, no expert has seen relevant government action to improve the integration of refugees within the education system. As for safeguarding equal opportunities, the related activity rate is mediocre (47%).

One expert reports that “budgetary efforts have been targeted towards early childhood but depend a lot on local governments and on the facilities they provide. Some effort (but rather marginal) is also being made towards ‘college education’ (11- to 15-years-old) within the framework of the 2015 reform and of the programmes designed to provide special support to suburban schools facing economic and social difficulties, in particular in relation to the integration of foreign or migrant families. Given the budgetary restrictions, not much money is available for the whole education system.”

Quality With regard to equal opportunities and early school leavers, the reforms are expected to have slightly positive effects (0.54 / 0.57), but experts are not satisfied. Many would like the education system to become more decentralised. One expert explains that “the adopted reforms are plagued by a certain number of ‘sacred cows’ which remain untouched and impede substantial change. These ‘fundamental principles’ include the complete centralisation of programmes with no margin of manoeuvre at local or school level and the de facto co-management of the entire system with powerful and conservative unions.”

With regard to educational mobility, one expert complains: “Educational reforms under the auspices of *égalité* are blind to major problems for young people from poorer social backgrounds or immigrants. The one-size-fits-all approach does not work.”¹

Labour Market Access

Need Experts see the need to increase employment levels as quite pressing (2.5, rank 18). This is especially true for specific subgroups, such as the long-term unemployed (2.88), young people (2.75), the low-skilled (2.63) and the foreign-born population (2.63). With regard to precarious employment (2.25) and in-work poverty (2.25), the need for government action is also quite high in absolute terms but relatively low (rank 9 and 8, respectively).

Activity The activity rate aimed at improving job prospects is very low (24%),

¹ Jake Murdoch, University of Burgundy, Dijon

ranking France last out of 19 countries. No activities at all are reported for tackling in-work poverty or at increasing labour market access for senior citizens, women, refugees and the foreign-born population. For the long-term unemployed, 37 percent of the reform need has been addressed; for young people, 39 percent. The highest activity rate is reported with regard to precarious employment (56%).

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The overall need for improvement in this dimension is the highest among the countries examined (2.74, rank 18/18). This is surprising, as France ranks 11th in the 2015 SJI Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination dimension. While the need to improve gender equality is somewhat lower (2.33), the experts see an urgent need to tackle income inequality (2.75), reduce the number of NEETs (3.0) and improve integration policies (2.88). With regard to the latter aspect, one expert explains: “Integration of migrants and refugees essentially rests upon the signature of a ‘reception and integration contract’, which is very insufficient in providing skills (especially language skills) and access to rights. Further, there is no specific assistance and follow-up for people with over 5 years’ residence. Migrants and refugees face numerous obstacles in their professional ‘insertion’. Many jobs are forbidden for foreign people. All these topics should be taken into account, but the social and political climate in France is very hostile to these groups.”²

Activity The activity rates in this dimension differ strongly. While that aimed at reducing the number of NEETs was 75 percent, only 17 percent of the reform need for improving integration policies has been addressed. The activity rates aimed at tackling income inequality (42%) and gender inequality (50%) are mediocre. With regard to the latter aspect, one expert reports that “the Act of 4 August 2014 increased the mandatory presence to 40 percent women on the board of directors of listed companies by 2017.” Another one explains that “parental leave has been reformed in order to reduce the average length of maternity leave and to encourage fathers’ involvement. A leave of absence for working partners of pregnant women has also been adopted. Family support allowance for single mothers is being gradually revised so as to increase it by 25 percent, excluding inflation, by 2018. Protection against unpaid maintenance allowances will be implemented from 1 April 2016 onwards.”³

² Thomas Kirszbaum, École normale supérieure de Cachan

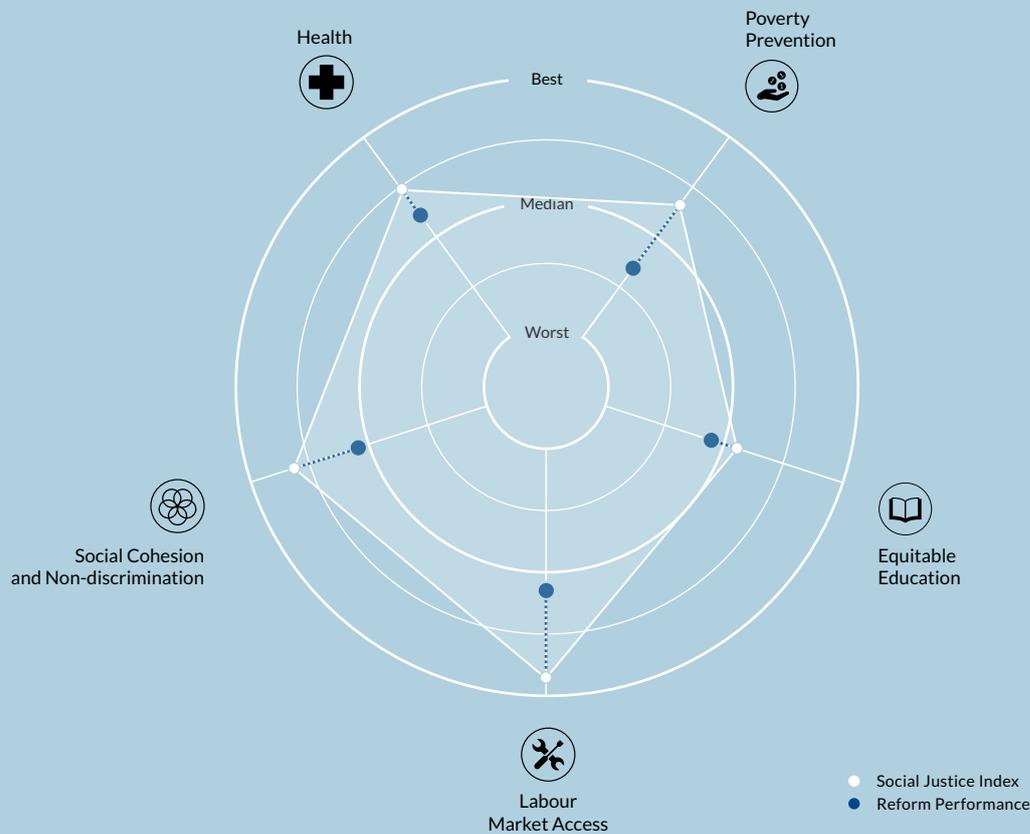
³ Thomas Kirszbaum, École normale supérieure de Cachan

Findings by Country



Germany

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Though Germany ranks a respectable 7th in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), the experts assess the need for social reforms in Germany as being as high as the EU median (2.18, rank 12/23).

The highest reform need is seen in the dimension of Labour Market Access (2.44, rank 14/19). This result is surprising, as Germany ranks 3rd in this dimension in the 2015 SJI. Nevertheless, the experts see a strong need to improve access for specific subgroups, particularly with regard to refugees (2.53) and long-term-unemployed (2.40), and to tackle precarious employment (2.71) as well as in-work-poverty (2.57). In the Education area, where Germany ranks 13th in the 2015 SJI, the experts see a similarly strong need for reforms (2.3, rank 18/22), especially in improving the integration of refugees within the education system and safeguarding independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (3.0 each).

Furthermore, the need to improve Social Cohesion is rated as quite high in Germany (2.22, rank 12/18), though it ranks 6th in the 2015 SJI. Looking at the relevant policy objectives in this dimension, the main pressing issues

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



for the German government are to address income inequality (2.56) and improve the integration of refugees within society in general (2.5). Interestingly, before the onset of the refugee crisis, Germany received the highest score of all EU countries for its integration policies in the SJI.

With regard to Poverty Prevention, the experts see a rather low need to improve the situation for the total population (1.24, rank 6/27) but a strong need to reduce poverty among refugees (2.28, rank 18/27) and single parents (2.15), though the latter need score is relatively low compared to other countries (rank 5/27).

Activity The experts say that only about one-third (35%) of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in Germany has been addressed (rank 20/23). This is far behind the leaders in this respect – Luxembourg (65%) and Bulgaria (60%) – and also behind the average activity rate in the EU (46%). Only Spain, Slovakia and Greece show lower activity rates than Germany. The highest activity rate in Germany can be discerned in the Health dimension (53%, rank 14/20). The biggest reform gap is seen in the Education dimension, where hardly one-fifth of the reform need has been met

(19%, rank 17/22). In the other three dimensions, the activity rate was between 33 and 38 percent.

Looking at the main pressing challenges mentioned above, the extent to which the reform need has been addressed is more or less disappointing. At least 55 percent of the reform need to improve the integration of refugees in the society in general has been met. In terms of tackling precarious employment and in-work poverty, 42 and 33 percent of the respective needs have been addressed. The fact that this is so despite the introduction of a statutory minimum wage at a quite low level might be a sign that the experts see the minimum wage as a necessary, but inadequate policy instrument. For the policy objectives 'safeguard independence of learning success from children's socio-economic background', 'improve labour market access for refugees' and 'address income inequality', the activity rates are about 25 percent. No expert said there were efforts to better integrate refugees within the education system.

Quality While the reform activity wasn't really high in Germany, the experts assessed the overall reform quality positively (0.76, rank 8/20) and slightly better than the average quality in the EU (0.69). This shows that the experts expect the reforms introduced to have a (slightly) positive effect on social inclusion in Germany. Looking at the dimensions, the best quality is seen in the areas Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (0.89, rank 4/12) and Labour Market Access (0.91, rank 3/17). In the Health (0.70, rank 7/19) and Poverty Prevention (0.49, rank 16/24) dimensions, the expected success of the initiated reforms is slightly lower.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need In Germany, as in other EU member states, some population groups are more likely to become income poor than others. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the experts saw a rather low need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.24) and a comparatively high need to reduce poverty among refugees (2.28, rank 18), the foreign-born population (2.04), single parents (2.15) and children (2.04). The need to reduce poverty among senior citizens is modest (1.69), but many experts expect poverty among older people in Germany to rise significantly in future.

Activity Looking at these specific subgroups, the related activity rates differ quite strongly. The highest activity rate was stated with regard to poverty among children (60%). The respective activity rates for the other groups were much lower, at 35 percent (single parents), 20 percent (refugees) and 12 percent (foreign-born population). The most relevant activity was the introduction of a statutory minimum hourly wage of €8.50, which is seen as a measure to reduce poverty among the total and/or working population. For specific subgroups, very few changes were introduced, including smaller increases in child benefits and increases in tax exemptions for single parents.

Quality For the total population, the experts expect the reforms to have only slightly positive effects (0.36). The respective reform quality for children, single parents and seniors is assessed a little better, with scores between 0.54 and 0.73. For refugees, the experts do not expect any improvement with

regard to poverty. One expert explains: “Due to a 2012 Constitutional Court ruling, the government had to increase benefits, which had been cut in 1993 and frozen ever since. The reform in March 2015 lifted the benefit level to almost the social assistance/unemployment benefit II level. However, as a reaction to populist politics in the wake of the refugee crisis in 2015, the government decided to cut back levels (and/or convert them to in-kind benefits) again in October.” Another expert thinks that the “benefit increase was positive, but cutbacks or transformation into in-kind benefits were a bureaucratic nightmare.”

To reduce poverty in Germany, most experts recommend implementing/raising minimum income levels (for the total population, children and seniors). One expert thinks: “One aspect of necessary reform activities regards the design of minimum income schemes since there is a significant problem of long-term benefit receipt that has been neglected by policymakers so far. In order to bring those beneficiaries closer to the labour market, a stronger link to social services (debt, drug & psycho-social counselling, child care) is necessary, which is mainly an organisational challenge. Moreover, receiving benefits should not be bound to certain conditions of conduct since sanctions have been proved to be ineffective and rather aggravate the risk of poverty.”

Equitable Education

Need As the link between students’ socioeconomic background and learning success is quite strong in Germany (rank 15 in 2015 SJI), all experts see a very strong need (3.0) to address this issue and increase educational mobility. The same urgent need is seen with regard to the integration of refugees within the education system. The reform need to improve the quality of teaching is only modest (1.65). The other three policy objectives (‘ensure equal opportunities’, ‘improve structural conditions’ and ‘reduce early school leavers’) show need rates around 2.0. Interestingly enough, the experts did not see big differences between the reform needs in individual sub-policy objectives (the different stages of education: early childhood, pre-primary etc.) The only exception can be discerned in terms of ‘structural conditions regarding finances and human resources’, where the reform need for early childhood education (2.4) is assessed as being much higher than for the secondary stage of education (1.6). The importance of improving the structural conditions in early childhood education reflects the fact that Germany lags behind many other EU countries in this regard.¹ Concerning educational mobility, one expert believes a change in thinking is necessary: “Education is generally not seen as social policy. This is wrong. The Bildungsideal [educational ideal] looms large. But it’s clear that middle-class kids will get their Bildung [education] anyway, so lots of resources are wasted on them instead of targeting the ones from poorer households, where returns on investment should be so much higher.” Another one recommends “to abandon the current school system with its division into several school types of different quality. A two-tier system would be ideal: Primary school up to the fourth class, and thereafter only comprehensive school from 5th to 12th (or 13th) class, in which children can attain different educational certificates.”

¹ See also the ‘Education’ chapter by Marius R. Busemeyer.

Activity Looking at the policy objectives, all activity rates are below 50 percent: ‘improve the quality of teaching’ (43%), ‘ensure equal opportunities’ (36%), ‘safeguard independence between socioeconomic background and success’ (25%) and ‘improve structural conditions’ (18%). There were no relevant reform activities to reduce the number of early school leavers or improve the integration of refugees within the education systems, according to all experts. Regarding the different stages of education, a political priority for reforms in early childhood education in Germany can be identified.²

✱ Labour Market Access

Need With high employment/low unemployment rates, Germany ranks a respectable 3rd in the 2015 SJI’s Labour Market dimension. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the need to improve access to the labour market for the total population is only mediocre (1.6), while the experts see a significantly more urgent need for specific subgroups within the labour market, such as refugees (2.5), the long-term unemployed (2.4), the low-skilled (2.3) and the foreign-born population (2.2).

An even higher need is seen for tackling precarious employment and in-work poverty (2.71/2.57). One expert describes the situation as follows: “Today, many people in Germany work a lot (in hours) and earn too little = in-work poverty. Many people have more than one job, and unemployment rates are very low. So, the problem – or the challenge – is not to increase employment, but to increase the value that people get from their employment.”

Activity Despite a relatively modest need, the highest activity rates in raising employment levels can be stated for the total population (76%), seniors (46%) and women (45%). In contrast, the activities to raise employment for the above-mentioned ‘problem groups’ have been quite low, with rates ranging between 12 and 33 percent. The activity rates to tackle in-work poverty (33%) and precarious employment (42%) were mediocre, with the implementation of a statutory minimum wage being the most relevant reform implemented in 2015.

Quality The experts expect the reforms implemented in this dimension to have positive effects on Labour Market Access (0.91, rank 3/17). However, with regard to the included policy objectives, the assessments differ strongly. While the measures aimed at improving labour market access are not expected to improve the situation at all (-0.01, rank 18/19), the initiatives to tackle precarious employment are assessed quite positively (1.38, rank 2/12). With regard to the minimum wage, one expert explains: “The minimum wage seems to have been successful so far at the atypical/low end of the labour market. It’s continuing success depends on the good governance of the wage level and the overall economic climate.” Another expert thinks: “I expect the effect to be indifferent. Low-wage earners may profit from a minimum wage. Since poverty refers to the household and not to the individual, in-work poverty may not necessarily be combatted by the introduction of a minimum wage since this depends on the household composition and the labour market positions of the household’s members.”

² See also the ‘Education’ chapter by Marius R. Busemeyer.

 Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The highest needs for reform in this dimension are seen in reducing income inequality (2.56) and improving integration policies for refugees (2.50). But equally for the other policy objectives of ‘reducing gender inequality’ and ‘reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)’, the experts see quite high reform needs (2.0).

Activity According to the experts’ assessments, the activity rates in this dimension differ strongly. While the rate in tackling gender inequality is seen as 100 percent, the experts cannot report any relevant reform initiatives to improve integration of the foreign-born population or reduce the number of NEETs. Relevant activities that have been noticed by the experts are the introduction of a women’s quota for the supervisory boards of companies on the DAX index and entitling parents with children aged one year or older to child care, a measure which increases the opportunity for women in particular to take part in the labour market. The activity rates related to the policy objectives ‘reduce income inequality’ (28%) and ‘improve integration of refugees’ (55%) are mediocre. With regard to the latter aspect, one expert reports on the asylum reform in the context of the refugee crisis and mentions the following targets and measures: accelerating the decision-making process and decreasing the number of refugees, having more employees for the immigration ministry, enforcing stricter rules (deterrence of further refugees) and discriminating between real refugees (from Iraq and Syria) and economic migrants (from North Africa). The expert explains that individuals in the latter category were declared to be refugees from ‘safe home countries’, which makes it nearly impossible for them to get asylum rights in Germany.

Another expert observed that “integration policies have been developed and implemented. These policies aim at the acquisition of language skills, housing, employment, health care and registration.”³

Quality The reform activities tackling gender inequality are assumed to have quite positive effects (1.0, rank 2/13). For the area ‘improving the integration of refugees’, the expected success is lower (0.59).

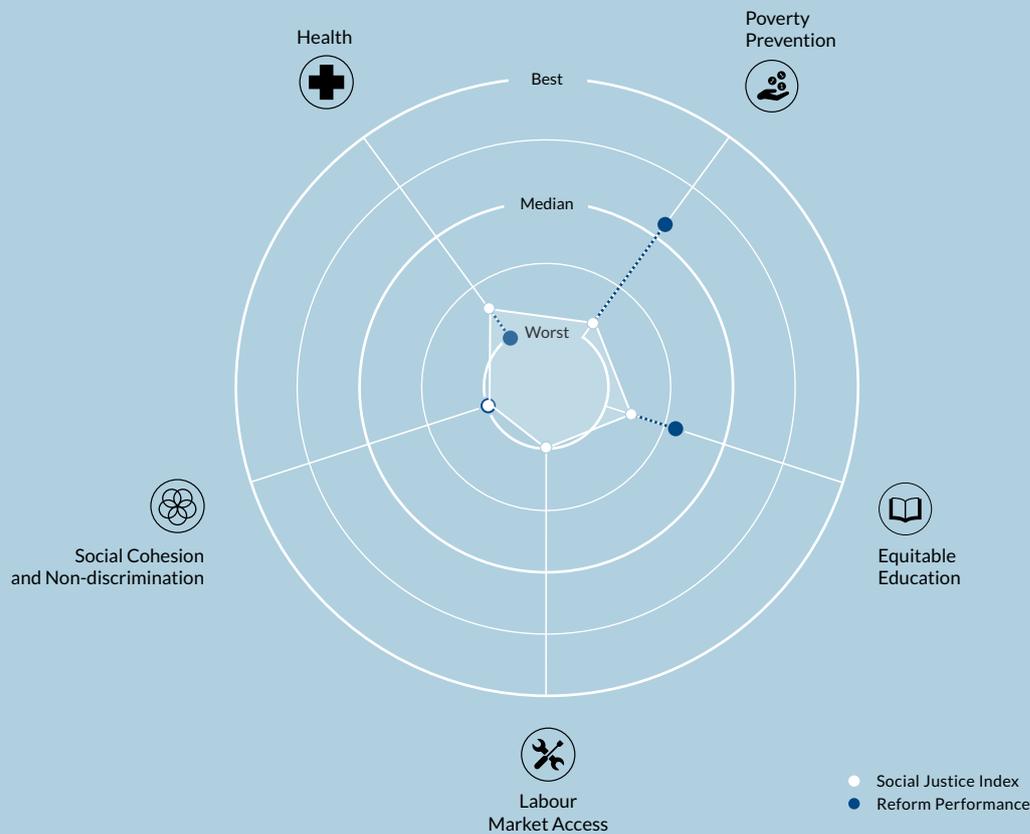
³ Sonja Zmerli, Sciences Po, Grenoble

Findings by Country



Greece

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need With an overall score of 2.39, Greece ranks very last out of the 23 EU countries examined regarding the need for social reforms. This clearly reflects Greece's poor performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country also ranks last of all, finding itself among the bottom five countries in all six dimensions. Looking at the categories, the experts see an urgent need to improve Labour Market Access (2.54, rank 16/19), to foster Social Cohesion (2.4, rank 15/18), to tackle Poverty (2.32, rank 23/27) and to improve the Health system (2.74, rank 19/20). The need to ensure Equitable Education is assessed as somewhat lower (1.98, rank 10/22), which does not reflect the country's performance in the SJI (rank 25 in the Education dimension).

Regarding all policy objectives, the most pressing challenges for the Greek government are to:

- increase employment levels, especially for the total population, young people and the long-term unemployed (3.0 each)

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- improve public health, health system efficiency, health care governance and accessibility (all 3.0)
- reduce income inequality (2.69) and the number of NEETs (2.71)

Activity According to the experts, 34 percent of the overall reform need has been addressed in improving social inclusion. This is below the EU median (46%), ranking the country 21st out of 23, far behind the leader (Luxembourg 65%). Looking at the individual dimensions, the activity rates differ quite strongly. A rather high rate can be seen in the Health dimension (73%, rank 5/20). With regard to Poverty Prevention (26%, rank 22/27), Labour Market Access (29%, rank 17/19) and Social Cohesion (23%, rank 18/19), activity rates are quite low in both absolute and relative terms. In the Education dimension, only 10 percent of the reform need has been addressed by the government, ranking Greece last of all in this respect.

When considering the most necessary reforms, the experts report high activity rates for most of them (between 64 and 100%). The observed activ-

ity rates are only significantly lower (about 35%) with regard to income inequality and the number of NEETs.

Quality Overall, the experts expect that the reforms initiated so far will very slightly worsen the situation (-0.04 , rank 19/20). Looking at the dimensions, the reform quality differs greatly. While the experts expect the activities concerning Poverty Prevention (1.11, rank 4/24) to have positive effects, they think the measures aimed at improving Health (-0.12 , rank 18/19) will (very) slightly worsen the situation.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need In contrast to most other countries, the experts not only see a need for reforms to reduce poverty among specific societal subgroups, such as children (2.58), refugees (2.58) and single parents (2.27), but also for the population in total (2.31.) This clearly reflects Greece's poor performance in the 2015 SJI, where the country comes in 26th for Poverty Prevention.

Activity The activity rate concerning poverty is rather low in both absolute and relative terms (26%, rank 22/27). Looking at the different societal subgroups, activity rates are (very) low with regard to foreign-born people (4%), refugees (19%) and senior citizens (19%). For the total population (44%, rank 16), young people (38%, rank 21) and single parents (28%, rank 19), activity rates are rather modest in absolute terms, but quite low compared to the other countries.

Some experts mention a humanitarian crisis law that includes food, rent and electricity subsidies. As one writes: "Even though Greece is still going through a very rough economic period, some measures have been adopted related to the cost of energy, social meals and tenants' rent support. These initiatives were not in fact policy reforms, but rather better-calibrated measures to reach those most in need. However, needs are much higher than current policy efforts."¹ Other experts report on the implementation of a guaranteed minimum income (GMI). One writes: "The programme ran for the total population, but since it was a pilot, it ran for specific geographic areas (13 municipalities, or one for each region in Greece). The aim of the programme was to tackle extreme poverty through an income transfer defined as the difference between actual household income and the guaranteed minimum income threshold as set for each specific household type. The programme has been amended and will run again [and have its] national roll-out in 2017." Furthermore, the experts observe the implementation of a "unified means-tested child benefit", "some cash benefits to single parents" and an "extension of unemployment benefits". With regard to senior citizens, some experts report that pensions have been cut.

Quality The overall reform quality in this dimension is 1.11 (rank 4/24), showing that the experts expect the reform initiatives to have positive effects. Looking at the subgroups of society, the same is true with regard to single

¹ Thomas Maloutas, Harokopio University, Athens

parents (1.0) and refugees (0.67). Concerning poverty among young people, the experts expect the reforms to have rather strong positive effects (1.54, rank 3), and think the measures will “lead to (relative) poverty alleviation”. One expert explains that “for the first time these policies are means-tested and thus will affect those who are truly poor.” Some experts are not completely satisfied, as they think that “the reforms were very limited, while the needs were already immense before the crisis.” Another expert explains: “[The] overall policy stance is not proactive [and] simply reacts to troika recommendations. When reforms are implemented, it is in a half-hearted way that does not guarantee the benefits will ever be drawn down.”² A third expert states: “Some limited policy initiatives in 2015 targeted groups below the poverty line, but they were far too small in scale. The continuing cuts in pensions, rises in taxation and especially the fees applied to own-account workers, as well as the deteriorating wage developments in the labour market, affected poverty (at least in its absolute sense) negatively.”

On the other hand, some experts think that the Greek government could not do any more for the poor owing to its “limited fiscal space”. Despite this, some experts recommend introducing a universal minimum income guarantee scheme or universal family benefits.

Equitable Education

Need The overall need in this dimension is 1.98 (rank 10/22), which does not really reflect Greece’s performance in the 2015 SJI, where it comes in 25th in the Education dimension. Looking at the policy objectives, the most pressing matter for the Greek government is to improve the quality of teaching (2.48, rank 20), structural conditions regarding finances and human resources (2.22, rank 16) and the integration of refugees in the education system (2.2). A pretty low need is seen in preventing early school leaving (1.2, rank 4). This is again surprising, as it does not reflect the country’s performance in the SJI (rank 16). One expert argues: “There is a need to move away from an extremely centralized educational system to one determined at a local and/or regional level.”

Activity The activity rate to improve structural conditions is extremely low (10%), ranking Greece very much in last place among the 22 countries examined. For the policy objectives ‘improve the quality of teaching’, ‘safeguard educational mobility’, ‘prevent early school leavers’ and ‘improve integration of refugees’, no expert reports any relevant reform initiative at all. With regard to the structural conditions, the related activity rate is only slightly higher (6%). In contrast, 61 percent of the reform need to ensure equal opportunities has been addressed, though the need is rather modest (1.75). One expert explains why government activity was quite low in this dimension, writing: “During the period in question, we have had three elections and thus three new ministers of education. Consequently, it is difficult to outline ‘new’ initiatives. The targets remain the inclusion of all children and the reduction of impediments to access.”

² Antigone Lyberaki, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens

Quality The experts expect the activities aimed at ensuring equal opportunities to have positive effects at the stages of tertiary education (0.63) and lifelong learning (0.57). On the other hand, they think these measures will slightly worsen the situation at the stage of secondary education (-0.11). With regard to the integration of refugees, one expert declares that “solutions to this are typically expensive, but involvement of NGOs already active in the field and integration into a wider inclusion programme would go a long way towards helping.”

✱ Labour Market Access

Need The overall need for reforms in the Labour Market dimension is very pressing (2.54, rank 16/19), which is not surprising, as Greece comes in last in the 2015 SJI Labour Market dimension. The experts see an urgent need to increase employment levels among the total population (3.0) and also among the specific subgroups of the labour market, such as young people (3.0), the long-term unemployed (3.0), low-skilled people (2.75) and women (2.69). Similarly, for the policy objectives ‘precarious employment’ (2.44) and ‘in-work poverty’ (2.44), the experts see a strong need for government action. With regard to precarious employment, one expert comments: “In 2011, the share of part-time and job rotation contracts of the total number of new appointments was 40 percent; in 2012, it increased to 45 percent; and it rose further in the following years. Also, since 2010, a significant number of full-time contracts have been converted into part-time or job rotation agreements each year. Uninsured labour has also increased.”

Activity According to the experts, 29 percent of the reform need has been addressed (rank 17/19). With regard to the policy objective ‘increase employment levels’, the activity rate in general is mediocre (50%), but it is significantly higher for the most pressing groups, such as young people (75%), the long-term unemployed (67%) and the total population (64%). For ‘precarious employment’ and ‘in-work poverty’, activity rates are quite low (14% each). One expert reports that “major reforms were introduced in early 2012. Legislation boosted flexible employment, facilitated redundancies and reformed the collective bargaining system. Reforms facilitated enterprise labour contracts and the individualization of employment conditions accompanied by reduced remuneration. The minimum monthly wage was cut by 22 percent by law in 2012, a sub-minimum wage was introduced for young people, and unemployment benefits were cut sharply. An extra benefit of €200 for the long-term unemployed has been introduced, but take-up has been very low, at 1.5 percent, due to highly restrictive eligibility criteria. For young workers (20–29 years) entering the labour market, there is only a meagre benefit of €73 for up to five months, provided that the young new entrants are registered as unemployed for 12 months.” With regard to in-work poverty, the same expert explains: “Legislation under the bailout deal facilitates the drawing up of employment agreements at the business level, even in very small enterprises and in the absence of enterprise-level unions. This effectively dismantled the regulatory framework of working conditions, in-

creasing flexibility to the detriment of security.”³ Concerning long-term unemployment, one expert reports on “partnerships between the central government and municipalities to integrate the long-term unemployed into the labour market, particularly the public-sector labour market, for a period of between five and 18 months.”

Quality The measures aimed at increasing employment are expected to have slightly positive effects (0.40). This is true for all subgroups with one exception: The initiatives concerning low-skilled people are expected to slightly worsen the situation (-0.27). One expert explains: “The reduction in the minimum wage and the setting of a lower floor for young workers was supposed to address the unemployment problem, and some academic evidence exists suggesting that it partly helped.” Another expert thinks “the reform targeting youth has had an effect, but mainly by improving their relative opportunities vis-à-vis other groups.” Some experts think labour demand must be increased: “Under conditions of a deep and protracted crisis, even well-designed and -implemented ALMPs could hardly work effectively in practice due to the very weak labour demand. Last but not least, no labour market-policy breakthrough can be achieved if the economy does not recover.”⁴ With regard to precarious employment, one expert recommends “making certain temporary contracts illegal”. Concerning in-work poverty, one expert thinks “the policy reforms that were introduced by the Greek governments in accordance with EU, ECB and IMF demands went in exactly the opposite direction. They forced the minimum wage below 60 percent of the national median.” Another expert comments: “The country is still implementing austerity measures, and the economy is still declining. Under these conditions, little can be done on this issue.”

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need According to the experts, there is a rather strong need to improve Social Cohesion in Greece (2.4, rank 15/18). Looking at the policy objectives, all need scores are above 2.0. Most pressing seems to be reducing the number of youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs) (2.71) and tackling income inequalities (2.69). One expert declares: “External (EU) decisions were one-sided, taken on an economic basis only. The pace of the required reforms was extremely hasty. Society was not able and still is not able to follow. The implications for social cohesion are huge. The indicators of political trust and to some extent interpersonal trust are alarmingly decreasing.”⁵ Concerning gender equality, one expert thinks “women are not 100 percent ensured regarding their job position in the private sector in case of pregnancy. This issue has to be addressed, and policymakers have to create a safety net around potential mothers.” Another one explains that “policymakers need to address the very long-term discrepancies between men and women regarding the much higher unemployment rate among women compared to among men, the much lower average annual income of women compared to among men for the same job, and the ‘glass ceiling’ preventing women from rising up the career ladder in most business sectors.”

³ Maria Petmesidou, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini

⁴ Maria Petmesidou, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini

⁵ Theoni Stathopoulou, National Centre for Social Research, Athens

Activity The overall activity in this dimension is 23 percent, ranking Greece last out of 18 countries. Looking at the four policy objectives, activity rates differ significantly. No expert reports relevant activities to ensure gender equality, and only 11 percent of the reform need to improve integration policies has been met. For the other policy objectives ‘tackle income inequalities’ (37%) and ‘reduce number of NEETs’ (35%), the activity rates are somewhat higher but still relatively modest. Concerning integration policies, one expert reports on a new law for citizenship in July 2015. With regard to NEETs, one expert explains: “There are many promises to address issues of youth unemployment but, with the exception of fragmented social policy measures, in practice policymakers preferred to see the young highly skilled workers leave the country (brain drain) and the semi-skilled or unskilled stay, relying on the help of family networks to survive.”

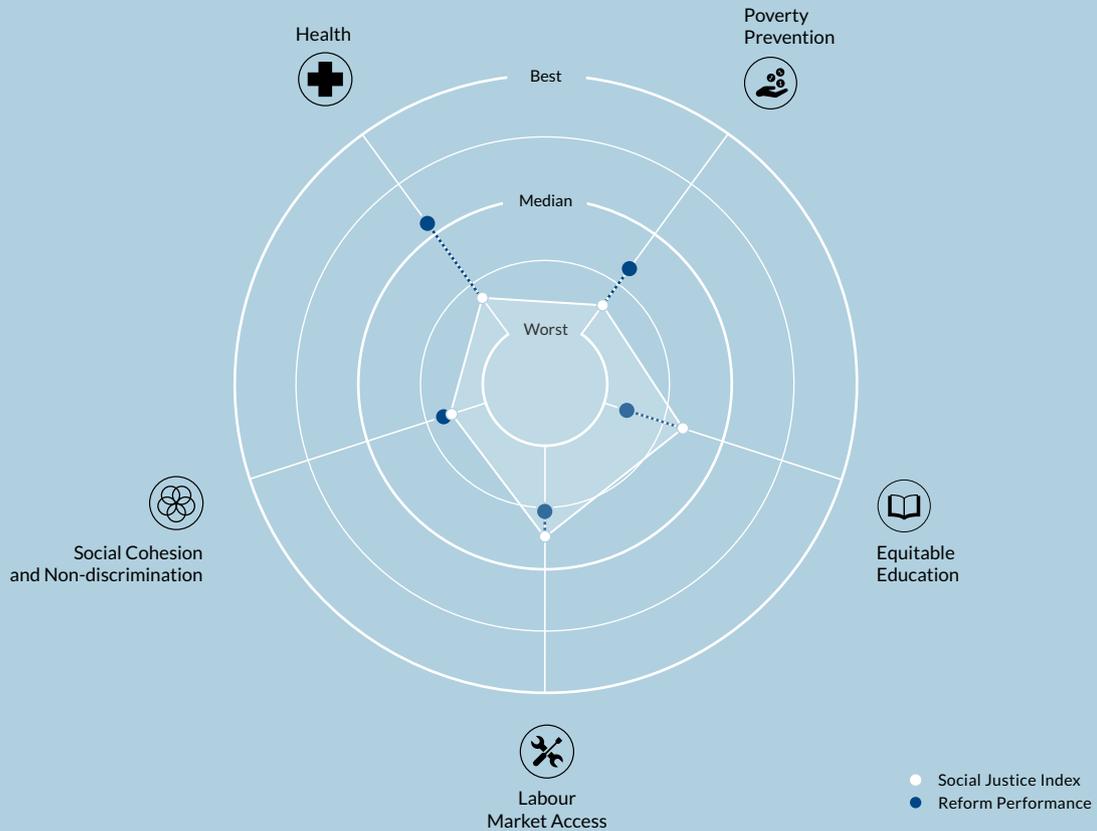
Quality With regard to income inequalities, one expert recommends “tackling tax avoidance of the very wealthy and tightening regulation pertaining to offshore companies and various tax havens.” Another expert explains why he is not satisfied with integration policies, writing: “After January 2015, the open-door policy of the newly elected Greek government probably worsened the already growing problem of large numbers of incoming refugees. The latter have been fleeing their war-torn native countries in the Middle East. This was a wrong policy choice on the part of the Greek government. This was all the more so given that the open-door policy was not accompanied by government measures to help, protect and feed the refugees who gathered in the open fields of the northern borders of Greece.”

Findings by Country



Hungary

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need The overall need for reforms to improve social inclusion is 2.09, ranking Hungary 9th in this regard. This is quite surprising, as the country comes in 23rd in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where it finds itself in the bottom half of countries in all six dimensions, ranking among the bottom five with regard to Poverty Prevention as well as Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination.

Looking at the dimensions, the need for reforms ranges between 2.1 and 2.3 for Equitable Education, Labour Market Access, Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination and Health, and is 1.74 for Poverty Prevention. This is quite high, but again surprising in relative terms, as the related ranks do not reflect Hungary's performance in the SJI. For example, in the dimension of Poverty Prevention, Hungary comes in 24th in the SJI, while the need score of 1.74 ranks the country 6th in this regard.

According to the experts, the most pressing issues for the Hungarian government are to:

- reduce poverty among young people (2.76)

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- improve structural conditions regarding finances and human resources in the education system (2.68), especially in secondary and tertiary education (3.0 each)
- reduce the number of early school leavers (2.68)
- improve public health and the quality of health care (2.6)
- increase employment/decrease unemployment levels among the total population (2.55) and, in particular, improve job chances for young people (2.64) and the long-term unemployed/low-skilled (2.91)

Activity According to the experts, 36 percent of the overall reform need in Hungary has been addressed (rank 19/23), which is below the EU median (46%) and far behind the leading countries: Luxembourg (65%) and Bulgaria (60%). With regard to Poverty Prevention (38%, rank 14/27), Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (42%, rank 10/18) and Health (55%, rank 11/20), the activity rates are mediocre. In the other two dimensions, Equitable Education (17%, rank 19/22) and Labour Market Access (28%, rank 18/19), the experts report (very) low government activity.

Looking at the main pressing challenges, the related activity rates differ greatly. (Very) high activity rates can be seen with regard to the policy objectives ‘improve job chances for long-term unemployed/low-skilled’ (90/70%). The rates are mediocre for ‘youth poverty’ (61%), ‘increase employment levels’ of the total population (65%) and young people (50%), and ‘improve structural conditions in education’ on the secondary and tertiary education levels (50%). No expert reports on relevant initiatives to reduce the number of early school leavers.

Quality The overall quality score of 0.26 (rank 16/20) shows that the experts expect the reforms undertaken so far to have only slightly positive effects on social inclusion. Looking at the dimensions, the experts see a quite low, but still positive quality with regard to Poverty Prevention (0.38, rank 18/24), Labour Market Access (0.14, rank 12/17) and Health (0.65, rank 8/19). The activities aimed at fostering social inclusion (-0.21, rank 9/12) are expected to (very) slightly worsen the situation. Looking again at the most pressing policy objectives, the experts think the initiatives to tackle youth poverty (0.4) and to increase employment levels among the total population (0.37) as well as among young people (0.32) will have (slightly) positive effects. On the other hand, they are relatively sure that government activities concerning long-term unemployment (-0.44) and unemployment among low-skilled people (-0.71) will significantly worsen job prospects for these groups.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The relatively low average reform need to tackle poverty (1.74, rank 6/27) is quite surprising, as Hungary ranks 24th in the SJI Poverty dimension. Looking at the different groups of society, the need for reforms differs very greatly. The experts see a more or less strong need to reduce poverty among young people (2.76), single parents (2.35) and the population in general (1.94). For senior citizens (1.47) and refugees (1.2), the reform need is modest. Little need is only seen for reducing poverty among the foreign-born population (0.73, rank 2).

Activity Overall, the activity rate is 38 percent in this dimension, ranking Hungary 14th out of 27 countries. The highest activity rates can be discerned with regard to reducing poverty among children (61%) and the population in total (55%). Significantly less government activity is reported with regard to senior citizens (36%) and single parents (26%). Practically no government activities have been seen aimed at tackling poverty among refugees (5%) and the foreign-born population (0%). One expert reports: “Hungary has a non-refundable tax allowance for families with children. The majority of poor people could not deduct the necessary amount from their tax base. In 2015, the government allowed people to deduct the credit not only from the tax (flat rate 16% for each taxpayer), but also from the health and pension contribution. The majority of those with three or more children still cannot use the credit.”¹ Another one sees some more activities: “In 2014, tax modifications affecting families with

¹ Ferge Zsuzsa, University Eötvös Loránd, Budapest

3+ children but in lower income brackets were introduced, changes [were made to] the system of child care benefit and child care fees, (...) the extra nursing fee [was introduced] (in 2015 and Jan. 2016), the free meals programmes for children were further extended (Sept. 2015), [and] the social protection system was significantly restructured in 2015. [Since] March [of] that year, the districts provide income compensation, financed from the central budget, based on nationally set criteria. Local government provides expenses repayment, regulated according to their own local decrees.” Another activity was “a reform of means-tested social benefits (as of March 2015) that reallocated the administration of the main means-tested unemployment assistance (UA) from municipalities to government offices at the micro-region level and, at the same time, gave municipalities more autonomy in designing their own (residual) benefit systems, with no monitoring set up. This is likely to lead to more variation across municipalities in the generosity and accessibility of social benefits. Public works schemes were extended further in 2014 and 2015.”²

Quality The experts expect the reforms implemented to have slightly positive effects (0.38, rank 18/24). The best reform quality is seen with regard to single parents (1.0). For young people (0.4) and the total population (0.2), the expected effects are rather slight. The written answers show that many experts think the reforms will improve the situation rather more for middle- and upper-class families. One expert explains: “I don’t expect any genuinely positive outcome because the overall policy favours upside-down distribution and ignores the deep problems of poverty. Some partial successes are possible, at least in some cases.”³ Another expert thinks that “the present system of tax relief post-children definitely favours affluent families. Instead of this, raising the amount of child allowance (unchanged since 2008) would be needed and, within this, a larger increase for single parents.”⁴ Some experts complain that support levels are not sufficient. As one writes: “The amount of provisions for the socially excluded, including unemployment provisions, is very moderate, [and] benefits are considered inadequate. Conditions are sometimes discretionary. It seems that local provisions have become more limited, their allocation more unfair. Those living on the smallest amounts receive less support, together with those with a lot of children.” Another expert complains that “the level of provisions is very low and inadequate to lift people out of poverty. Significant numbers are excluded from social support.” Yet another expert is unsure about the effects: “The reform of the social benefit system may have several effects. Moving the main benefit to [the] small, regional level may reduce poverty by ensuring equal access (compared to the previous very fragmented and unmonitored administration), if all the needy are informed (there’s a risk there). Giving more autonomy on other benefits may have the opposite effect. [One] would need more monitoring on what municipalities do and also on the impact of the reform [as well as] research on benefit take-up (last study dates back to 2006).”⁵

Some experts recommend an increase and an indexation of benefits, especially of the minimum pension, as “the amount of a number of social support is tied to the minimum pension.”

² Ágota Scharle, Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis

³ Ferge Zsuzsa, University Eötvös Loránd, Budapest

⁴ György Molnár, Institute of Economics, Budapest

⁵ Ágota Scharle, Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis

Equitable Education

Need The overall need in this dimension is 2.13, ranking Hungary 12th out of 22 countries. The experts see a more or less pressing need to ensure equal opportunities (2.17, rank 19/25), improve the structural conditions regarding finances and human resources (2.68, rank 23/23), safeguard independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background (2.5) and reduce the number of early school leavers (2.67). For the policy objective ‘improve the quality of teaching’ (1.78), the need is modest, and only a slight need is seen in relation to improving the integration of refugees in the education system (1.0, rank 3/18). With regard to equal opportunities, the experts see a need to decrease the ethnic segregation of Roma children. One expert says: “However, the selective nature of the whole educational system has not changed. While before 2010 strengthening the social integration of Roma kids was an important political objective, recently the government has challenged the need for it.” Another expert explains: “The Roma underclass often lives in 100 percent segregated villages. It would be imperative to maintain education in years 1 to 4 in these usually small villages, rather than bus children to more central schools. In years 5 to 8, often Roma children are in special classes. That is an important [cause of] the reproduction of discrimination against them later in life.”

Activity The activity rate in the education area is 17 percent, ranking Hungary 19th out of 22 countries. Looking at individual policy objectives, the related activity rates differ very greatly. Sixty percent of the reform need to ensure equal opportunities has been addressed (rank 9/25). The activity rates aimed at improving structural conditions (26%) and improving the quality of teaching (9%) are (very) low. No expert reports any government activity at all with regard to the objectives ‘ensure educational mobility’, ‘reduce the number of early school leavers’ and ‘improve integration of refugees’. The experts report pre-primary (kindergarten) education has been made compulsory for children aged 3 to 6.

Quality Though there are no quality scores in this dimension, the written answers give an impression of what the experts think. One expert voices the criticisms that, with nurseries, there is “not enough capacity, especially in the most disadvantaged settlements”, and that, with compulsory kindergarten, there are “not enough quality spaces [and a] lack of well-trained personnel in sufficient numbers.” Another expert thinks: “What is going on in primary and secondary education will increase social inequalities [and] deprive certain groups of children from successful integration into the labour market, with all its consequences.” Another one explains that “some reforms were introduced – like compulsory further education of teachers, new system of quality assurance etc. However, these – in their recent form – have rather a negative effect on teaching/pedagogical quality. Teachers are overwhelmed with administrative duties, the number of hours the teachers have to spend at school has increased etc.” Another one is not satisfied with a new policy measure: “Children may complete their studies at the age of 16 instead of 18 – this will have a negative effect. The government introduced a new programme, ‘Bridge’, for those who complete elementary school and are not 16 yet. First experiences of this new programme are quite unfavourable. Moreover, there is anecdotal information on 16-year-old kids joining the public work scheme to earn some money.”

One expert recommends “investment in the educational system instead of reducing public expenditure for this purpose; [putting] an end to the re-centralisation of the institutional framework (previously [the] responsibility of the municipalities, now of the central state); [increasing] freedom of teachers in choosing methods, textbooks etc.; implementation of special targeted measures for disadvantaged children; [fostering] early child development; [stopping the] segregation of Roma children.”

✳ Labour Market Access

Need Unlike with most other countries, the experts not only see an urgent need to increase job prospects for the ‘usual suspects’, such as young people (2.64) and the long-term unemployed/low-skilled (2.91), but also for the total population (2.55, rank 18/22). On the other hand, the need to improve labour market access for the foreign-born population (1.0, rank 3) and refugees (1.5, rank 5) is seen to be quite modest. For women and senior citizens, core needs are around 2.0, and the same is true for the policy objectives ‘precarious employment’ and ‘in-work poverty’. With regard to precarious employment, one expert explains: “Labour market demand has not increased in the last few years. Non-registered employment, temporary contracts on involuntary basis are prevalent. Moreover, at several central or local state-run companies and service providers, people are made redundant and re-employed as public workers.”

Activity The activity rate in this dimension is 28 percent, ranking Hungary 18th out of 19 countries. The activity rates in raising employment levels differ very greatly. No expert reports any government initiative to improve the integration of foreign-born people or refugees in the labour market. On the other hand, the activity rates with regard to the long-term unemployed (90%, rank 2) and the low-skilled (70%) are (very) high. For the other groups, activity rates were between 18 and 50 percent. Only little government action is taking place to address precarious employment (16%) and in-work poverty (18%). Some experts report that a youth guarantee programme was introduced in 2015. Many experts report that public employment has been increased significantly, with one writing: “Employment in public works has been sequentially increased; the average public works employment was around 75,000 people in 2011, and 220,000 at the beginning of 2016. Public works expenditures have been raised more than fivefold during the last five years. This is a general and only slightly differentiated tool. Main target groups are undereducated people and the long-term unemployed. Public works crowded out almost every other ALMP (active labour market policy). The exit rate from public works to the primary labour market is between 11 and 13 percent.”⁶ With regards to women, one expert reports on “minor adjustments to maternity leave to allow mothers to work while on leave and a small increase in public child care capacities for children under 3.”

Quality Overall, the experts think the measures initiated to improve Labour Market Access will have very slightly positive effects (0.14, rank 12/17). On

⁶ György Molnár, Institute of Economics, Budapest

the one hand, they think the activities will improve job opportunities for the total population (0.37), young people (0.32) and women (0.14). On the other hand, they think the measures will further worsen the situation of the long-term unemployed (-0.44) and the low-skilled (-0.71), ranking Hungary last in this respect. Most experts think the public work measures are not really targeted towards people belonging to risk groups. Furthermore, they think the increase in public employment has only a short-term positive effect because “there are no signs of mobility leading back to the private-sector labour market”. One expert claims that “every research study proves compulsory public work does not facilitate labour market re-integration, emerging rather as a serious obstacle, as the person involved has no time for [a] job search, and public work does not develop human capital.”

Some experts recommend cutting labour taxes, especially on low wages. With regard to senior citizens, one expert recommends “introducing flexible retirement (malus and bonus for deviating from the normal retirement age). Plus, increase access to lifelong learning and improve/extend active labour market policies for those aged 55+”.⁷ Another expert would like to “increase the role of non-public works ALMPs and decrease the social contribution paid by the employer, especially for undereducated people.”⁸

With regard to in-work poverty, one expert recommends action to “reintroduce the tax credit for low earners and introduce a minimum income scheme.”

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need While the experts see a rather pressing need to ensure income equality (2.38), to foster gender equality (2.5) and to reduce the number of NEETs (2.5), improving integration policies for refugees and the foreign-born population in general is seen as a rather low priority (1.14, rank 4). The latter is quite surprising, as Hungary ranks 18th in the 2015 SJI with regard to integration policies. One expert explains that “most of the foreign-born population are ethnic Hungarians who do not need much integration.”

Activity No expert reports any government initiative to improve integration policies. For gender equality (29%, rank 11/17) and income equality (26%, rank 19/22), the activity rates are also quite low. One expert thinks “decreasing inequalities is not on the agenda of the recent government.” Another one explains that “increasing the scope and accessibility of child care services [and] the possibility to join the labour market while on child care leave may have a positive effect on the reconciliation of work and family life. However, the new government has a very conservative approach to gender-related issues and to families; the introduction of these measures had no conscious gender-based consideration.” In contrast, a high activity rate can be observed with regard to the objective ‘reduce number of NEETs’ (88%, rank 2/15). The experts report the introduction of a youth guarantee and the increase in (compulsory) public works.

⁷ Ágota Scharle, Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis

⁸ György Molnár, Institute of Economics, Budapest

Quality The reform activities aiming at a reduction of NEETs are assumed to slightly worsen the situation (-0.39). One expert explains that there is “insufficient labour demand – most of these young people have low levels of education – [and] strong, individualised training programmes would be more effective”. Another expert recommends that compulsory education be raised to 18 years.

With regard to gender equality, one expert comments that “the growing accessibility of child care services may support labour market participation of women if there is sufficient labour demand.” Looking at integration policies, another thinks “the policy towards refugees makes sure that no one gets refugee status in Hungary, so there will be no one to integrate.”⁹

Health

Need The experts see a more or less strong need for all policy objectives in this dimension (2.0 – 2.6); only for the objective ‘unmet needs for medical help’ is the need rather modest (1.67). One expert complains that “social status has a strong influence on the health status of people.” Another adds that “there are serious territorial inequalities concerning access to the health services. In some areas, there is an absolute shortage, e.g. child psychiatry. The situation is getting worse, as a huge number of doctors and nurses are looking for work in Western European countries owing to low wages and unacceptable working conditions.”

Activity The activity rate in this dimension is 55 percent, ranking Hungary 11th out of 20 countries. Very high activity rates can be seen in improving health system efficiency and health care governance (100%, rank 1). In contrast, the activity rate concerning unmet needs for medical help (20%) and the improvement of public health (8%, rank 24/24) have been (very) low. Activities named by the experts are centralisation of the health system, “some measures to decrease the emigration of the health workforce”, a new system of provider accreditation, and a primary health care reform project.

Quality The quality score in this dimension is 0.65 (rank 8/19), which means that the experts expect the activities to have (slightly) positive effects. The same holds true for the policy objective ‘improve health care governance’ (0.44). In contrast, the experts think the measures will have a negative impact on health system efficiency (-0.3). One expert recommends more prevention strategies to improve the situation. Another would like to see a comprehensive approach: “It would need a whole library: increase public spending, increase salaries of medical personnel, change the structure of the health care system (hospital-centred, more differentiated system meeting the needs of the different social groups), transparency (e.g. doctors running – among others – private practices use the facilities of the public institutions), decrease regional inequalities in the access to the services etc.”

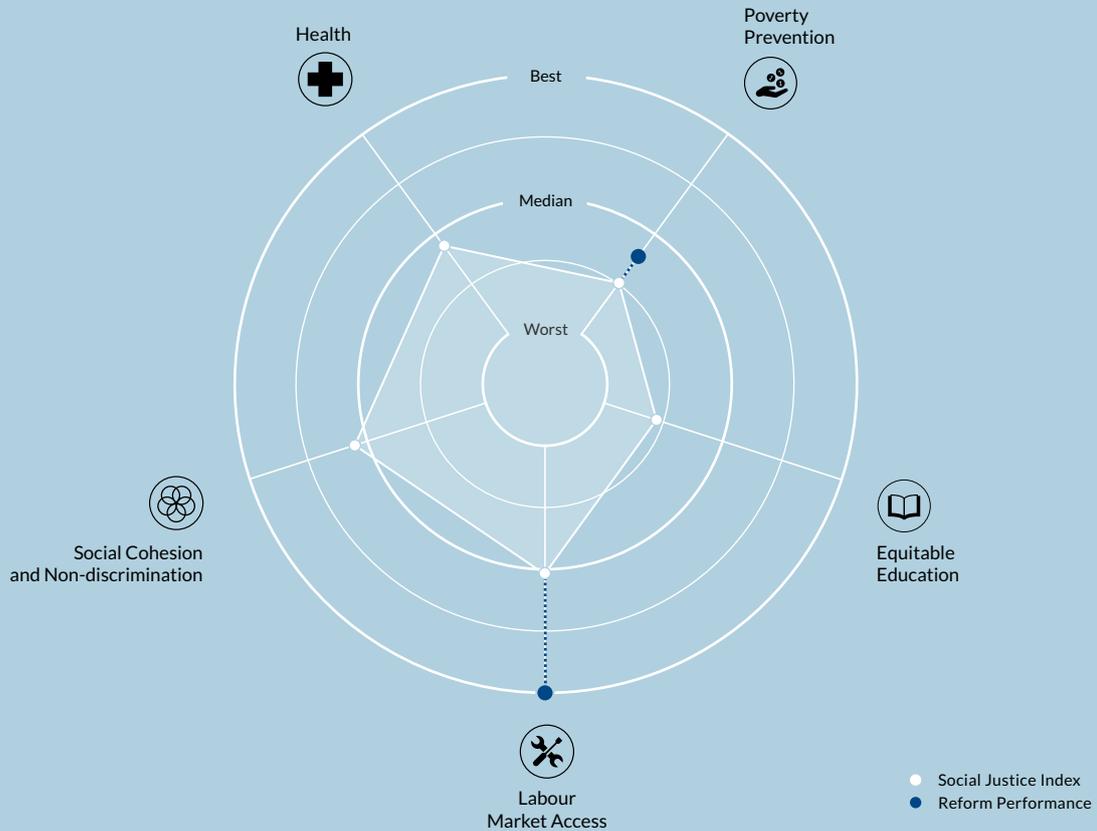
⁹ Endre Sik, TÁRKI Ltd., Budapest

Findings by Country



Ireland

How does the country rank in the EU?



Dimension Findings

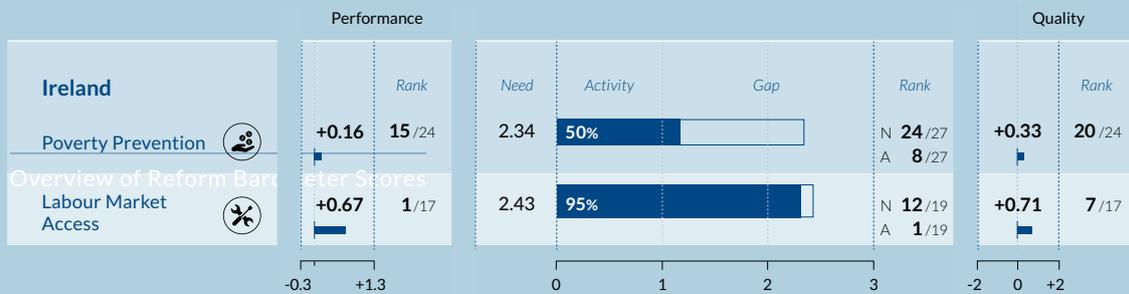
Poverty Prevention

Need The overall need to reduce poverty is 2.34, ranking Ireland 24th out of 27 countries. This clearly reflects Ireland's rather poor performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country ranks 21st in the dimension of Poverty Prevention. While the experts see a rather modest need to tackle poverty among the total population and senior citizens (1.5 each), the need to improve the situation is much more pressing for other societal subgroups, such as children (3.0), single parents (2.83), the foreign-born population (2.4) and refugees (2.8).

Activity According to the experts, 80 percent of the reform need to reduce poverty among young people has been addressed; for senior citizens and single parents, the activity rates are about 50 percent. Activities mentioned by the experts are increases in child benefits, state pensions and the minimum wage. On the other hand, the experts report that only a quarter of the relevant reform need related to the foreign-born population and refugees has been tackled.

Overall Reform Performance Ranking

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Quality The experts expect the reforms concerning poverty among elderly people (0.48) and children (0.33) to have slightly positive effects. With regard to the total population, they do not expect the reforms to change anything at all (0.0). One expert criticises the fact that “the state decided that it was more important to develop a policy of austerity to pay off the private debt of banks and bondholders. Even if they felt they had to make private debt the responsibility of the state, the burden should have been placed on the better-off rather than on the poorer sectors of society.” Another one thinks that “the welfare changes for lone parents have created a new poverty trap.”¹

Labour Market Access

Need The overall need to improve Labour Market Access in Ireland is quite pressing (2.43, rank 12/19). In contrast to many other countries, the experts not only see an urgent need to improve job opportunities for specific sub-groups of the labour market, such as young people (3.0), the long-term unemployed (3.0) and the low-skilled (2.75), but also for the population in

¹ Robin Hanan, European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland, Dublin

general (3.0). This reflects Ireland's performance in the SJI, where it ranks 20th with regard to (un-)employment levels of the total population. Only a little less pressing is the need to increase employment levels for women (2.25), while the need to improve labour market access for elderly people is rather modest (1.67). The need to tackle in-work poverty is quite high in absolute terms (2.33) but lower than in many other countries (rank 9).

Activity According to the experts, the activity rate in this dimension is 95 percent, ranking Ireland 1st in this regard. For the policy objective 'increase employment/reduce unemployment', the activity rate is 90 percent (rank 2); for 'in-work poverty', it is 100 percent (rank 1). The experts report that the government launched 'Pathways to Work 2016–2020' in February 2016 as a follow-on to Pathways to Work 2012–2015, which "presents a detailed strategy to increase activation of unemployed, reduce the transition from short- to long-term unemployment, reduce disincentives to work and roll out the Youth Guarantee scheme. Main target groups are the unemployed, the long-term unemployed and young people."

The core of these pathways is an action plan for the 2016–2020 period, which includes six strands: enhancing engagement with unemployed people of working age; increasing the employment focus of activation programmes and opportunities; making work pay by incentivising the take-up of opportunities; incentivising employers to offer jobs and opportunities to unemployed people; building organisational capability to deliver enhanced services to people who are unemployed; and building workforce skills. One expert explains: "The government has also started to contract out unemployment services, specifically to assist long-term unemployed individuals to find suitable employment/training, to the private sector. This initiative is called Job Path."

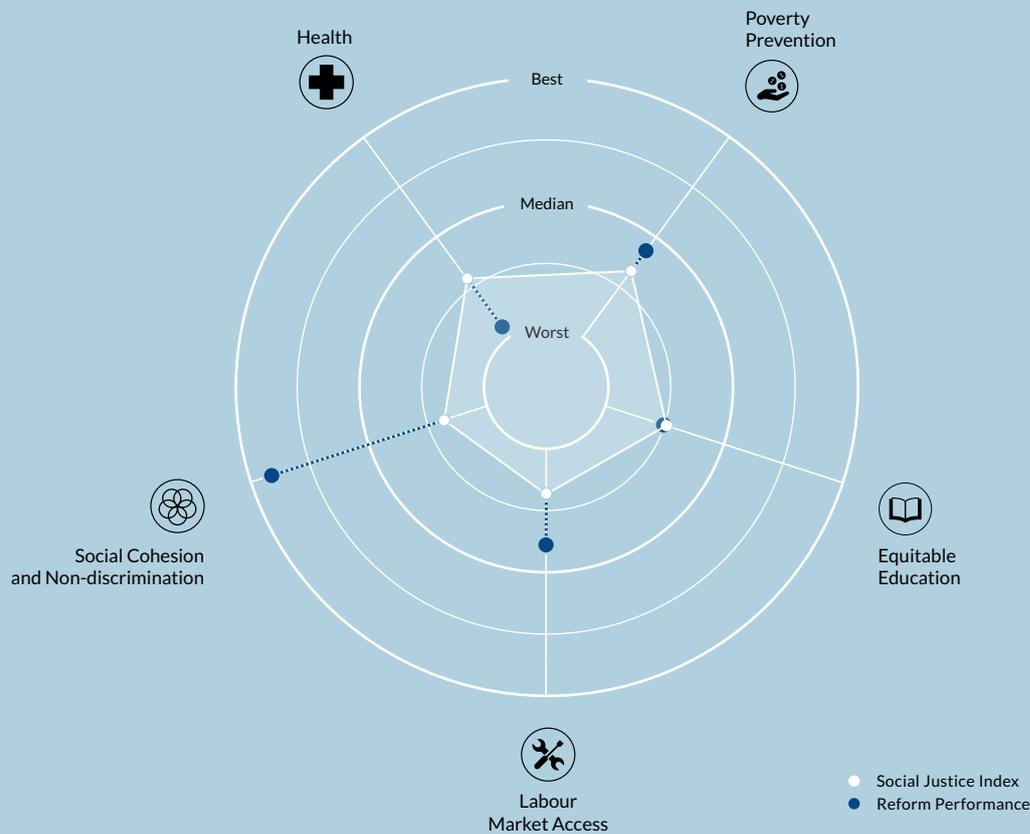
With regard to in-work poverty, one expert reports "improved income support for people in work on low incomes". Another expert reports that a 'Low Pay Commission' was established in 2015 with the objective of assisting and guiding the government in introducing policies and measures to address in-work poverty.

Quality The experts expect the reform initiatives to have quite positive effects on (un-)employment levels in Ireland (1.0, rank 2/19). One expert comments: "I expect many of the reforms to be successful (evidence to date suggests that they are successful). The question of priorities remains: for example, refugees or older workers have not been targeted solely because they are not seen to be important, and so any relative changes for these groups will be accidental, at best." Another expert thinks "over the period of the (first) Pathways to Work programme (for 2012–2015), unemployment fell from 15 percent to less than 9 percent. Long-term and youth unemployment also fell, and more rapidly than total unemployment, but both still remain unacceptably high." With regard to youth unemployment, one expert sees a "need to accelerate the reform of the apprenticeship system and extend it to non-traditional areas (i.e. beyond construction and manufacturing to ICT and services) in order to provide for young people who do not succeed in traditional education."

Findings by Country



How does the country rank in the EU?



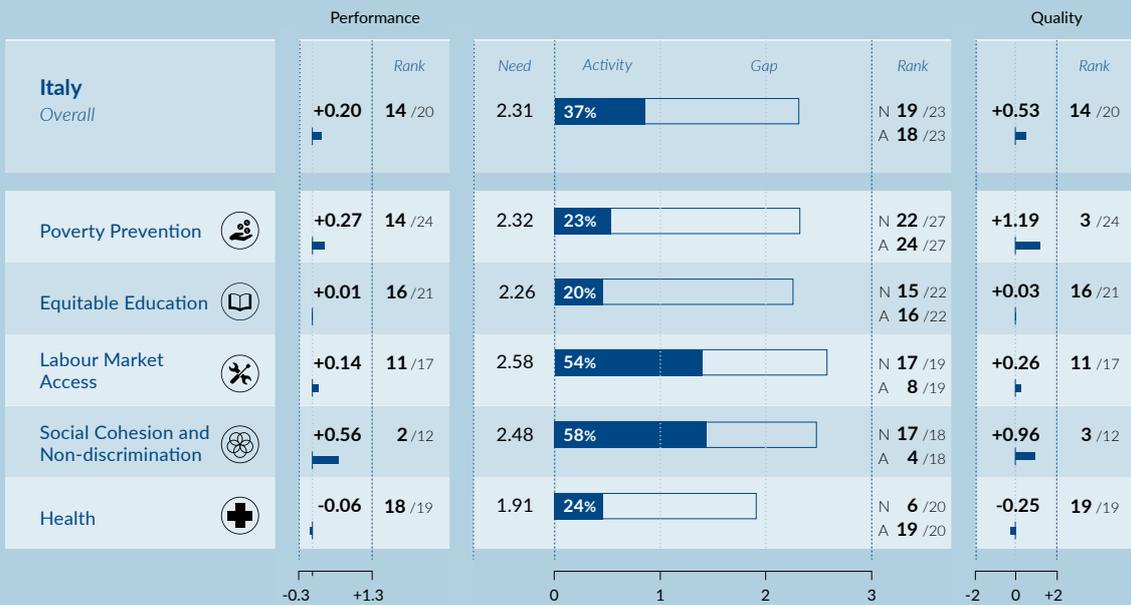
Overall Findings

Need With an overall score of 2.31, Italy ranks 19th among the 23 EU countries examined regarding the need for social reforms. This clearly reflects Italy's poor performance in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where the country ranks among the worst performers in the EU (rank 25). As Italy ranks in the bottom third in all five dimensions, it is hardly surprising that the experts see an urgent need for improvement in all dimensions, with the exception of Health. Deficits can be seen especially in the fields of Labour Market Access (2.58), Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (2.48) and Poverty Prevention (2.32). In the dimension Equitable Education, the need is only slightly lower, with a score of 2.26 (15/22). Concerning health policy, a need score of 1.91 is shown, making reforms in this policy field the most developed of all and ranking the country 6th in this dimension. Regarding all dimensions, the following would be of greatest importance:

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



- tackling youth unemployment (3.00)
- improving labour market access for women (2.92)
- reducing temporary and project-based labour contracts (2.80)
- preventing early school leaving (2.73)
- improving integration of refugees (2.71)

Activity According to the experts, 37 percent of the overall reform need has been addressed in improving social inclusion in Italy. The country ranks 18th out of 23, way behind the leading countries (e.g. Luxembourg 65%) and behind the EU average (46%). Looking at the individual dimensions, the activity rates differ strongly. Quite high activity rates can be stated in the areas Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (58%) and Labour Market Access (54%). In the other three dimensions, the activity was much lower (between 20 and 25%).

When considering the reforms that are most needed, the experts' opinions on how these were addressed do not show a homogenous picture. They

report that 100 percent of the need to reduce youth unemployment has been addressed. Equally, the issue of ‘reducing temporary and project-based labour contracts’ has been addressed, with an activity rate of 89 percent. The activity rates were much lower, but still relatively high compared to other countries, when it comes to improving job chances for women (51%) and the integration of refugees (58%). With regard to early school leavers, only a third of the reform need has been addressed.

Quality The experts assessed the overall reform quality slightly positively, with a score of 0.53 (Italy ranks 14/20), which is below the EU average (0.69). While the experts expect the initiatives to reduce Poverty (1.19, rank 3/24) and to improve Social Cohesion (0.96, rank 3/12) to have quite positive effects, the assessed quality for Labour Market reforms is much lower (0.26, rank 11/17). With regard to Equitable Education, the experts do not expect the reforms to change the situation at all (0.09, rank 19/22). Looking at the main pressing challenges, the reform quality differs strongly in their assessments. While the reforms aimed at improving labour market access for women (1.0) and the integration of refugees (0.64) are expected to have quite positive effects, the quality of reforms concerning youth unemployment is much lower (0.33). Furthermore, the experts expect the activities concerning the number of early school leavers (-0.67) and precarious employment (-0.08) to (slightly) exacerbate the situation.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The experts reported a relatively high need to reduce poverty within the total population (2.19, rank 23) and an even more pressing need to reduce poverty among specific societal subgroups, such as refugees (2.67), children (2.61) and single parents (2.35).

Activity Considering refugees, the activity rate is below 5 percent, representing a very low willingness/capability on the part of the government to address this policy field. The activity rate in reducing poverty among single parents is significantly higher (19%) but still relatively low. In the case of preventing poverty among young people, the activity rate is much higher (42%). Reforms mentioned by the experts are the “bonus €80”, which entitles low-income workers to this amount every month, and the introduction of a new social card, which is a pilot scheme of minimum income support for poor families with children.

Quality Looking at the overall population, the experts expect the reforms to have a strong positive effect (1.19). The respective reform initiatives for children (1.2), senior citizens (1.37) and single parents (1.0) are likely to be effective, as well. Most experts recommend implementing a universal minimum income scheme.

Equitable Education

Need The experts see a rather pressing need for improvement with regard to all policy objectives in this dimension, as all scores are above 2.0. The highest need can be seen in the fields of ‘improving structural conditions regarding finances and human resources’ at the level of tertiary education (2.62) and ‘reducing the number of early school leavers’ (2.73). Equally, in weakening the link between socioeconomic background and children’s learning success, the experts see a rather high need (2.55) for improvement, though Italy ranks a respectable 4th in the 2015 SJI in this regard.

Activity Activity rates are quite low despite the high needs in the above-mentioned fields: 13 percent in the case of ‘improving structural conditions’ at the level of tertiary education, and 32 percent aimed at reducing the number of early school leavers. With regard to social mobility in the education system, the activity rate is only 7 percent.

Quality The experts expect the activities concerning the number of early school leavers (-0.67, rank 17/17) to exacerbate the situation.

Labour Market Access

Need Italy’s overall unemployment rate is 12.4 percent (as of April 2015), but it is 39.1 percent among 15- to 29-year-olds. Accordingly, the experts see a very urgent need in various segments of the labour market. The biggest need is seen as reducing youth unemployment (3.00), but promoting women’s employment (2.92) and reducing long-term unemployment (2.69) are likewise of high importance. Furthermore, the experts see an urgent need to tackle precarious employment (2.8) and in-work poverty (2.67).

Activity The activity rate towards raising employment among the entire population is 67 percent, especially targeting youth unemployment (100%) and reducing precarious employment and/or temporary contracts (89%). With regard to women and the long-term unemployed, about half (51%) of the reform need has been addressed, while the activity rate is only 17 percent with regard to in-work poverty. Most relevant reforms reported by the experts are the ‘Jobs Act’, which quite radically modifies dismissals (for new entrants), contractual arrangements and unemployment benefits, as well as the introduction of a youth guarantee programme, which supports young people by increasing awareness of existing jobs and training offers.

Quality While the quality scores with regard to women’s employment (1.0), low skilled employment (1.08) and long-term unemployment (1.26) are quite promising, the experts are much less optimistic about those for young people (0.33). With regard to precarious employment, the experts expect the reforms to very slightly worsen the situation (-0.08). Experts who rated the reforms positively think the Jobs Act will reduce labour market rigidity and favour the transformation of temporary contracts into open-ended contracts. The more sceptical experts complain that the Act gives an incentive to dismiss new entrants too easily, which will lead to a (further) segmentation of the labour market and increase the risk of poverty, especially among young

people. Furthermore, they are not satisfied with active labour market policies and public employment services in Italy, as they consider them inadequate and ineffective. Suggestions provided by the experts are to make temporary contracts more expensive to employers than open-ended ones and to implement a “new pink deal” in order both to foster demand for women’s labour and supply better services for working mothers. As in the dimension of Poverty Prevention, many experts recommend introducing a minimum income scheme in order to tackle in-work poverty. Some experts think there should equally be reforms addressing the demand side of the labour market in order to create new jobs.

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The experts see an urgent need for improvement for all four policy objectives in this dimension, as all need scores are 2.3 or more. The most pressing need is seen in improving the integration of refugees (2.71).

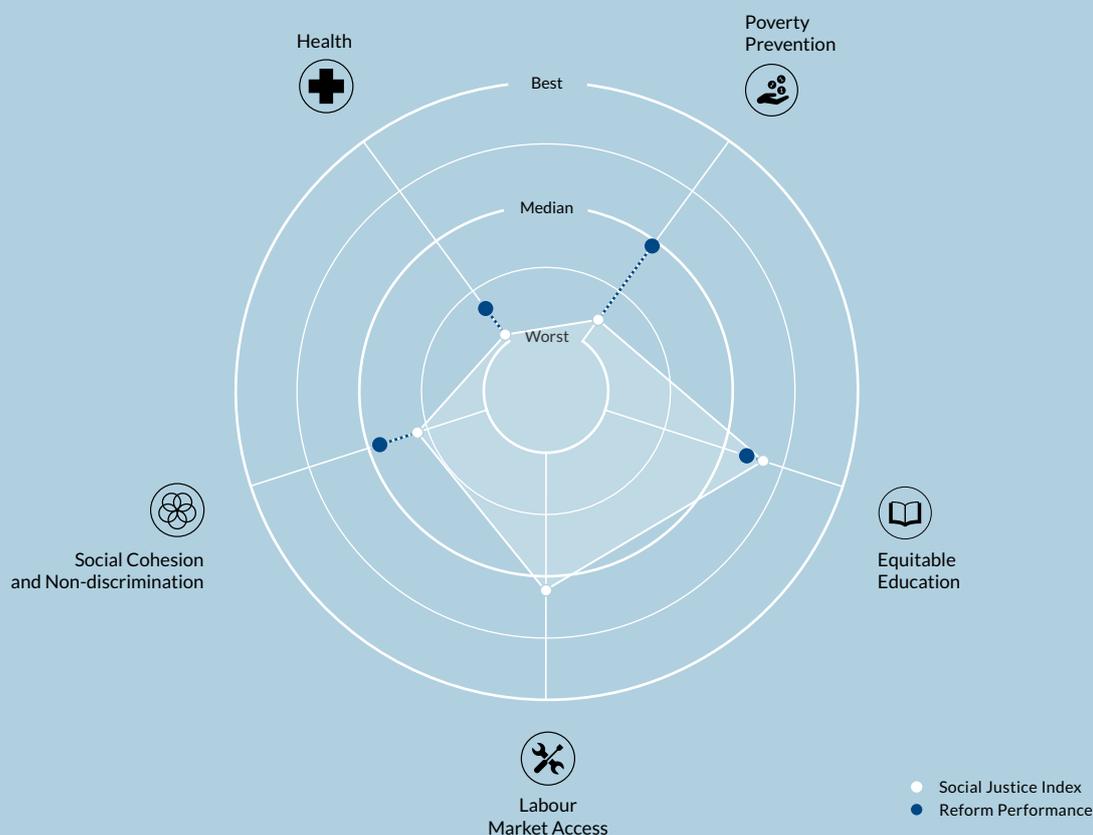
Activity The related activity rates are quite high for all four policy objectives (between 50 and 63%), ranking Italy among the top 10 countries. With regard to refugees, the experts report that the registration of asylum-seekers has been improved. Furthermore, a guarantee of a residence permit for six months and the possibility of working after only two months (instead of six) have been introduced. With regard to gender equality, the ‘Jobs Act’ is seen as the most relevant reform initiative.

Quality According to the experts, the measures aimed at safeguarding gender equality are expected to have strongly positive effects (1.4, rank 1/13), as they are expected to give greater protection for self-employed women and, furthermore, to provide incentives for companies to use teleworking models. For refugees, the experts are less optimistic. Though the quality score is slightly positive (0.64), some experts complain that the possibility of working after two months is not feasible because of asylum-seekers’ poor language skills, the inefficiency of Italian employment centres and services, and the effects of the economic crisis. The reforms aimed at reducing the number of NEETs are expected to have positive effects (1.0).

Findings by Country


Latvia

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need The experts assess the overall need for social reforms in Latvia to be relatively high (2.21, rank 14/23). This is in accordance with the country's 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI score) of 4.98, which was well below the EU average (rank 20/28).

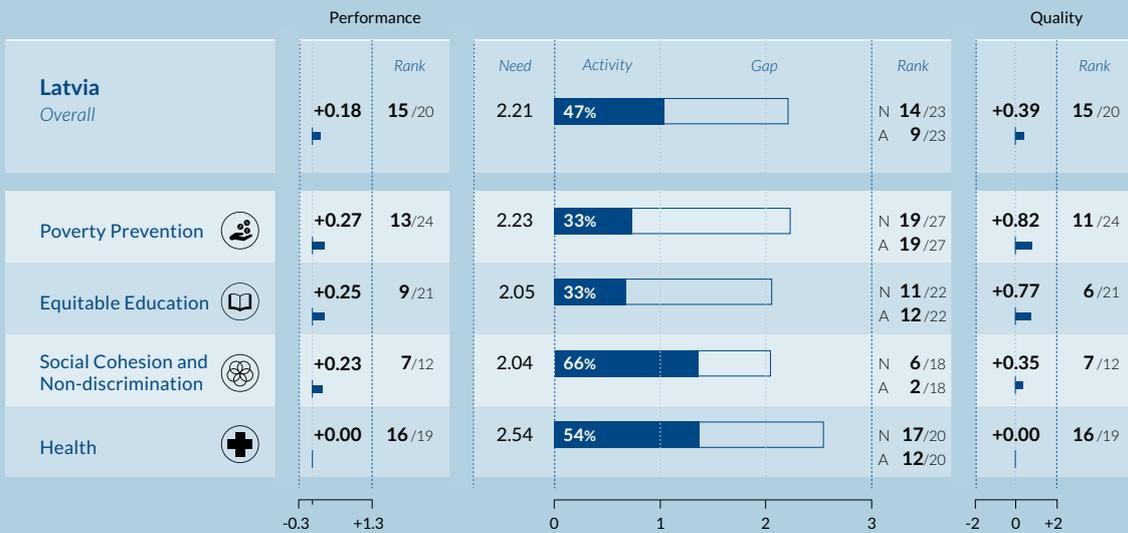
The highest need for reform is seen in the Health dimension (2.54, rank 17/20). Here, the need was evaluated as extremely high with regard to the improvement of public health (3.00), the unmet needs for medical help (2.88) and the accessibility and range of health services (2.75). The need for reform is also seen as quite high in the dimension of Poverty Prevention (2.23, rank 19/27), especially concerning senior citizens (2.88) and children (2.88) as well as single parents (2.75).

A lower need for reform was assessed in the dimensions of Equitable Education (2.05, rank 11/22) and Social Cohesion (2.04), where Latvia ranks 6th out of 18 assessed countries. However, the experts stated that reform is very much needed to ensure that the learning success of children is independent of their socioeconomic background (2.57).

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Activity Overall, the activity rate is 47 percent, ranking Latvia 9th out of 23 evaluated countries. However, activity rates differ widely among the four assessed policy dimensions. In the dimensions of Health and Social Cohesion, 54 and 66 percent, respectively, of the reform need is being addressed. But in the dimensions of Poverty Prevention and Equitable Education, Latvia shows far lower activity rates (33% each).

In the Health dimension, which is in the most need of reform, activity rates also range widely: Two of the three most pressing challenges (improvement of public health and access to health services) received activity rates of 73 percent each. However, the unmet needs for medical help, which is the second-most pressing issue, is only seeing an activity rate of 48 percent. And the financing of the Latvian health system, the fourth-most pressing challenge, is assigned the lowest rate (16%).

In the Poverty Prevention dimension, which has the second-highest need of reform, activity rates overall were relatively low. With regard to the most pressing challenges of preventing poverty for senior citizens and children, the activity was measured at 40 and 45 percent, respectively.

Quality Although the experts assess the activity rate to be relatively high, their assessment of the effectiveness of those measurements is less positive. Overall, the quality score is 0.39 (rank 15/20). While the policy reforms on Poverty Prevention (0.82, rank 11/24) and Equitable Education (0.77, rank 6/21) are expected to have a positive effect, the government action with regard to Social Cohesion (0.35, rank 7/12) is expected to have only very slight effects. The quality of Health reforms, which are the most pressing ones for Latvia, are evaluated as practicably ineffective (0.0, rank 16/19).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The need to introduce policy reforms concerning Poverty Prevention is very high in Latvia, according to the experts. While the overall need is rated at 2.23, it is even higher for senior citizens (2.88), children (2.88) and single parents (2.75). In stark contrast, the need is rated far lower for foreign-born people (1.14) and refugees (1.50).

Activity Although the need for reform is high, activity rates regarding Poverty Prevention were rated as low by the experts (33%), ranking Latvia 19th out of 27 assessed EU member states. Three experts stated that reform was especially needed with regard to minimum income in Latvia, and explained that while the government plans to act on this issue, there have so far been no concrete results. One expert stated: “There is a strong and acute necessity to introduce an official subsistence minimum.”¹ The experts also expressed that pensions need to be raised to prevent poverty among the elderly.

Looking at the societal groups with the greatest need for reform, the activity rates were slightly higher: 45 percent with regard to the prevention of child poverty, and 40 percent regarding the risk of poverty in old age. Fewer policy reforms were introduced for single parents (31%) and refugees (27%). In accordance with the limited demand for policy reforms for the foreign-born population in Latvia, the activity rate was estimated as being close to zero (2%).

Quality While the experts expressed the view that only a small amount of the reform need is being addressed, the policy reforms that have in fact been introduced are expected to have positive effects on poverty prevention overall (0.82, rank 11/24) and even more on the at-risk groups of senior citizens (1.37) and children (1.00).



Equitable Education

Need The experts see a strong need to introduce policy reforms regarding Equitable Education. Policy change is very strongly needed to ensure that learning success is independent of children’s socioeconomic background (2.57). Equally, the policy objectives of equal opportunities in education, the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources, and the qual-

¹ Feliciano Rajevska, Institute of Human, Economic and Social Research, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

ity of teaching were all evaluated to be in high need of reform (2.03 each). While the degree of need ranged between 1.57 and 2.33 for the different levels of education, tertiary education was assessed to be in above-average need across all three policy objectives (2.27 or 2.25). A lower need was assessed with regard to the rate of early school leavers (1.63).

Activity The activity rate for reforming the Latvian educational system is 33 percent. In comparison to other EU member states, this is about average, ranking Latvia 12th out of 22 evaluated countries. With regard to the most pressing policy objective, the independence of learning success from socioeconomic background, the experts observed a low activity rate of just 23 percent. However, a particularly high activity rate was assessed for the level of secondary education across the policy objectives of equal opportunities (45%), structural conditions (78%) and the quality of teaching (69%). With regard to the quality of teaching, a high activity rate was also assessed for primary education (67%). Almost no policy reforms were or are being introduced to ensure equal opportunities in lifelong learning (7%) or to provide sufficient financial and human resources in early childhood and pre-primary education (6 and 10%, respectively).

Quality The experts expect the policy reforms to have a positive effect on the Latvian education system (0.77, rank 6/21). Equal opportunities are expected to improve at the primary and secondary education levels (1.00 each) and, to a lesser extent, at the level of tertiary education (0.50). The same improvement can be stated for the quality of teaching (averaging 0.97, but ranging for each education level between 0.67 and 1.23) as well as for the rate of early school leavers (0.80). While the experts also anticipate that the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources will improve at the secondary education level (0.83), they expect no improvement in tertiary education in this regard (-0.14).

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need According to the experts, the need for reform in the dimension of Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination is high. However, in comparison to other EU member states, Latvia performs fairly well, ranking in the top third. Policy changes are strongly needed to decrease the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (2.67, rank 11/15), to reduce income and wealth inequality (2.50, rank 14/22) and, to a lesser extent, to safeguard gender equality (2.00, rank 6/17). According to the experts, very little reform is needed with regard to the integration of foreign-born persons and refugees (1.00, rank 3/14).

Activity Although the need for reform in this dimension was estimated to be comparatively low, the activity rate related to social cohesion was assessed to be the second-highest among the 18 evaluated states (66%). Only Italy received a higher activity rate. For the specific policy objectives, the activity rate was slightly lower with regard to gender equality (58%) and NEETs (63%, rank 6/15). Conversely, the experts evaluated extremely highly the reform activity concerning income and wealth inequality (70%, rank 4/22) as well as integration policy (83%, rank 1/17).

Quality While the reform need is comparatively moderate and there are government actions, their effectiveness is evaluated as being quite low, at 0.35 (rank 7/12). For the reforms regarding Latvia's integration policy, which saw the highest activity rate, the experts even anticipated a slightly negative outcome (-0.20).



Health

Need The dimension of Health is in the greatest need of policy change, both compared to the other dimensions assessed for Latvia as well as to the other EU member states. Latvia only ranks third to last with regard to the need for reform. All of the eight policy objectives received scores of 2.00 or higher. The greatest need is seen in improving public health in general (3.00), reducing unmet needs for medical help (2.88) and ensuring the accessibility and range of health services (2.75).

Activity The most pressing policy objectives mentioned above received mixed government attention. While 73 percent of the need to improve public health (rank 11/24) and the accessibility of health services (rank 6/19) was addressed, the objective of meeting the need for medical assistance received an activity rate of just 48 percent. Much was also done to increase the quality (73%, rank 6/22) and the performance (66%, rank 8/19) of health care. What's more, very little policy change was introduced to advance the efficiency (36%, rank 18/20) or the sustainable and fair financing of the Latvian health system (16%, rank 17/20). Many of the experts voiced their concern about this issue, with one stating: "At this stage, the problem has reached the level of crisis."² According to the experts, the Latvian government has introduced initiatives to introduce mandatory health insurance. However, the experts remain sceptical of those plans and instead favour an increase in public financing of this sector.

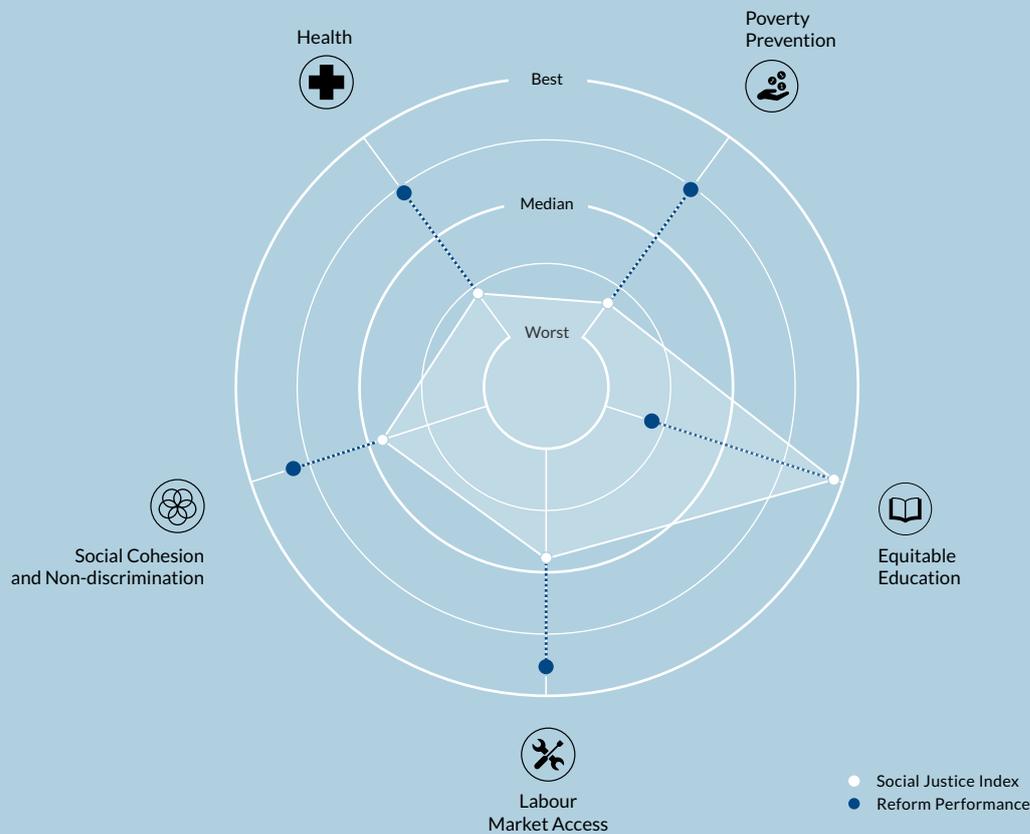
Quality The Latvian health system was assessed to be in great need of policy reform. Though the experts assessed that much of the reform need is being addressed (with the exception of its efficiency and financing), they are less positive about the effects of the measures that have been taken. Concerning the quality of the reforms, Latvia only ranks fourth to last. Although the experts anticipate a positive effect for the reforms aimed at improving public health (0.75) and the quality of health care (0.34), they expect adverse consequences with regard to health care governance (-0.74), access to health services (-0.90) and meeting the need for medical help (-0.36).

² Girts Brigis, Department of Public Health, Riga Stradins University

Findings by Country

Lithuania

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Lithuania has a high need for policy reform, assessed by the experts at 2.28 (rank 15/23). The highest need is seen in the Health sector (2.65). Compared to 20 other EU member states, Latvia's need for policy change in this area is the third highest. This is not surprising, as Lithuania's place in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI) in this dimension was also very low, ranking it 22nd out of 28 countries. In this regard, the 2015 SJI report points out that the provision of health care services varied across Lithuanian counties, and that out-of-pocket payments continued to be frequent.

Based on the experts' evaluations, the second-most pressing issue is the reform of Labour Market Access (2.43, rank 13/19). According to the 2015 SJI report as well as the experts' assessments, youth, low-skilled workers and the long-term unemployed face the greatest challenges in accessing the labour market, with the SJI report explicitly stating that low-skilled unemployment in the country is one of the highest in the EU.

The third-highest need for policy reform is seen in Poverty Prevention (2.28, rank 20/27). The 2015 SJI puts a special emphasis on poverty preven-

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores

	Performance			Quality					
	Score	Rank	Rank	Need	Activity	Gap	Rank	Score	Rank
Lithuania <i>Overall</i>	+0.42	5 /20		2.24	51%		N 15 /23 A 6 /23	+0.84	4 /20
Poverty Prevention	+0.40	7 /24		2.28	37%		N 20 /27 A 15 /27	+1.06	5 /24
Equitable Education	+0.00	17 /21		1.81	10%		N 8 /22 A 21 /22	+0.00	17 /21
Labour Market Access	+0.51	3 /17		2.43	69%		N 13 /19 A 4 /19	+0.74	6 /17
Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination	+0.51	3 /12		2.03	51%		N 5 /18 A 6 /18	+1.00	2 /12
Health	+0.59	6 /19		2.65	72%		N 18 /20 A 6 /20	+0.82	5 /19

tion as one of Lithuania’s principal social justice challenges, stating that 27.7 percent of the population was at risk of poverty in 2014. Elderly people were especially at risk of severe material deprivation. The experts also assessed that senior citizens are the group most at risk of poverty (2.82).

Although the experts assess that policy change is slightly less needed with regard to Social Cohesion (2.03) and that Lithuania performs fairly well in comparison to other countries (rank 5/18), the 2015 SJI suggests that more needs to be done (score 5.82 out of 10, rank 16/28).

In the dimension of Equitable Education, Lithuania achieves considerable success, as the need for policy reform is evaluated at 1.81, which is comparatively low (rank 8/22). This is also in accordance with the 2015 SJI for this dimension, in which Lithuania received a score of 7.22 out of 10 and ranked as second-best after Denmark. In addition to that, the SJI stated that some of Lithuania’s most noteworthy achievements include the low dropout rate (in fact, one of the lowest among EU member states), independence of learning opportunities from socioeconomic background, and strong investment in early education, which has been shown to have significant, lifelong positive effects.

Activity According to the experts, Lithuania has the sixth-highest activity rate overall, with half of the need for policy reform being addressed by the government (rank 6/23). The activity rate is within the top third in three dimensions: Social Cohesion (51%, rank 6/18), Labour Market Access (69%, rank 4/19) and Health (72%, rank 6/20). However, looking at Poverty Prevention (37%, rank 15/27) and Equitable Education (10%, rank 21/22), government activities are below average. At least with regard to the latter dimension, this can be explained by the relatively low need for reform and current success in equitably distributing educational opportunities.

Quality The experts evaluate the quality of the actions that were already introduced as relatively high (0.84, rank 4/20). They expect the government reforms to have quite a positive effect on the three most pressing challenges: preventing poverty (1.06, rank 5/24), ensuring better access to the labour market (0.74, rank 6/17) and improving health care (0.82, rank 5/19).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need Poverty Prevention remains one of Lithuania's most pressing issues. According to the 2015 SJI, families with many children, people living in rural areas, young people, disabled people, unemployed people and senior citizens are at high risk of poverty. Based on the experts' assessments, the most urgent actions are needed to prevent poverty for elderly people (2.82), single parents (2.81) and children (2.71).

Activity The activity rate overall is relatively low in this dimension. The experts assess that 37 percent of the need with regard to preventing poverty was addressed by the government (rank 15/27). However, activity varies widely, on the one hand, between the demographic groups – from 6 percent (foreign-born population) to 49 percent (senior citizens) – and, on the other hand, between targeting certain demographic groups versus targeting the total population (68%).

Though the activity rate is much higher for certain demographic groups, it is still below the EU average. For instance, the action taken on preventing poverty for senior citizens and children – two of the most at-risk groups in Lithuania – was estimated to be at 49 and 47 percent, respectively; however, in most other European countries the activity rate was much higher than this. Governmental action on preventing poverty for single parents, who also belong to the at-risk groups, was assessed at only 21 percent. And for foreign-born people, only 6 percent of the need was met.

The activity rate for the total population, however, is significantly higher (68%), both in comparison to the above-mentioned activity rates targeting specific demographic groups as well as to other EU countries (rank 7/27). This shows that the actions taken were mostly targeted at the total population rather than at certain demographic or societal groups.

For example, the experts reported that policy reforms introduced by the Lithuanian government included the amendments to the 'Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents'. It gives municipalities greater authority over the provision of social assistance benefits, thereby decentralizing the system. Furthermore, the amendments aim to make more efficient use of

expenditure in order to reduce dependence on social assistance benefits and to stimulate participation in the labour market.

Quality The experts expect the policy changes introduced to have a positive effect in the fight against poverty (1.06, rank 5/24). This holds true for preventing poverty for the total population (0.87) as well as for certain demographic groups seen as being at risk, such as senior citizens (0.96) and children (1.33).

Equitable Education

Need Equitable Education is one of the dimensions in which Lithuania achieved substantial success. With one of the lowest early dropout rates in Europe, the experts assess the need for reform in this policy objective to be comparatively low (1.6, rank 8/22). Though more needs to be done to ensure that learning success is independent of children's socioeconomic background (2.17), Lithuania also performs fairly well in this regard when compared to other EU countries (rank 4/22).

Just above the EU median is the need to improve the quality of teaching (1.85, rank 11/22) and to ensure equal opportunities within the education system (1.92, rank 11/22). However, for the latter policy objective, the need varies greatly across the different educational levels. While the need in primary education was just 1.50, it was assessed at 2.18 for pre-primary education. Multiple experts stated that the accessibility of preschool education was a pressing challenge, as many children in rural areas did not have a preschool within their proximity.

Looking at the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources for Lithuania's education system, the need for reform here is the highest one of the six policy objectives within this dimension (2.28). It is also considerably higher compared to other EU member states, being the third highest (rank 20/22).

Activity According to the experts, little has been done to improve the education system in Lithuania. The activity rate is assessed at 10 percent, ranking Lithuania second to last (rank 21/22). The lowest activity is observed with the policy objective of improving the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources (5%), where some activity is seen for early education (29%) but none for any other educational level. And while some actions have been taken to improve the quality of teaching in early education (29%), pre-primary and primary schools (23% each), none has been taken in regards to secondary education or higher levels. Low levels of activity have also been assessed by the experts concerning equal opportunities (17%), the independence of learning success from socioeconomic background (16%), the rate of early school leavers (0%) and the integration of refugees (9%). This, however, needs to be viewed within the context of an overall low need for action.

Labour Market Access

Need The overall need for policy reform targeting Labour Market Access is relatively high (2.43, rank 13/19). The experts assess that policy change is

needed to increase employment opportunities, especially for young people (2.75), the low-skilled (2.63) and senior citizens (2.25). Fewer improvements have to be directed towards the employment of women (1.38), foreign-born people and refugees (0.71 each). Overall, the reduction of unemployment needs less reform in Lithuania when compared to other EU member states (1.87, rank 3/22). In stark contrast, there is an acute need to reduce the number of people who are employed with equivalised disposable income below 60 percent of the national median (3.00). On this policy objective, Lithuania is the worst performer in relation to 18 other assessed EU member states.

Activity The aforementioned urgent need to decrease in-work poverty is already met by an activity rate of 75 percent for this policy objective (rank 5/18). And 59 percent of the need for policy reforms to increase employment was addressed, ranking Lithuania 8th out of 22 assessed countries. All experts reported that government action was taken targeting youth employment, and that 86 percent of the need to bring long-term unemployed people back into the labour market was tackled. Less action was taken addressing the unemployment of women (30%) and low-skilled workers (29%).

Quality The experts rate governmental action as being of high quality (0.74, rank 6/17). They particularly expect to see a reduction of in-work poverty (0.67 rank 8/14) and a fall in unemployment (0.89, rank 5/19), especially for young people (1.26, rank 2/17).

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The need for policy reform, as assessed by the experts, varies greatly across the individual policy objectives. While the need to decrease the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET rate) (1.67, rank 2/15), to advance gender equality (1.60, rank 4/17) and to improve integration policies (2.00, rank 6/14) is comparatively modest, the need to decrease income and wealth inequality is acute (2.83). On this policy objective, Lithuania ranks last out of 22 assessed countries.

Activity Of the aforementioned acute need for reform targeting income and wealth equality, 53 percent is being addressed through government action. This is the sixth-highest activity rate out of 22 countries.

Health

Need The need for reform in the Health sector was assessed as particularly high (2.65), ranking Lithuania third to last in this policy dimension. Furthermore, the need is high (2.33 or more) across all of the seven assessed policy objectives, ranking Lithuania below average for each. The most pressing issues are the improvement of public health (2.88, rank 20/24) and health care governance (3.00).

Some experts stressed that primary health care needs to be improved. One expert wrote: “There have been some new quality indicators for primary health care, such as avoidable hospitalization for main ambulatory care sensitive conditions, national preventive programmes (cervical cancer screen-

ing, breast cancer screening, colon cancer, cardiovascular disease prevention). There have been some fresh incentives for primary health care, increasing the comprehensiveness of services at [the] primary health care level. But there is too little attention paid to capacity-building and still too few incentives to get a better performance among primary health care services.”¹

Regarding health governance, one expert stated that more cooperation is needed at the organisational level of the health care system. Policies must strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination to allow for a better provision of health care services.

Activity While the experts described a high need for reform in the Health dimension, they are confident that the government is already addressing a lot of the issues (72%, rank 6/20). With regard to the efficiency of the health system as well as its outcomes performance, all experts assessed the government as taking action in tackling these issues (100%).

For instance, the experts reported that the Lithuanian government has initiated the restructuring of health care institutions. Two specific aims were to reduce the number of in-patient beds by strengthening out-patient care as well as to cut the number of health care institutions. However, the experts assessed that more needs to be done, as these reforms were only partially successful and health care providers lacked the incentives to reform. Some experts also stated that the methodology for assessing the need for hospital beds has to be reviewed.

Looking at the most pressing issues – public health and health governance – 74 and 75 percent, respectively, are being addressed through policy reforms (rank 10/24 and 6/19). The lowest activity rates can be observed for improving access to health care (30%, rank 14/19) and for ensuring the sustainable and fair financing of the health system (50%, rank 9).

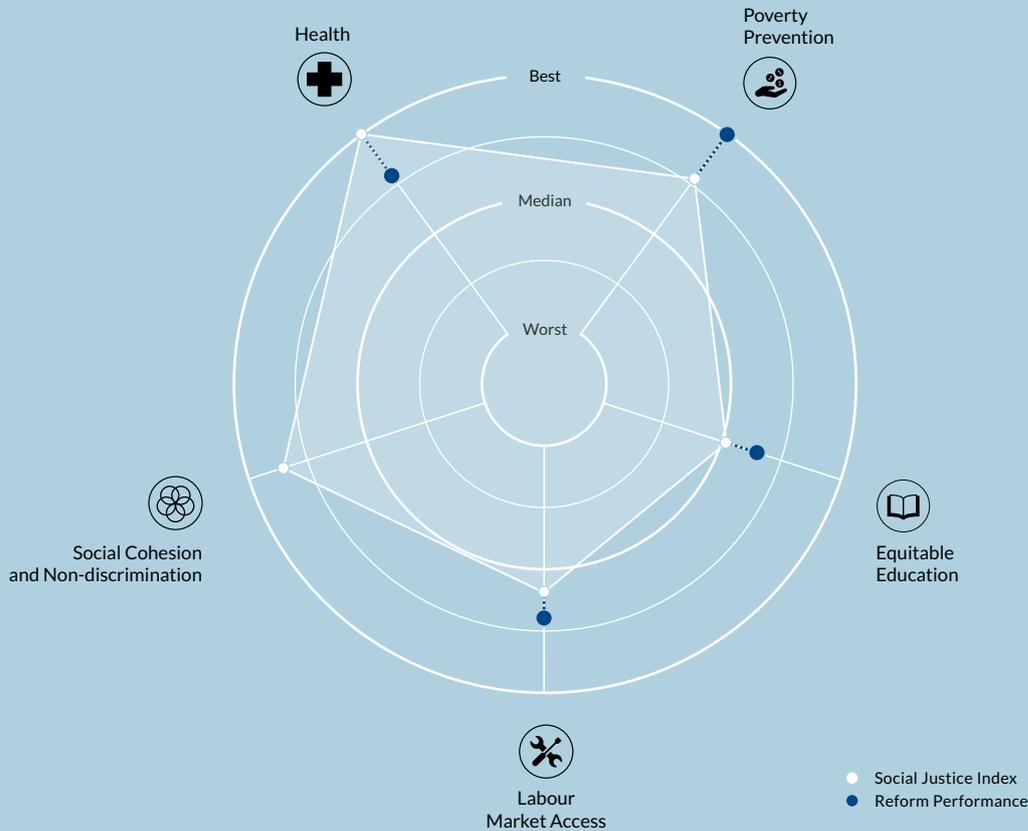
Quality The experts assess the quality of the introduced policy reforms to be relatively high (0.82, rank 5/19). They are particularly optimistic about the influence of the reforms in health care governance and the quality of health care, expecting them to have an above-average impact compared to other EU member states (1.00).

¹ Arnoldas Jurgutis, Faculty of Health Sciences, Klaipeda University

Findings by Country

Luxembourg

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Luxembourg's need for policy reform is close to the EU median need of 2.18, ranking the country 11th out of 23 assessed EU member states. Based on the experts' assessments, the country performs fairly well on the dimensions of Labour Market Access (2.05, rank 6/19) and Health (1.90, rank 5/20). In fact, Luxembourg has one of the best health care systems in the EU. In the dimension of Health, the country ranked 1st in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), receiving a score of 7.88 out of 10.

In contrast, the experts see a pressing need for policy change in the area of Equitable Education, which is assessed at 2.58, ranking Luxembourg in last place among 22 countries. Their assessment is that more reform also has to be introduced with regard to Poverty Prevention, even though Luxembourg ranked among the top 10 in this dimension for its policies in the 2015 SJI.

Activity Luxembourg has the highest activity rate, both overall (65%, rank 1/23) as well as in the dimension of Poverty Prevention (79%, rank 1/27). Furthermore, it shows the second-highest activity rate with regard to Equitable

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Education (55%, rank 2/22) and Labour Market Access (80%, rank 2/19). Fewer policy reforms were introduced for improving the Health system (46%), ranking the country only 16th out of 19 countries. However, Luxembourg already has a very good health system in place and, therefore, a rather low need for the introduction of policy changes.

Quality The overall quality of policy reforms in Luxembourg was evaluated as being relatively high (0.76), ranking the country nearly within the top third (rank 7/20). Though only a few steps were taken towards improving the health system, the experts were very optimistic that these actions were advancing public health even further (1.33, rank 2/19). With regard to Poverty Prevention, the experts expect the reforms to have also quite positive effects (0.99, rank 9/24). Equitable Education was assessed to be in the greatest need of reform, compared to both other policy objectives and other EU member states. While governmental action addressing this pressing issue is the second highest out of 22 EU member states, the experts only expect slim improvement (0.50, rank 13/21).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need Luxembourg shows a comparatively high need for policy reform with regard to Poverty Prevention. While the need is relatively low for the total population (1.33) and senior citizens (0.56), the experts assessed that certain demographic and societal groups are at high risk of poverty. A strong need for policy change was assessed for single parents (2.44) and children (2.63). Moreover, reforms addressing poverty prevention among Luxembourg's foreign-born population (2.67) and refugees fleeing to the country (2.71) are even more urgently needed. Concerning this issue, one expert stressed that the need for reform in the dimension of Poverty Prevention is closely linked to that in Equitable Education. Poverty can only be prevented if education is improved, specifically by ensuring universal access to education and allowing for the use of different languages in primary school – objectives which would greatly benefit the aforementioned groups. However, Equitable Education remains a dimension in which Luxembourg also shows a very high need for reform (2.58, rank 22/22).

Activity Luxembourg shows the highest activity rate among the 27 assessed EU member states in the dimension of Poverty Prevention. Regarding the above-mentioned at-risk groups, the activity rate was also remarkably high: 58 percent and 81 percent of the need for poverty prevention policies addressed the foreign-born population and refugees, respectively, which are among the highest activity rates compared to other countries. Addressing the need for single parents was even assessed as at a remarkable 100 percent, and at 88 percent for children.

Quality The quality of the policy reforms introduced was rated as being at an above-average level (0.99, rank 9/24). The experts are even more optimistic about the impact of policies addressing poverty prevention for refugees (1.67, rank 1/13).



Equitable Education

Need Luxembourg has the highest need for reform in the dimension of Equitable Education among the 22 assessed EU member states (2.58, rank 22/22). Across all six policy objectives, the country performs below the EU average. However, the most pressing challenges are ensuring equal opportunities (2.28, rank 22/25), ensuring the independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (3.00) and integrating refugees (3.00). As mentioned above, these three pressing issues also contribute to putting refugees and foreign-born people at a very high risk of poverty. According to the experts, reviewing language policies and the use of tracking (streaming) in the secondary education system are at the forefront of what needs to be done next. The experts described tracking as being particularly harmful to foreign-born students. Making it easier to switch between streams, postponing tracking to an older age, or even reducing the number of streams in secondary education are described as possible solutions.

Activity The activity rate in the dimension of Equitable Education is 55 percent, which ranks Luxembourg in 2nd place out of 22 assessed countries. With regard to the three most urgent policy objectives for Luxembourg mentioned above, a similarly high activity rate can be seen. While activities ensuring equal opportunities are just above average (44%, rank 11/25), a lot is being done towards ensuring the independence of learning success from a person's socioeconomic background (67%, rank 4/21) and integrating refugees (67%, rank 2/18).

Quality Though the need for education reform is high and the experts assessed a high activity rate, especially regarding the most pressing challenges, they were less optimistic about the impacts of the policy changes introduced. Though they anticipate a positive influence (0.50, rank 13/21), they expect it will be rather minor.

Labour Market Access

Need The need for reforms addressing Labour Market Access in Luxembourg is comparatively low (2.05), ranking the country within the top third. However, the experts assessed a greater need for reform concerning the objective of increasing employment for youth (3.00) as well as for women, the long-term unemployed, low-skilled workers and foreigners (2.67 each). Significantly less need was assessed for creating job opportunities for the total population and senior citizens (1.67 each). This corresponds with the need to prevent poverty for certain groups, as discussed above.

Activity Again, the activity rate is very high: 80 percent of the need for policy reform was addressed, which is the second-highest rate in this dimension. A lot of governmental action was also undertaken to improve job opportunities for certain groups, such as women and foreigners (75% each) as well as for refugees (63%) and young people (67%). However, more needs to be done regarding long-term unemployment (38%).

Quality The experts assess the reforms introduced to have positive but moderate impacts (0.47, rank 9/17).

Health

Need With a good health system in place, reforms are less needed in Luxembourg when compared with 19 assessed EU member states (1.90, rank 5/20). A slightly higher need was assessed for the policy objective of accessibility and range of health services (2.00, rank 7/19). For this objective, the experts remarked that access to health care still depends on social status, and that it needs to be improved for certain societal groups, such as homeless people and drug addicts.

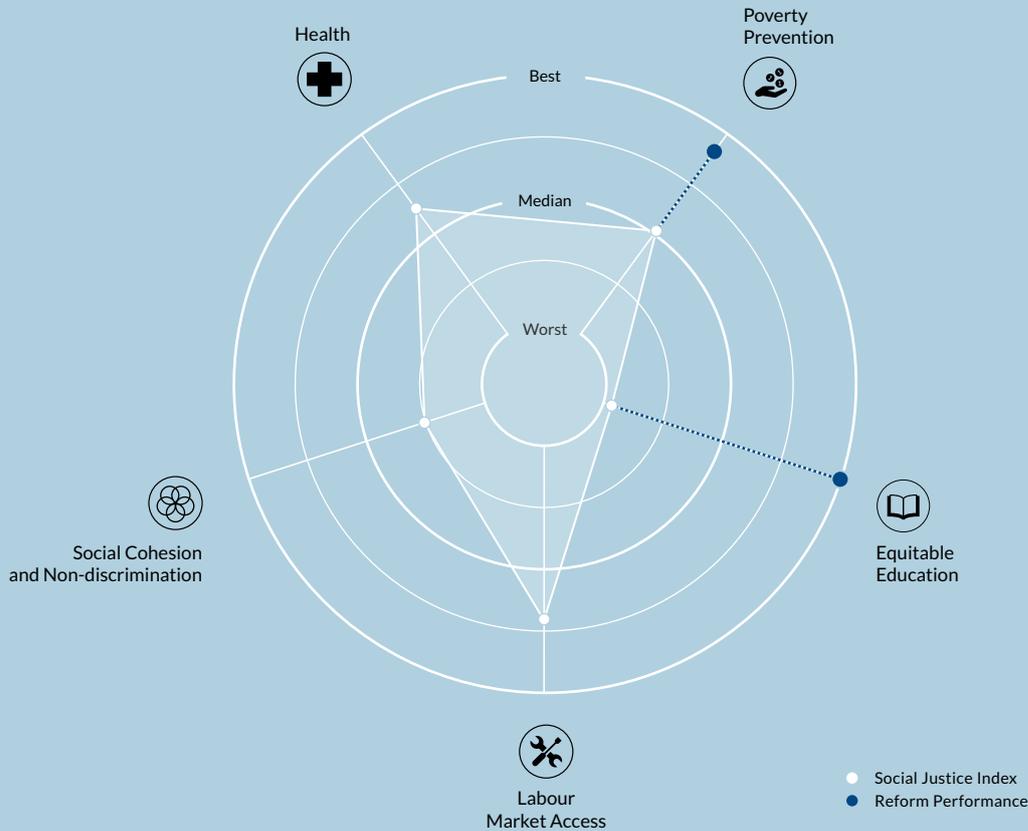
Activity The activity rate was relatively low (46%, rank 16/20). While it was high regarding improvements to public health and the quality of health care (63 and 67%, respectively), little was done to improve the accessibility and range of health services (38%).

Quality The quality of health care reform was assessed as being the second highest out of 19 evaluated EU member states (1.33).

Findings by Country

 **Malta**

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Malta's overall need for policy reform was evaluated at 2.27, ranking the country 17th out of 23 assessed EU member states. The biggest challenge for Malta is reforming its educational system so as to ensure Equitable Education for its population. As stated in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), Malta has one of the highest rates of young people dropping out of education and training. In fact, according to the experts, reducing the rate of early school leavers is the policy objective with the highest need of reform (2.83, rank 19/21). Though the need for policy reform with regard to Poverty Prevention (2.03, rank 15/27) and the improvement of Health (2.25, rank 11/20) was significantly lower, it was still higher than in most other EU member states.

Activity Malta is very active in introducing reforms overall (52%, rank 4/23), but especially regarding its most pressing issue of ensuring Equitable Education (68%, rank 1/22).

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Quality For the aforementioned reform of Malta's education system, a strong and positive impact is expected (0.75, rank 7/21). Furthermore, the experts anticipate that policies addressing poverty prevention will have an even stronger influence (1.37, rank 1/24).

Dimension Findings

 Poverty Prevention

Need The need for reforms addressing Poverty Prevention in Malta is relatively high (2.03), ranking the country 15th out of 27 assessed EU member states. This need is highest for refugees (2.27). One expert stated that Poverty Prevention has not yet addressed this group specifically. Three other experts stressed that more support programmes for refugees are required, and that it must be ensured they have the right to claim benefits and be legally employed.

Activity The activity rate for this dimension is comparatively high (52%), ranking the country 6th out of 27 countries. While little action was taken to prevent poverty for foreign-born people (0%) and refugees (14%), a considerable proportion of the required need was addressed for seniors (66%), the total population (69%), single parents (79%) and children (86%).

The experts reported that various measures have been undertaken. Schools have introduced ‘breakfast clubs’ so that working mothers can drop off their children early and have them provided with a meal. Free child care was introduced for children below the age of 3, while the number of day care centres was increased. Children’s allowances were raised for low-income families, and tax rates were lowered for low-income workers. In 2015, ‘in-work’ benefits were introduced for low-income families with both parents working, and this was extended to families with just one working parent in 2016. The idea is to give incentives for people to work while also supporting low-income families. Still, one expert criticized the fact that, instead of providing benefits, the minimum wage should have been raised. The minimum state pension was increased for seniors citizens, though a few experts stated that overall pensions are still inadequate.

Quality The quality of the above-mentioned reforms is scored very highly (1.37, rank 1/24), in particular with regard to young people (1.69, rank 2/24) and single parents (1.45, rank 1/23). The assessment of how refugees will be affected is divided: While one expert claims that refugees should also benefit from the policy changes, two experts voice concern that more measures directly addressed at refugees are required. Though the overall judgment is very positive, one expert comments: “Reforms tend to target specific aspects and not take a holistic approach. Poverty is not only an issue of financial income, but also of health, education and employment opportunities.”¹

Equitable Education

Need In the 2015 SJI, Malta is given a score of 4.70 out of 10 in the dimension of Education, ranking it 27th out of 28 EU member states. Only Slovakia receives a lower score. Hence, the experts assess the need for reforming the Maltese educational system as being very high. The experts put a special emphasis on the need to improve early and pre-primary education, with one suggesting that a national strategy should be introduced.

The highest need for action in a single policy objective was attested as reducing the rate of early school leavers (2.83, rank 19/21). Whilst being the group at the highest risk of poverty, refugees are also poorly integrated into the Maltese education system. The experts assessed the need for reform here to be at 2.67 (rank 16/18). Equally high is the need to ensure the independence of learning success from a person’s socioeconomic background (rank 15/21). One expert comments: “At all levels of the educational system, there seems to be some need to address the needs of those children coming from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. These children feature significantly among the low-achievers in the Maltese educational system, particularly at the end

¹ Suzanne Gatt, Department of Early Years and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida

of primary school.”² The need for reform addressing the quality of teaching from early education to secondary schooling is comparatively high, as well (2.67–2.80, rank 20–22).

Activity According to the experts, many pressing challenges are being addressed through government actions (68%). In fact, Malta is assessed to be the most active country in the dimension of Equitable Education. The activity rate is particularly high for the policy objective of reducing the rate of early school leavers, where 100 percent of the need is being addressed. To reduce the number of early school leavers, Malta has introduced an ‘Alternative Learning Programme’ which targets students who are falling behind on their studies and are at risk of becoming or are de facto early school leavers. The programme allows students to take academic courses as well as vocational training.³

Malta is also very active regarding the policy objectives of equal opportunities (72%, rank 4/25), quality of teaching (65%, rank 3/22) and independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background (68%, rank 1/21). In advancing these objectives, a ‘National Curriculum Framework’ which identifies learning areas and cross-curricular themes was introduced in 2013. It was followed up in 2015 by the ‘Learning Outcomes Framework’, which is setting specific learning goals for each educational level. While the introduction of free child care centres is primarily targeted at incentivising parents to work, they also provide early and pre-primary education. Furthermore, preschool teachers are now trained up to degree level in order to increase the quality of their teaching. At the tertiary level, more evening and online courses are provided in order to allow people with other professional, social or family commitments to study flexibly.

The activity rate is lower with regard to the integration of refugees (58%), but still quite high when compared to other EU member states (rank 4/18). As an example of a specific measure taken by the government for this policy objective, experts report that a yearlong language class is being offered to selected non-English-speaking students, teaching them English, Maltese and the local culture.

Quality The overall quality of these reforms is scored highly by the experts (0.75, rank 7/21). A very positive influence is expected from improving equal opportunities (1.03, rank 6/18) and ensuring independence of educational success from a student’s socioeconomic background (1.33, rank 2/16). The impact of the reforms on the quality of teaching is assessed as being slightly lower (0.72, rank 6/15). However, it has to be pointed out that the decision to train preschool teachers to degree level was very well received by the experts, and is expected to improve the quality of the educational experience for young children (1.00).

As for the ‘Alternative Learning Programme’ and other activities addressing the rate of early school leavers, the experts are quite critical, assessing the quality as being rather low (0.40, rank 8/17). One expert wrote: “The Alternative Learning Programme keeps students in school but does little to improve their basic key competences and entice them to stay on at school at

² Victor Martinelli, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida

³ MEDE Annual Report 2014 <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Publications/Documents/Annual%20Reports/2014/MEDE%20Annual%20Report%202014.pdf>

post-secondary level.”⁴ A second expert added: “I do not think that addressing the problem in the last year of schooling is going to have any positive effect on the students’ ability to sit for their examinations successfully. This is an issue that has its roots in the students’ primary and early-secondary education.”⁵

The lowest scores are given to the initiatives addressing the integration of refugees (0.26, rank 6/15) because not all refugees are being offered the described courses and the real impact of such classes is questioned by the experts.

Health

Need In the area of Health, Malta scores a respectable 7 out of 10 in the 2015 SJI, ranking it 11th out of 28 countries, or just behind the UK, France and Germany. The experts assess the need for policy reform in the health sector at 2.25 (rank 11/20). The highest deficits are found in the quality of health care (2.67, rank 20/22) and the sustainable and fair financing of the Maltese health system (2.67, rank 17/20).

The need for reforms is rated lower regarding the efficiency of the health system (2.00, rank 4/20), the accessibility and range of health services (2.00, rank 7/19) and unmet needs for medical help (1.67, rank 7/17).

Activity As for the most pressing issues of improving the quality of health care and the financing of the health system, little action has been taken to address the perceived need (38 and 0%, respectively).

The policy objective with the highest activity rate is the improvement of public health (57%, rank 19/24). Regarding this objective, the ‘Non-communicable Disease Strategy’ was introduced in 2010. On the one hand, it sets priorities for common diseases, predominantly cardiovascular illness and diabetes; on the other, it also includes programmes addressing health promotion and disease prevention for the forthcoming years. Furthermore, Malta adopted its first ‘National Cancer Plan’ in 2011.

⁴ Suzanne Gatt, Department of Early Years and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida

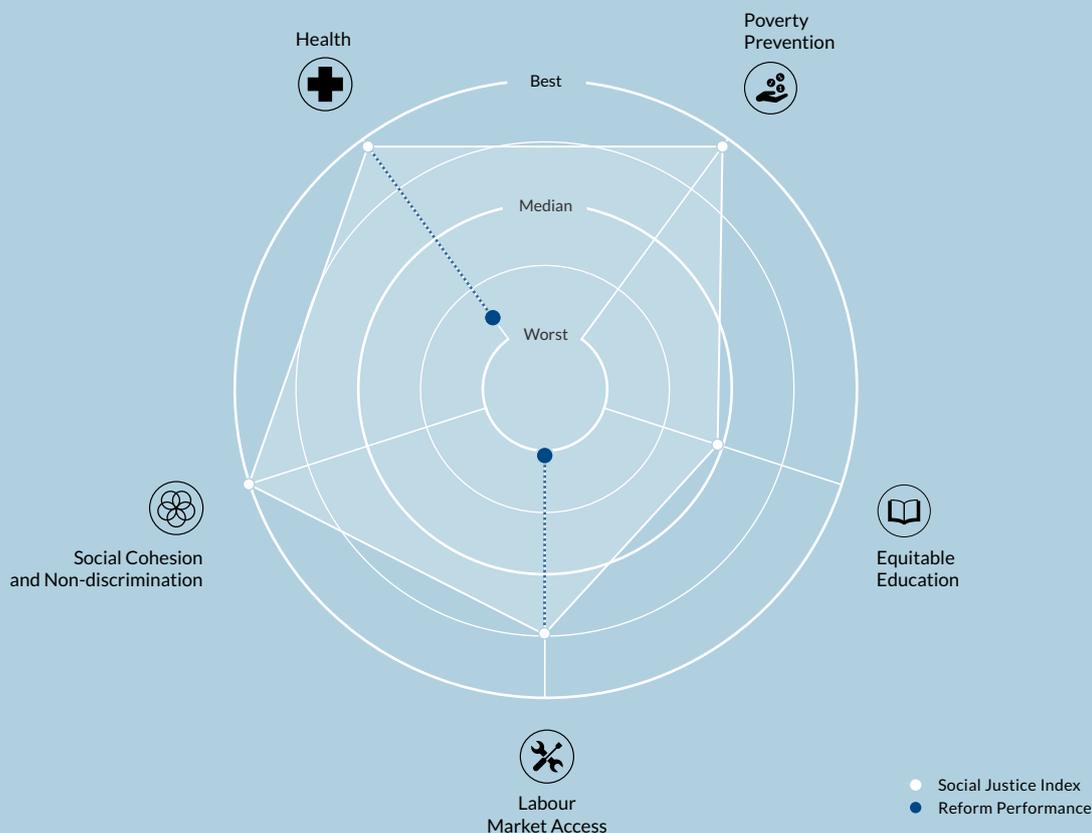
⁵ Victor Martinelli, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida

Findings by Country



The Netherlands

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need According to the experts, the Netherlands has one of the lowest needs for policy reform (1.72), ranking it 3rd and only behind Denmark and the Czech Republic. This accords with the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), in which the country scored 6.84 out of 10 and ranked 4th out of 28 EU member states. Only Sweden, Denmark and Finland received better scores. Looking at the different dimensions, the need for reform is lowest in the field of Poverty Prevention (1.36, rank 1/27) and Health (1.68, rank 3/20). It is slightly higher for the dimensions of Labour Market Access (1.78, rank 2/19) and Social Cohesion (2.04, rank 7/18), but relatively low compared to other EU member states.

Activity The Netherlands has addressed 48 percent of the need for reform, ranking the country 8th out of 23 assessed EU member states. The highest activity rate is seen in the dimensions of Labour Market Access (64%) and Health (63%), ranking the country 5th out of 19 and 8th out of 20 countries, respectively. While a moderate activity rate is assessed for the dimension of Social Cohesion (41%, rank 12/18), the activity rate of 18 percent with regard to Poverty Prevention is one of the lowest of all the EU member states examined (rank 25/27).

Overall Reform Performance Ranking

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Dimension Findings

Poverty Prevention

Need The need to reform Poverty Prevention in the Netherlands is the lowest of 27 assessed EU member states (1.36). This accords with the country's performance in the 2015 SJI, where the Netherlands scored 7.19 out of 10 and ranked 2nd out of 28, trailing only the Czech Republic. When looking at the different subgroups, the need is slightly higher with regards to refugees (1.75) and foreign-born people (1.71). In contrast, the need is extremely low for the total population (1.00), senior citizens (0.86), children (1.43) and single parents (1.43).

Activity As a consequence of the low need to reform Poverty Prevention policies, the Netherlands show a very low activity rate (18%) in this dimension. Only two countries have shown lower activity in this area: Spain (17%, rank 26/27) and Slovenia (10%, rank 27/27). However, the activity rate was significantly higher with regards to refugees (34%) and senior citizens (56%).

Labour Market Access

Need The need for reforming Labour Market Access in the Netherlands is particularly low when compared to other EU member states (1.78, rank 2/19). Only Denmark has a lower need. Looking at the different policy objectives, the need is at its lowest for reducing in-work poverty and the number of low-wage earners (1.33), ranking the Netherlands 1st out of the 18 EU member states examined. With regard to reducing temporary contracts on involuntary basis (2.14, rank 7/16) and increasing employment (1.87, rank 4/22), the need is higher, though it is still one of the lowest in comparison to other European countries.

Activity In this dimension, the Netherlands is the fifth-most-active country and has addressed 65 percent of the need for policy reform. The activity rate is higher concerning the increase in employment for the total population and senior citizens (79% each) than for the foreign-born population and refugees (47 and 50%, respectively).

One of the new policies reported on by the experts is the ‘Work and Security Act’ (‘wet werk en zekerheid’), which sets new regulations with respect to renewing fixed-term contracts. The length of consecutive temporary contracts was cut from three to two years, and periods between two consecutive contracts before a new chain of temporary contracts begins was extended from three to six months.

Quality The experts criticized the ‘Work and Security Act’ as an incentive for employers to hire more people with a fixed-term contract instead of a permanent contract, thereby creating more flexibility with their staff rather than creating more employment. Furthermore, some experts stated that while this policy might increase employment, it risks creating jobs in precarious conditions. And though it was the government’s intention to create the conditions under which temporary employees qualify for a permanent contract sooner, the experts’ assessment is that flexibility has increased rather than decreased. This assessment is also clearly reflected in the evaluation of the quality of those policy reforms that have been introduced: While they are mildly conducive to increasing employment (0.18, rank 12/19), they will have a negative impact on job chances for refugees (-0.44) and the number of temporary contracts on involuntary basis (-0.68, rank 11/12).

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The need for reform in the dimension of Social Cohesion is comparatively low (2.04, rank 7/18). This accords with the 2015 SJI, which gives the Netherlands a score of 7.97 out of 10 and ranks it 1st in the dimension of Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination. Looking at the policy objectives, the need for improving gender equality is high (2.33); in fact, it is the 5th highest among the 17 countries assessed (rank 13). In contrast, the need to reduce income and wealth inequality is comparatively low (1.75, rank 3/22).

Activity The reform activity was rather moderate regarding social cohesion overall (41%, rank 12/18) as well as regarding income inequality (57%, rank 8/22) and gender equality (29%, rank 12/16) more specifically.

 Health

Need In this dimension, the Netherlands has one of the lowest needs for reform overall, ranking 3rd out of 20 countries. Only Denmark and Austria have a lower need. The lowest need for improvement was assessed for the unmet needs for medical help (0.67 rank 1/17), the accessibility and range of health services (1.00, rank 2/19), the outcome performance of the health system (1.33, rank 1/19) and its efficiency (1.75, rank 3/20). With regard to the remaining four policy objectives, the need was assessed as ranging between 2.00 and 2.33, ranking the Netherlands in the top 10 for each objective.

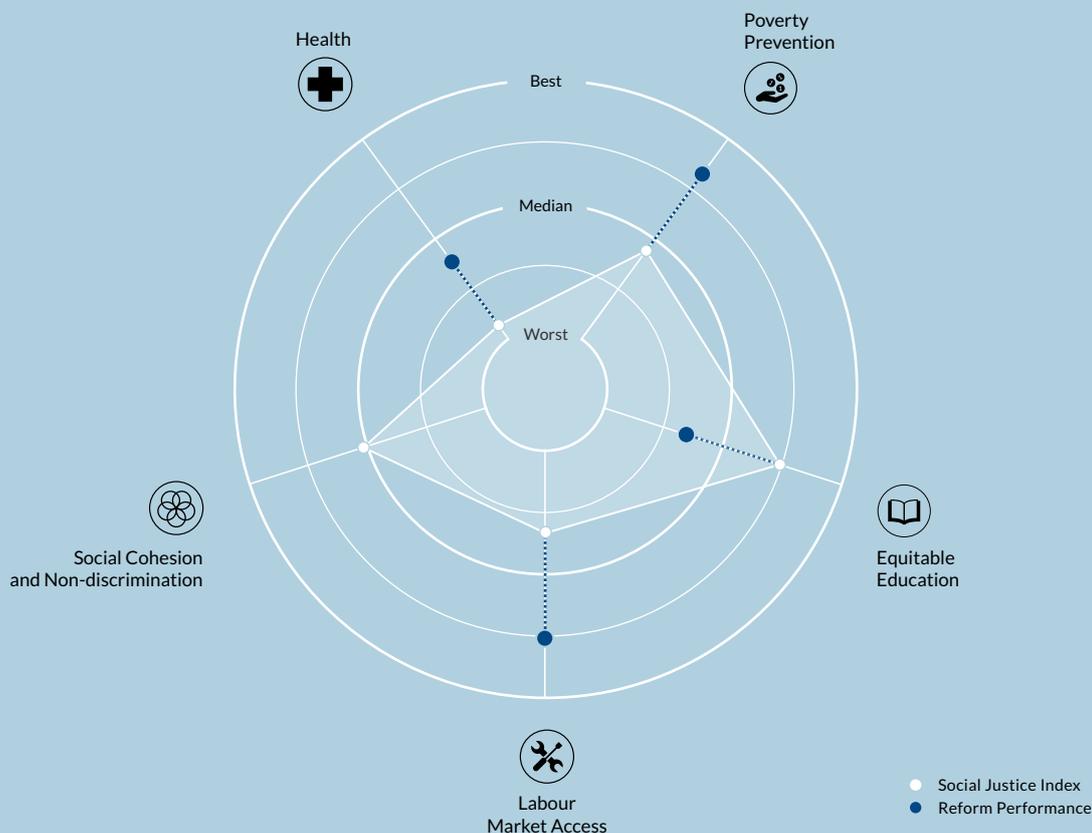
Activity The activity rate for this dimension is the 8th highest, with 63 percent of the need for reform being addressed through government action. The National Prevention Programme 2014–2016 ‘Everything Is Health’ focuses on integrating cure, prevention, health in the community, at school and at work. In an attempt to contain costs, long-term care has been decentralised and handed over to municipalities.

Findings by Country



Poland

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Poland's overall need for policy reform was assessed as being 2.13, or just below the EU median of 2.18, ranking the country 10th out of 23 countries. Looking at the different dimensions, the highest need is seen with regard to Labour Market Access (2.61, rank 18/19). This accords with the low score of 5.51 out of 10 in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), which ranks the country 19th out of the 28 EU member states assessed. However, it has to be pointed out that Poland has continually improved its score over the years.

As stated in the 2015 SJI, providing accessibility to high-quality Health care services is Poland's most pressing challenge. The need for reform is high (2.43, rank 15/20), as the range and accessibility of health services is low and waiting times are relatively long.

One area in which Poland has achieved considerable success is the provision of Equitable Education. The need for reform is assessed as being comparatively low (1.68, rank 6/22). Poland also ranked among the top 10 in the 2015 SJI, with a score of 6.71 out of 10 (rank 8/28). As stated in the 2015 SJI, it has a low rate of early school leavers. Furthermore, reforms undertaken

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



by the first Tusk government are reported to have had positive effects on the effectiveness and quality of education.

The experts also report that Poland has a comparatively low need for reform policies addressing Poverty Prevention (1.80, rank 7/27). However, this stands in contrast with a low score of 4.85 in the 2015 SJI, which ranks the country only 16th out of 28 countries.

Activity Poland is one of the most active countries, addressing 49 percent of its need for policy reforms (rank 7/23). This activity rate was sustained across all policy dimensions: Poverty Prevention (51%, rank 7/27), Equitable Education (45%, rank 5/22), Labour Market Access (53%, rank 9/19) and Health (47%, 15/20).

Quality The quality of Poland’s reforms is evaluated as a moderate 0.68 by the experts, ranking the country 11th out 20 European countries. The positive impact on the different policy dimensions is highest for Poverty Prevention (1.04, rank 6/24) and lowest with regard to the provision of Equitable Education (0.17, rank 15/21).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The need to reduce poverty in Poland is assessed as being highest for children (2.68, rank 18/27). Addressing poverty among single parents is also rated a fairly high priority (1.95), though quite low when compared to other EU countries (rank 3/27). The third-most-at-risk subgroup in Poland is senior citizens (1.68). Though the need for reform concerning the foreign-born population (1.29) and refugees (1.58) is low, a few experts specifically pointed out that the integration of refugees in the labour market and in education is crucial to fighting poverty. And while energy credits have been introduced by the Polish government, one expert states: “Fuel poverty (energy poverty) is addressed with energy benefits, which reach only 7 percent of the target group. Thus, this particular issue should be targeted with a new instrument.”¹

Activity Half of the need for policy reform is being addressed in Poland (51%, rank 7/27). Looking at the most pressing issue, reducing child poverty, 88 percent of the need is being addressed. As one of the most prominent policies, the ‘Family 500+’ programme was introduced in April 2016. Under this subsidy programme, families will receive 500 PLN for their second child and subsequent children up to the age of 18, regardless of their income. Families with one child will also profit from these benefits if their monthly income is below 800 PLN, or if their child is disabled and their income is below 1,200 PLN. Regarding the second-most-pressing issue, preventing poverty among elderly people, the experts report that 75 percent of the need is being addressed. One policy instrument is pension indexation.

Quality The quality of the policies introduced was evaluated as being remarkably high (1.04, rank 6/24). Experts are even more optimistic about the impact on child poverty (1.38). However, a few experts state that a negative side effect of the ‘Family 500+’ programme could be that it discourages women from joining the jobs market by increasing family incomes. The experts are more sceptical about the expected influence on poverty among elderly people, with a few specifically stating that senior citizens will not profit from pension indexation.



Equitable Education

Need Poland succeeds fairly well in providing Equitable Education. The overall need for reform is assessed at 1.68, ranking the country 6th out of 22 EU member states. The lowest need is seen for the policy objectives of early school leavers (1.00), ranking it 2nd behind the Czech Republic, and the quality of teaching (1.25), ranking it 4th out of 22 countries. The highest need for reform is seen in ensuring equal opportunities within early (2.67) and pre-primary education (2.56). Many experts state that nurseries, kindergartens and preschool education are not always accessible for families living in rural areas. Thus, access to early education and pre-primary education is inadequate

¹ Dominik Owczarek, Foundation Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), Warsaw

and needs reform. Similarly, the need for reforming the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources in early and pre-primary education are evaluated as being high (2.00 each). In an attempt to address the issue, the former Polish government lowered the school age from 7 to 6, and made preschool education mandatory for 5-year-olds. However, these reforms have been reversed by the current Law and Justice (PiS) government.

Activity The activity rate in this dimension is comparatively high overall (45%, rank 5). Regarding measures to ensure equal opportunities, the activity rate is very high (77%, rank 3/25). Less governmental activity is observed with respect to the less urgent objectives of early school leavers (25%) and quality of teaching (27%).

Quality The quality of reforms is assessed at merely 0.17, ranking Poland 15th out of 21 countries. Though the impact of policies on equal opportunities is evaluated more positively (0.67, rank 10/18), many experts criticise the above-mentioned reversal of policies. According to the experts, the likely consequences are increased inequalities in access to education for children from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds and children living in rural areas.

✳ Labour Market Access

Need The need for reforming Labour Market Access in Poland is the second highest among 19 EU countries (2.61). While a need for increasing employment (2.18, rank 10/22) is discerned, the more pressing challenges are improving precarious employment, namely, reducing temporary contracts on involuntary basis and decreasing in-work poverty and the number of low-wage earners (2.83 each, rank 16/16). To address these issues, one expert reported that a national minimum wage is being discussed in Poland but has not yet been introduced.

Activity The activity rate addressing Labour Market Access is comparatively high (53%, rank 9/19), with a focus on reducing temporary contracts on involuntary basis and decreasing in-work poverty (71%, rank 3/16). Furthermore, the experts assess that 47 percent of the need to reduce in-work poverty (rank 9/16) and 39 percent of that to increase employment (rank 18/22) is being addressed.

Quality The experts expect the policies introduced to have quite a positive impact on the dimension overall (0.83, rank 5/17) and on the reduction of temporary contracts on involuntary basis in particular (1.00, rank 4/12). While the impact on increased employment (0.55, rank 9/19) and lower in-work poverty is assessed positively, as well, one expert states that the impact is fairly limited, as minimum wages remain too low and access to employment contracts continues to be limited.

 Health

Need Health remains a pressing issue for Poland. In the 2015 SJI, the country only scored 4.11 out of 10, ranking it 26th out of 28 countries, ahead of only Latvia and Romania. Accordingly, the experts also assessed the need for reform to be high (2.43, rank 15/20). The need was also high across the eight policy objectives for this dimension, ranging from 2.13 (unmet needs for medical help: rank 14/17) to 2.73 (improvement of public health: rank 19/24). The second- and third-most-pressing issues are observed in the quality of health care and the efficiency of the health system. One expert says that the health care system in Poland performs poorly partly because of a lack of investment and partly because of the lack of political will to make health care a priority. Additionally, many seek health services outside Poland, namely, in Western European countries.² Just as stated in the 2015 SJI, many experts report that long waiting times are a pressing issue in Poland's health care system. While a policy with a focus on oncological care was introduced in early 2015, the experts still saw a need to introduce new policies addressing this issue more thoroughly at the time this survey took place.

Activity The activity rate for this dimension is comparatively low (47%, rank 15/20). However, it is significantly higher for the most pressing issue of improving public health: 100 percent of the need for reform here is being addressed by government action (rank 1/24). This is largely thanks to a 'Law on Public Health' introduced in September 2015, which sets regulations for the structure, main stakeholders and financing of the public health system in Poland. Furthermore, it proposes coordination mechanisms and defines the responsibilities of individual stakeholders more clearly.

Quality The experts evaluated the quality of the introduced reforms as being moderate. While the overall quality is assessed at 0.56, ranking the country 11th out of 19 countries, no improvement is expected with regard to the quality of health. A more positive outlook is shared with respect to the improvement of public health (0.88, rank 7/19). However, most experts commented that it was still too early to assess what impact the most recent reforms will have on the Polish health care system, though a few added that the 'Law on Public Health' provided a limited number of specific details. One expert states: "The law is very general, without any concrete [proposals]. The position of public health in the overall health system will not change and is more or less marginal. The dominant concern is medicine. One reason is that public health is dominated by medical doctors."³ However, another expert remains more optimistic, writing: "For the first time, the public health agenda has been put at the highest legislative level. This novel law sets a framework for sustainable public health development in Poland. It is to be hoped that implementation of the Law on Public Health will help the prioritization of public expenditures on health-related areas and enhance the position of public health among many competing targets for public investment. It's difficult to foretell whether implementation is going to be successful."⁴

² Christoph Sowada, Institute of Public Health, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Krakow

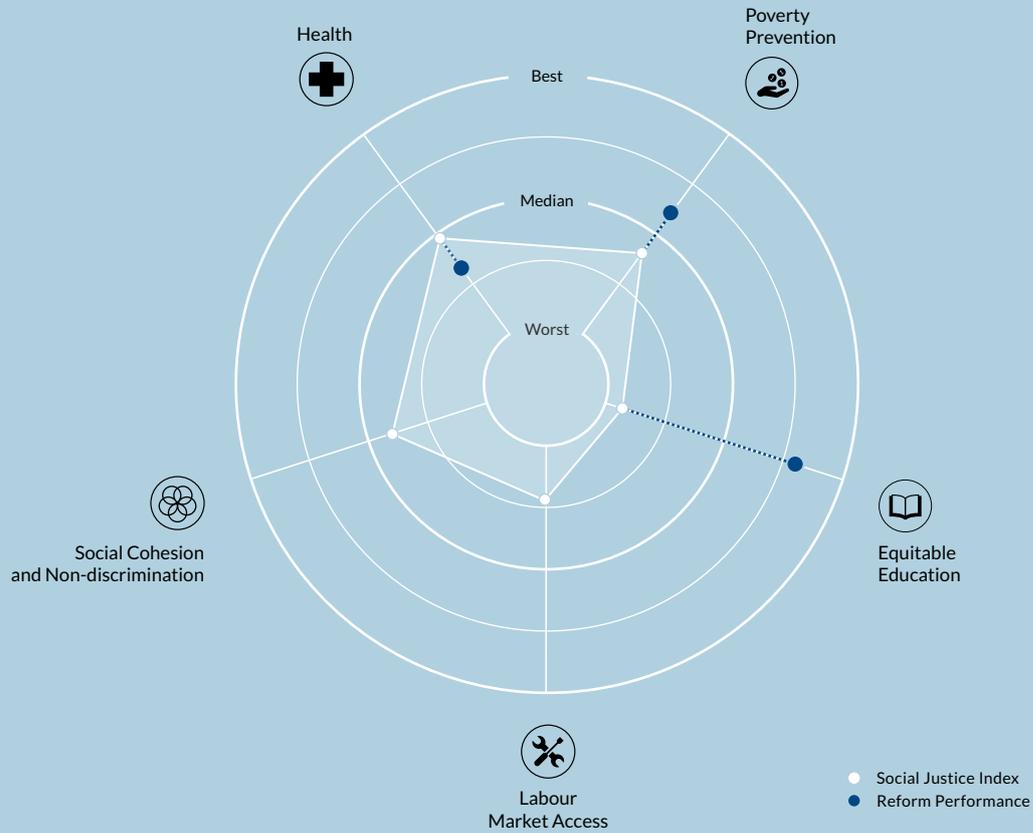
³ Christoph Sowada, Institute of Public Health, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Krakow

⁴ Tomasz Bochenek, Department of Drug Management Institute of Public Health, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Krakow

Findings by Country

Portugal

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Portugal performed poorly in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), ranking in the bottom half on all dimensions and even in the bottom five on Equitable Education. The country only scored 4.98 out of 10, which is clearly below the EU average (5.63). However, based on the experts' assessment, Portugal's need to reform is close to the EU median need of 2.18, ranking the country 13th out of 23 EU member states. With regards to Equitable Education, Portugal even ranked in the top 10 (1.93, rank 9/22). In contrast, the experts assessed the need to prevent poverty as the second highest out of 27 EU member states. This assessment is at variance with the SJI, which ranked Portugal 17th out of 28 countries in the dimension of Poverty Prevention.

Activity The activity rate of 42 percent is again close to the EU median (46%), ranking Portugal 16th out of 23 assessed countries. The rate is higher with regards to health (54%, rank 13/20) and unemployment (45%, rank 15/22), especially regarding reforms targeting unemployment within the total pop-

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



ulation and young people (75% each). Fewer policies have been introduced to improve Equitable Education (35%, rank 11/22) and to alleviate Poverty (38%, rank 12/27), with the exception of one programme targeting children (62%) and senior citizens (60%).

Quality The quality of newly introduced reforms is equal to the EU median (0.70), ranking the country 10th out of 20 EU member states. The score is even higher for poverty prevention (0.81, rank 12/24) and designing Equitable Education (1.26, rank 2/21). In contrast, the quality score regarding Health is significantly lower (0.31), ranking the country 15th out of 19.

Dimension Findings

Poverty Prevention

Need The 2015 SJI highlighted Poverty Prevention as one of the major policy challenges for Portugal, referring to an increased proportion of the population being at risk of poverty or social exclusion as well as to a widening

gap in poverty levels between generations. In fact, the report pointed out that child poverty had increased between 2007 and 2015, while poverty among the elderly had decreased. These findings are also reflected in the experts' assessment, which puts the need to alleviate poverty for the total population at 2.42, ranking the country second to last. Only Bulgaria has a slightly higher need for reform (2.44). Likewise, while the need to alleviate poverty for elderly people is equal to the overall need in this dimension (2.42), the need for initiatives targeting child poverty is significantly higher (2.68). The second-most-at-risk group is single parents (2.63). With regards to the foreign-born population, the need for reforms was assessed at 2.42. However, one expert commented that more data is needed in order to properly assess the need, stating: "We need a comprehensive study of the economic well-being of migrants (first and second generation) in Portugal. The Statistics Office is forbidden by law to produce data disaggregated by ethnicity."¹

Activity Portugal's activity rate of 38 percent for the dimension of Poverty Prevention is equal to the EU median. While the rate was much lower for the foreign-born population (5%), refugees (26%) and single parents (25%), more policies targeting the total population (50%), children (62%) and senior citizens (60%) have been introduced. One expert describes how government activity changed after the 2008 financial crisis, writing: "A severe austerity regime, including cuts in welfare programmes and tax increases, was introduced in 2011, and it reinforced the negative impact of the crisis on vulnerable families. In the period from July 2014 to January 2016, there have been no policy reforms, except emergency programmes, but a new government (since 26 November 2015) has announced a strategy for combatting poverty based on three axes: First, draw up a national anti-poverty strategy for children and young people in an integrated way, reinstating [a] family allowance as the reference state support for families. Secondly, restore the previous level of social benefits, which guaranteed a minimum social standard for people subject to vulnerability (such as a 'Social Insertion Income and Income Supplement for the Elderly'). Finally, dignify work, creating new public support for low-wage [earners], and prevent working families with children from living in poverty."²

Quality The quality of recent reforms is assessed at 0.81, ranking Portugal 12th out of 24 EU member states. While the experts evaluated policies targeting the total population as practically ineffective (0.15), they are more optimistic about a positive impact of programmes targeting poverty among children (1.15), single parents (1.00) and the elderly (0.80). One expert voiced the criticism that "social emergency policies (such as food for poor people) didn't reduce poverty levels, [but] only alleviated stress for most severe forms of poverty. More structural policies are needed to enable families to become less dependent."³

¹ Amílcar Moreira, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon

² Pedro Hespanha, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra

³ Pedro Hespanha, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra

Equitable Education

Need Portugal performed poorly in the dimension of Equitable Education in the 2015 SJI, ranking third to last, ahead of only Malta and Slovakia. However, the experts are less pessimistic about the Portuguese education system. Based on their assessment, the need to reform is 1.93, ranking the country 9th out of 22 EU member states assessed. Like most European countries, Portugal has a high need to ensure the independence of learning success from a person's socioeconomic background (2.33, rank 7/25) and to reduce the rate of early school leavers (2.00, rank 10/21). A comparatively low need to reform was assessed with regards to the integration of refugees (1.80, rank 6/18), the quality of teaching (1.67, rank 8/22) and the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources in education (1.81, rank 7/23). However, it has to be pointed out that, on the policy objectives of structural conditions and quality of teaching, the need was assessed as being significantly higher for early education and lifelong learning than for other educational levels. For example, as the need to improve the quality of teaching in pre-primary through tertiary education was assessed as ranging between 1.40 and 1.60, the need with regards to early education (2.00) and lifelong learning (2.17) was assessed as being significantly higher.

While Portugal ranks in the top 10 on five policy objectives, the country performs worse with regards to equal opportunities in education. The need to reform was assessed at 1.98, ranking the country 12th out of 25. Though the need is assessed as being very low for primary education (1.00), it is significantly higher for tertiary education (2.40), lifelong learning (2.40) and early education (2.30) – or, in short, for most non-mandatory levels. Several experts also stressed in their written comments that universal early education should be introduced to foster equal opportunities for children.

Activity The highest activity rate in this dimension is discerned for the integration of refugees (60%), ranking the country 3rd out of 18 countries assessed. Much has also been done to reduce the number of early school leavers (41%) and to increase equal opportunities in education (43%), especially with regards to pre-primary education (70%). Less has been done to decrease the dependence of learning success from a person's socioeconomic background (29%, rank 10/21), to improve structural conditions in education (21%, rank 13/23) and to improve the quality of teaching (13%, rank 16/22).

Quality The overall quality of newly introduced policies is assessed at 1.26, ranking the country 2nd out of 21 EU member states.

Health

Need The need to reform the health system is assessed at 2.24, ranking the county 10th out of 20 countries. Though the policy objective of health governance received a moderate need score (2.25, rank 9/19), one expert highlights its importance for overall improvement in this dimension, stating: “This is probably one of the major problems and the potential solution of many of the actual problems in the field of health. Probably the qualification of primary care namely in the eyes of the public, and a clear articulation between primary care and hospitals will be relevant.”⁴

⁴ Constança Paúl, Abel Salazar Biomedical Sciences Institute, University of Porto

Activity The activity rate for the dimension of Health is 54 percent, ranking Portugal 13th out of 20 countries. However, the rate with regards to sustainable and fair financing of the health system (76%) and its outcome performance (82%) is the fourth highest.

Quality The experts assess the quality of newly introduced policies at 0.31 (rank 15/19). While initiatives addressing the need to reform the efficiency as well as the sustainable and fair financing of health system are expected to be practicably ineffective (0.11 and -0.07, respectively), a positive impact is anticipated with regards to the improvement of health care (1.10, rank 3/19). One expert comments on the effects of reforms, stating: “Comprehensive policy reforms agreed with the so-called troika were taken after 2011 (among which: decrease the burden on public expenditure; monitor and assess professionals’ performance, namely regarding drugs prescription; merge facilities and so on. Little has been known until today regarding the real effects of this policy change. The macro-level indicators (e.g. [the] population’s health outcomes) have not captured significant changes besides the exponential rise of users’ out-of-pocket payments (from about 25% in 2007 to more than 33% in 2012). On the other hand, I was responsible for a national-scale study conducted among doctors and designed to grasp their real experiences before/during the time the bailout lasted in Portugal. The results are expressive: more than half of the doctors (53.3%) claim that more patients are abandoning treatments.”⁵

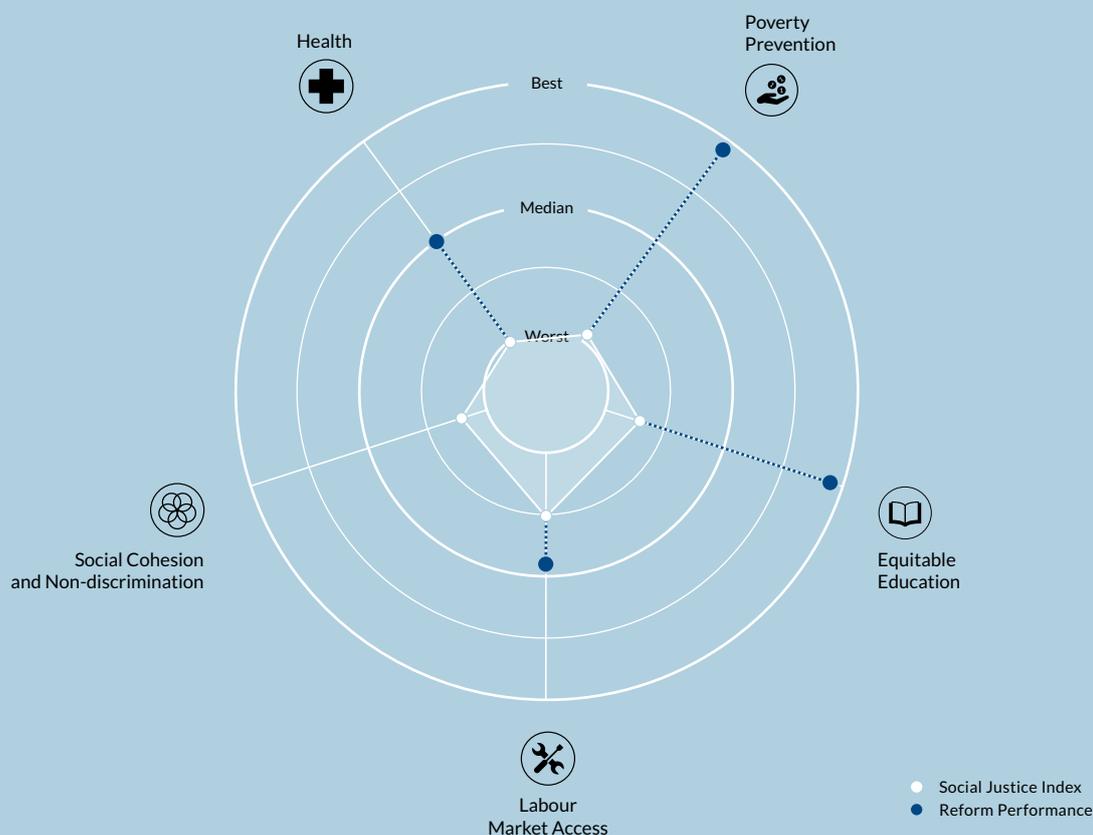
⁵ Tiago Correia, ISCTE - Lisbon University Institute

Findings by Country



Romania

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Though the overall need for policy reform in Romania is high (2.27), it is certainly not one of the highest among EU countries, ranking Romania 13th out of 23 assessed EU member states. This is rather surprising, as the country performed poorly in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), where it receives an overall score of 3.74 out of 10 and a ranking of 27th out of 28 countries.

Looking at the different dimensions of the 2015 SJI, Romania ranks among the bottom five performers in four of the five policy fields. In accordance with this, the experts evaluated the policy dimensions of Health (2.78, rank 20/20) and Equitable Education (2.47, rank 20/22) to be most urgently in need of reform. In contrast to the findings of the 2015 SJI, the experts assess Social Cohesion (1.83, rank 3/18), Labour Market Access (2.28, rank 9/19) and Poverty Prevention (1.96, rank 13/27) as less pressing challenges for the country – also when compared to other European countries. This can partially be explained by the fact that the subgroups of the foreign-born population and refugees are attested as having a low need for policy changes, which influences the overall need. For instance, while the need to increase employment

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores

	Performance			Quality					
	Score	Rank	Rank	Need	Activity	Gap	Rank	Score	Rank
Romania Overall	+0.40	6 /20	6	2.27	51%	1.76	N 16 /23 A 5 /23	+0.77	6 /20
Poverty Prevention	+0.73	2 /24	2	1.96	61%	1.35	N 13 /27 A 2 /27	+1.20	2 /24
Equitable Education	+0.50	2 /21	2	2.47	38%	2.09	N 20 /22 A 9 /22	+1.31	1 /21
Labour Market Access	+0.21	10 /17	10	2.28	60%	1.68	N 9 /19 A 6 /19	+0.35	10 /17
Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination				1.83	32%	1.51	N 3 /18 A 14 /18		
Health	+0.32	10 /19	10	2.78	62%	2.16	N 20 /20 A 9 /20	+0.52	14 /19

for the total population is assessed at 2.43, the aforementioned groups only receive a need of 0.33 each. One expert explains that foreign-born people and migrants are weakly represented in the Romanian population, so fewer initiatives are needed to address their social inclusion.

Activity Romania has the fifth-highest activity rate. According to the experts, 51 percent of the need for reform is being addressed by government action. The rate is the highest in the dimension of Health (62%, rank 9/20), Labour Market Access (60%, rank 6/19) and Poverty Prevention (61%, rank 2/27), for which only Luxembourg ranked higher. The activity rate is lower for the dimensions of Social Cohesion (32%, rank 14/18) and Equitable Education (38%, rank 9/22), though it is still above average in comparison to other EU member states for the latter one.

Quality The quality of reforms introduced in Romania are assessed as being high (0.77), ranking the country 6th out of 20 EU countries. Furthermore, Romania received the second-best quality score for its reforms on Poverty Prevention (1.20) and the best quality score for initiatives designed to safe-

guard Equitable Education (1.31). The experts also expect a positive impact on the Health system (0.52, rank 14/19), though they are less positive about the improvement of Labour Market Access (0.35, rank 10/17).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The 2015 SJI highlighted Poverty Prevention as a dimension most desperately in need of reform, as a significant proportion of Romania's population is living in or is at risk of poverty and/or severe material deprivation. Accordingly, Romania received a low score of 1.39, ranking the country 27th and only ahead of Greece. Though the experts see a pressing need for reform addressing Poverty Prevention, it is quite moderate in comparison to other EU member states (1.96, rank 13/27). However, the need is assessed very differently for various subgroups: Whereas introducing policies addressing the foreign-born population (0.87) and refugees (1.22) is a comparatively low need, addressing the poverty of children (2.79) and the total population (2.35) is assessed as being very high – also in comparison to other EU member states. These numbers more closely reflect the need for reform as assessed by the 2015 SJI.

One expert suggests that “single parents should be helped with special allowances, tax exemptions and other measures.”¹ Another one adds: “Higher wages and pensions should be introduced.”² One expert recommends: “The amount of social aid granted on the basis of the Law on the Minimum Income Guarantee (Law 416/2002 – revised) should be increased and differentiated according to one's housing situation. Now, there is no difference in the amount of the benefit for homeowners, rent-paying tenants and homeless families, or those living in sub-standard shacks at the peripheries (such as segregated and impoverished Roma settlements). Social services, in particular job-mediation and subsidized child care services for job-seeker parents, should be developed.” With regard to senior citizens, the expert adds: “The poverty of the elderly population is larger and deeper in rural areas, as they often receive the minimum social pension (less than €100 a month) and have limited access to subsidized care services. The minimum social pension should be increased and, due to the lack of public home care services in rural areas, larger subsidies should be granted to accredited NGOs providing home care services.”³

Activity The activity rate is assessed as the second highest out of 27 assessed EU member states. Again, very little is being done for the foreign-born population (0%) and refugees (15%), and a lot more with regard to children (90%) and the total population (70%).

The ‘National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction’ and the ‘Strategic Action Plan for 2015–2020’ have been introduced in Romania. They include both policies addressing the individual across various dimensions (e.g. social benefits, improving education and health) and area policies which address rural and marginalised urban communities, including the Roma.

According to the experts, a large proportion of initiatives to prevent poverty in Romania take the form of social benefits. More specifically, children's

¹ Alexiu Teodor Mircea, West University of Timisoara

² Alina Botezat, “Gh. Zane” Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Bucharest

³ Cristina Rat, Sociology Department, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca

allowances were doubled (in June 2015), a kindergarten attendance allowance has been introduced, the means-tested family allowance was increased (in December 2014), the minimum salary has been increased several times since 2012, pensions have been increased to adjust for inflation, and the minimum state pension has been increased by approximately 14 percent.

Quality The measures introduced are expected to have quite a positive effect on the prevention of poverty (1.20, rank 2/24), especially with regard to children (1.43). One expert argues: “For the means-tested family allowance for the needy, the conditionality of compulsory school attendance for each school-aged child (6–15) has strong adverse effects, as the neediest families, especially in rural areas, do not have the means to ensure regular school attendance for their children. Instead of promoting school attendance, this conditionality actually denies benefit to the neediest.”⁴ One expert also addresses the involvement of stakeholders, stating: “Increasing the role of stakeholders (public, non-governmental or private organisations) during all stages of the policymaking process (as recently happened in the area of child protection, social inclusion of the disabled) may well increase ownership and ensure active involvement and collaboration in implementing the reforms. If assumed by all actors involved and effectively applied, the poverty exit policies will result in a constant reduction of poverty.”⁵ With regard to the role of schools in the fight against poverty, another expert states: “A large body of medical and socioeconomic research provides evidence on the negative effects of hunger on children’s school performance. To improve the lives of the most marginalized children, education plays a crucial long-term role. In this sense, schools may constitute an efficient platform to attack and overcome the detrimental effects of hunger and poverty.”⁶

Equitable Education

Need The high need to reform the education system in Romania is recognised both by the experts (2.47 rank 20/22) and the 2015 SJI (score 5.04 out of 10, rank 24/28). The need is evaluated as being high across five policy objectives, ranking Romania in the bottom five on four of them. The experts highlight that a public debate and new policies addressing the high dropout rate in the Romanian education system are urgently needed. One expert points out that a first step would involve gathering data on this issue, as only student associations collect data on school dropouts at present. Other aspects in need of more attention are early education for children under the age of three and lifelong learning. Two experts state that no coherent policy has been introduced at a national level on these issues, with one commenting: “We don’t have early-childhood and lifetime-learning educational strategies.”⁷ Numerous experts also discuss the insufficient training of teachers in Romania.

Activity The overall activity rate for this dimension is 38 percent, ranking Romania 9th out of 22 countries. It is higher with regard to ensuring equal

⁴ Cristina Rat, Sociology Department, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca

⁵ Eva Militaru, National Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection, Bucharest

⁶ Alina Botezat, “Gh. Zane” Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Bucharest

⁷ Alexiu Teodor Mircea, West University of Timisoara

opportunities (65%, rank 7/25), improving the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources (45%, rank 5/23) and safeguarding the independence of learning success from children's socioeconomic background (48%, rank 6/21). The activity rate is lower with regard to improving the quality of teaching (22%, rank 14/22) and reducing the rate of early school leavers (15%, rank 14/21).

The experts report that an assessment of the education system was undertaken in 2009. Together with reform targets, it was submitted to public debate in 2010. A new 'National Education Law' was drafted and then adopted in 2011. It addresses all levels and aspects of the Romanian education system, containing measures against unequal opportunities at all stages of education. The implementation process is gradual. One specific step already taken addresses pre-primary education. Following an initiative of the NGO Ovidiu Rom, the government introduced a national programme called 'Every Child in Kindergarten' in 2015. It aims to increase the attendance of children living in rural areas at kindergarten to at least 90 percent by 2020. It specifically targets disadvantaged families by introducing cash transfers as incentives for children's attendance at kindergarten. It is hoped that this will especially increase kindergarten attendance among Roma children, which is very low at present. Accordingly, the activity rate for ensuring equal opportunities for pre-primary children is particularly high (81%).

Quality The experts expect the reforms to have quite a positive effect on the performance of the education system (1.31, rank 1/21). They are particularly optimistic with regard to safeguarding equal opportunities (1.41, rank 2/18). One expert stated that she was particularly optimistic about the impact of the 'Every Child in Kindergarten' programme on Roma children's attendance and, subsequently, their learning success at the primary education level.

Labour Market Access

Need Though the need to reform Labour Market Access is comparatively modest (2.28, rank 9/19), it is much higher for different policy objectives and subgroups. The need is assessed as highest for the objectives of reducing the number of temporary contracts on involuntary basis (2.50, rank 11/16) and reducing in-work poverty as well as the number of low-wage earners (2.50, rank 12/18). One expert comments that it will be crucial to implement the reform of active social protection under a programme the government has announced and parliament has approved already.

The need to increase employment overall is assessed as being comparatively low (1.85, rank 2/22). The experts see a very low need for policy changes addressing the employment of the foreign-born population or refugees (0.33 each) and, in comparison to other EU member states, little need to increase job opportunities for the long-term unemployed (2.29). However, a much higher need is assessed with regard to the total population (2.43) and young people, in particular (2.86).

Activity The activity rate for this dimension is high (60%, rank 7/19), especially as regards increasing employment (91%, rank 1/22). The activity rate is significantly lower with regard to reducing in-work poverty (31%, rank 11/16), the most pressing issue in this dimension. The experts report that, in order

to reach its Europe 2020 target of increasing employment to 70 percent of the population aged 20–64, Romania has modernised labour market institutions and increased institutional capacity, introducing reforms targeted at subgroups at the same time. Furthermore, Romania has introduced strategic objectives for the country as a whole, including a ‘National Strategy for Life-long Learning 2015–2020’ and a strategy to lower the percentage of early school leavers to below 10 percent.⁸

One expert reports that Romania modified its unemployment insurance act in 2013 with the aim of making more active measures available, including for the long-term unemployed and young people. A ‘Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan’ has been presented, with a second plan with more ambitious targets already underway. Using available financing from the European Social Fund extensively, 28 Youth Guarantee centres have been founded, and improved entrepreneurship programmes for young people and NEETs, in particular, have been launched. A law on traineeships has been adopted as of 2014, and the apprenticeship act has been modified as of 2013. Another expert reports that companies have been incentivised to hire young graduates and/or senior citizens in their last three years before retirement through financial grants.

The experts report that the minimum salary was increased several times by the government between 2012 and 2015. Furthermore, they observed “a very small increase in the minimum income (now 175 euro net)”.

Quality The quality of reforms regarding this dimension is evaluated at 0.35 (rank 10/17), implying that the experts do not expect a significant impact on labour market access. However, their assessment is much more optimistic as regards the policy objective of increasing employment (1.32, rank 1/19). One expert comments that the financial incentives for companies to hire young graduates and senior citizens close to retirement have already had a positive impact on the unemployment rate for these two subgroups. Another expert concludes that the reforms introduced have been well designed but lack adequate financing.

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The need to improve Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination is assessed as being comparatively low overall (1.83, rank 3/18), and the same holds true for the two policy objectives of reducing income and wealth inequality (2.00, rank 4/22) and improving integration policy (0.83, rank 1/17). However, one expert comments that the Roma population still faces strong discrimination in Romania.

Romania is struggling to reduce its rate of early school leavers. Therefore, the need to reduce the NEET rate remains high (2.25, rank 7/15). Furthermore, the need to improve gender equality is high, as well (2.25, rank 12/17). One expert points out that while a National Agency for Equality between Men and Women has been re-established, it mostly remains inactive. The most recent strategy for advancing gender equality dates to the 2010–2012 period.

⁸ Cristina Lincaru, National Scientific Research Institute for Labor and Social Protection, Bucharest

Activity The activity rate in this area is comparatively low, with only 32 per cent of the need for reform being met. The rate is particularly low with regard to decreasing income and wealth inequality (12%, rank 21/22).

Health

Need In the 2015 SJI, Romania only scored 3.09 out of 10, ranking last out of 28 countries for the Health dimension. The experts assess the need for reform at the maximum of 3.00 on four policy objectives, namely, the improvement of public health, the quality of health care, the sustainable and fair financing of the health system, and the outcome performance of the health system. The need for improving the health system's efficiency is rated at a high 2.80 (rank 18/20). With regard to health care governance (2.33, rank 12/19) and the accessibility and range of health services (2.33, rank 13/19), the need is assessed as being slightly lower.

However, with regard to the latter objective, one expert comments: "In 2011, a number of municipal hospitals and ambulatory clinics were closed by the government with the aim of raising the efficiency/cutting costs in the health care system. This measure was not followed by a solution for the communities that these hospitals were serving and, thus, increased the gap in health care accessibility between large urban communities and rural and small city communities. No one has ever made an impact evaluation of that measure in terms of costs saved vs. population health needs to be covered – and how much it actually cost to bring all those people into the big medical centres. There are still a lot of GP offices in rural areas that have no practitioners. There are no policies that would offer real incentives for GPs to practice there. This also applies to hospitals in small urban communities that have been renovated and equipped with EU funds, but function at minimal capacity due to lack of personnel."⁹

Furthermore, one expert comments on the need for political will: "Public health should have a more prominent part in the Romanian Ministry of Health's strategic planning and consequent resource allocation. Currently, there is an acute shortage of financial resources, not enough specialized human resources, zero political interest and poor population knowledge of/education in the importance of public health. In terms of recommendations, the causes are diverse and intricate, and so would the solutions. The most important thing that is missing is political interest. Once we manage to get that, things will move – faster or slower – in the right direction."¹⁰ Another expert argues similarly by stating: "From previous experience, reforms are not fully successful due to lack of enforcement and political instability. The success of reforms is ensured when the change is related to an EU regulation that should be transposed by the country or is among the conditionalities established in order to attract funds from the EU or other international financial bodies."¹¹

With regards to unmet needs, one expert states: "Financially, the law regulates access by providing health insurance, but funds are extremely depleted and ineffective, such that a great part of the population which is entitled

⁹ Petru Sandu, Department of Public Health, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

¹⁰ Petru Sandu, Department of Public Health, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

¹¹ Silvia Gabriela Scintee, National School of Public Health Management and Professional Development, Bucharest

to guaranteed tests and treatments is placed on waiting lists with delays of 3 to 6 months. Secondly, there are no at-home services performed for those in need of house care, not even on a monthly basis. This is all due to the inefficiency of the way funds are allocated, but also to the fact that the system receives insufficient funds.”¹²

Activity The activity rate for the Health dimension is relatively high (62%, rank 9/29). The lowest activity rate is assessed for the objective of improving the outcome performance of the health system. All other objectives receive high activity rates (of 50% or higher), with 100 percent of the need to improve health care governance being met. The experts report that a ‘National Health Strategy 2014–2020’ (known as ‘Health for Prosperity’) has been introduced by governmental decree. The strategy consists of three strategic areas with different targets: (1) public health development (maternal and child health, combatting double burden of disease in population, health in relation to the environment); (2) health services development (a system of basic community support services for vulnerable groups, regionalisation/concentration of hospital care and creating regional networks of referral, creating networks of health care providers); (3) transversal measures development (development of health system governance; strengthening national, regional and local management capacity, planning and monitoring of public health and health services; promoting research and innovation in health).

One expert adds: “The National Authority for Quality Management in Healthcare was created in 2015. Its roles include: elaborating, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the national strategy for quality assurance in health; drafting legislative proposals to ensure harmonisation with international regulations; elaborating accreditation standards, methods and procedures for health care providers; accrediting training and technical consultancy providers in the field of health quality management; evaluating, re-evaluating and accrediting health providers and monitoring that appropriate quality standards are in place in health care facilities at all levels of care; performing research activities in the area of health services quality.”¹³

With regard to increasing the efficiency of the health system, one expert summarises the reforms aimed at cutting costs: “introduction of claw-back tax for reimbursed drugs (2009); modification of the reference price system (2009, enforced in 2014); new mechanisms introduced to monitor on a monthly basis health care expenditure (2012); introduction of e-prescriptions for reimbursed drugs (2012); introduction of the health insurance card (2015); increasing efficiency in the health system through e-health (piloted at the moment, proposed extension).”¹⁴ Furthermore, she also lists reforms at the hospital level: “decentralization of administration of public hospital (2010); National Strategy for Hospital Rationalization (2011); National Plan for Hospital Beds (reduction) for 2014–2016; introduction of patient copayment in in-patient care (2013)”.¹⁵

¹² Alexandra Gheondea, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest

¹³ Silvia Gabriela Scintee, National School of Public Health Management and Professional Development, Bucharest

¹⁴ Silvia Gabriela Scintee, National School of Public Health Management and Professional Development, Bucharest

¹⁵ Silvia Gabriela Scintee, National School of Public Health Management and Professional Development, Bucharest

Quality The quality of these new reforms is positively evaluated at 0.52 (rank 14/19). However, two experts illustrated with an example (the health card) how a good reform could miss its target when its implementation is inadequate. One expert states: “The patient’s electronic health card was introduced in order to have a more clear picture of the health services provided and avoid fraud (i.e. requests for state reimbursement of services that were never offered). However, the way this service was introduced and how it’s currently (not) functioning, make most of the people in the health system believe this was yet another preferentially allocated contract. The card doesn’t store patient records, and many times the validation system is not functioning properly.”¹⁶ Another expert adds: “[The health insurance card] is likely to facilitate the better use of public funds for health. However, most passwords for the cards have been set by the medical nurses and doctors without asking for the patients’ opinion or preserving the secrecy of the code. In this way, most cardholders’ PIN numbers are the date of birth of the owner. In this way, this leaves room for fraud.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Petru Sandu, Department of Public Health, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

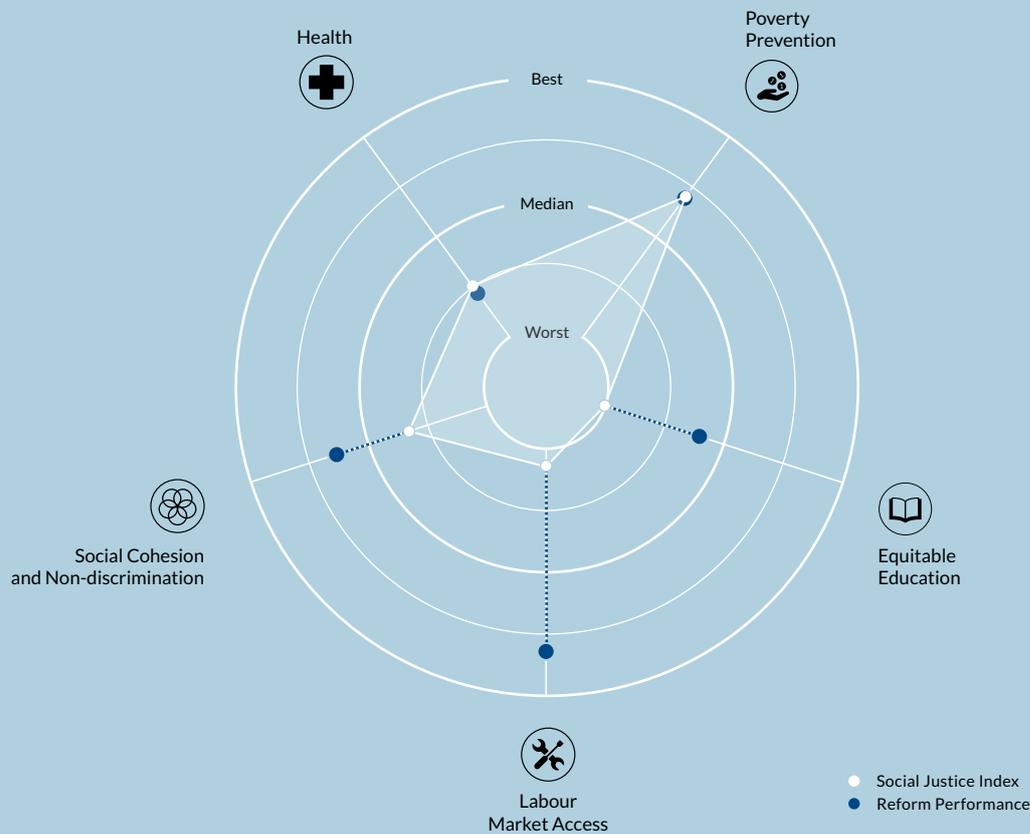
¹⁷ Alexandra Gheondea, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest

Findings by Country



Slovakia

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Based on the experts' assessment, Slovakia has the fourth-lowest overall need for social reforms (1.75) and also ranks among the top five in four dimensions. The experts assess the need as being particularly low with regard to improving Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (1.54, rank 2/18), advancing Poverty Prevention schemes (1.46, rank 3/27), ensuring the provision of Equitable Education (1.63, rank 4/22) and reforming Labour Market Access (1.83, rank 4). Only with regard to improving the Health system is the need to reform comparatively high (2.30, rank 14/20). These results partially stand in contrast to the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI): While Slovakia achieved considerable success in the dimension of Poverty Prevention (6/28), it ranked among the bottom 10 in the other four dimensions, namely, Equitable Education (28/28), Labour Market Access (26/28), Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (20/28) and Health (21/28). Furthermore, the 2015 SJI pointed out that improving education opportunities as well as access to the labour market are the most pressing issues for Slovakia.

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores

	Performance			Quality					
	Score	Rank	Rank	Need	Activity	Gap	Rank	Score	Rank
Slovakia <i>Overall</i>	+0.27	12 / 20	12	1.75	32%	1.43	N 4 / 23 A 22 / 23	+0.83	5 / 20
Poverty Prevention	+0.38	8 / 24	8	1.46	36%	1.10	N 3 / 27 A 16 / 27	+1.04	7 / 24
Equitable Education	+0.10	13 / 21	13	1.63	18%	1.53	N 4 / 22 A 18 / 22	+0.54	11 / 21
Labour Market Access	+0.45	4 / 17	4	1.83	49%	1.34	N 4 / 19 A 11 / 19	+0.91	2 / 17
Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination	+0.37	5 / 12	5	1.54	43%	1.17	N 2 / 18 A 9 / 18	+0.86	6 / 12
Health	+0.10	15 / 19	15	2.30	19%	2.20	N 14 / 20 A 20 / 20	+0.54	13 / 19

When looking at specific societal groups, the experts consistently assess the need for reforms addressing the foreign-born population and refugees as being low. For instance, the need to reduce the risk of poverty for these subgroups was only evaluated at 0.60 and 0.67, respectively, compared to 1.36 for the total population. The integration of refugees in the education system is assessed at 1.25, compared to an overall need on the dimension of Equitable Education of 1.63. Furthermore, the need to increase their employment is assessed as being significantly lower (1.11 each) than for the total population (2.45). Finally, the need for integration policies is assessed as being equally low (0.87). Most experts explain their assessment by referencing the low numbers of refugees and foreign-born people in Slovakia, while one describes the country’s asylum policies as extremely restrictive.

Activity Overall, Slovakia has one of the lowest activity rates. According to the experts, the government has addressed only 32 percent of the need to reform, ranking the country second to last, only in front of Spain. The activity rate is particularly low on the dimensions of Health (19%, rank 20/20) and Equitable Education (18%, rank 18/22), which was identified by the 2015 SJI as one of the most pressing issues.

However, it has to be pointed out that government activity addressing foreign-born people and refugees is consistently evaluated as being extremely low across various dimensions. The activity rate is close to or in fact zero for the objectives of reducing poverty (foreign-born 8%, refugees 0%), integrating refugees into the educational system (0%), increasing employment (0%) and improving integration policies (0%). This is not very surprising, as the need for reforms on these issues is assessed as being very low, as well.

Quality The quality of the reforms is assessed as being high (0.83), ranking the country in 5th place. Looking at the dimensions, the experts expect a positive impact from reforms on Poverty Prevention (1.04, rank 7/24), Labour Market Access (0.91, rank 2/17), Social Cohesion (0.86, rank 6/12) and, to a lesser extent, Health (0.54, rank 13/19).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need According to the experts, the need for reducing poverty in Slovakia is comparatively low (1.46, rank 3/27). These results accord with the findings of the 2015 SJI, which explains that the low need is due to the country's relatively even income-distribution patterns. Furthermore, the report stressed that Slovakia has achieved considerable success on this dimension, especially with regard to preventing poverty for senior citizens, since 2007. However, it did point out that the risk of poverty is much higher for children and young people. The experts' evaluation is also in accord with this: While the need to introduce poverty prevention schemes directed at elderly people is assessed at 1.65, the need is much higher for children (2.05), but also for single parents (2.41). One expert comments that the minimum income should be raised to improve children's living conditions, and that measures addressing work-life balance should be designed to help single parents. The comments of most experts focus on employment and the need to reform labour market access in order to prevent poverty. One expert explains: "There is a general lack of opportunities to work. Several regions have extremely high long-term unemployment (more than 25%), [and] several groups have virtually no access to employment (poorly educated, Roma communities)."¹ One expert also points out that the majority of poor people in Slovakia are long-term unemployed. Therefore, he argues, policies should focus on increasing their employment.

Activity Overall, the activity rate for this dimension is comparatively low. According to the experts, the government has addressed only 36 percent of the need for reform. Policies have mostly aimed at reducing the risk of poverty for senior citizens (68%), for children (52%) and, to a much lesser extent, single parents (21%). Virtually no policy has been introduced to specifically address the risk of poverty for the foreign-born population and refugees.

Schemes reported by the experts include the 'National Action Plan for Children 2013–2017', which aims at building and developing a system for protecting the rights and interests of children by promoting policies that enable parents of children at risk of social exclusion to remain in the labour market. Furthermore, child care benefits have been raised, and the administrative

¹ Michal Páleník, Employment Institute, Bratislava

hurdles for recipients have also been reduced. With regard to senior citizens, the experts report that a minimum retirement pension was introduced in 2015. It targets elderly people who have worked for a minimum period of 30 years and would otherwise depend on social assistance benefits. The minimum pension is equal to 136 percent of the subsistence minimum.

Quality The reforms introduced by the government are expected to have quite a positive effect on poverty prevention. The experts assess the quality of new policies at 1.04, ranking the country 7th out of 24. The quality is assessed as being even higher for children (1.27) and the total population (1.30). Nonetheless, a number of experts comment critically on these policies. One expert states that the measures taken are very general in nature and do not reflect the needs of specific groups or regions. Another expert adds: “The majority of reforms are not targeted at some specific group of people who need help. For older people (in the area of pensions), greater solidarity is needed. The specific groups of people endangered by poverty (single-parent families, young people without work) gain no benefit from lower taxes (...) specific measures have to be prepared.”² Furthermore, one expert criticises the fact that the steps taken towards poverty prevention are too small to have any sustainable impact. For example, the allowance of free train rides for students and pensioners or the provision of a minimum pension are not effective in the fight against poverty in Slovakia.

Equitable Education

Need Although the 2015 SJI identified education as the dimension most urgently in need of reform, the experts assess the need for Slovakia as the fourth lowest among 22 assessed EU member states. The need is seen as being particularly low in the policy objectives of improving the quality of teaching (1.13, rank 2/22), integrating refugees (1.25, rank 5/18) and reducing the rate of early school leavers (1.40, rank 5/21). In contrast, the experts assess a higher need to better ensure equal opportunities in education (1.66, rank 7/25), especially with regard to early and pre-primary education (2.13 each), but even more so to improve structural conditions regarding financial and human resources (2.11, rank 15/23), again particularly in early and pre-primary education (2.40 and 3.00, respectively). Though still fairly low in comparative terms, the need for reducing the dependence of learning success from a child’s socioeconomic background is assessed as being the highest in this dimension (2.25, rank 5/21). As the 2015 SJI report states: “The PISA performance of Slovak students depends on their socioeconomic background more so than in any other EU country.”

Activity The activity rate in the dimension of Equitable Education is particularly low. Only 18 percent of the assessed need has been addressed, ranking the country 18th out of 22. Most worryingly, the activity rate is assessed at 0 percent for three policy objectives: the rate of early school leavers, the integration of refugees and – arguably the most pressing issue for Slovakia – the independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background.

² Ján Košta, Institute of Economic Research, Bratislava

One expert comments: “There has been no significant reform, and demographic changes will make the problems greater (mainly due to an increasing proportion of kids growing up in segregated communities and ghettos).”³

When looking at the pressing challenges of improving opportunities and structural conditions in early and pre-primary education, a much higher activity is observed: 57 percent with regard to equal opportunities at both educational levels, 26 percent regarding structural conditions in early education, and 60 percent for pre-primary education. The experts report that these activities mainly focus on increased funding for pre-primary education so as to increase capacity at this level. The main aim is to enrol 95 percent of children between the ages of four and five by the year 2020.

Labour Market Access

Need The main need in this dimension is assessed as increasing employment (2.16, rank 8/22). The need is much higher for most subgroups – with the exception of women (1.91), foreign-born people and refugees (1.11 each). While a need to increase job opportunities for the total population is assessed as being very high (2.45), it is even higher for the young (2.73), low-skilled workers (2.82) and the long-term unemployed (3.00). As for the latter, an expert comments: “For the long-unemployed (for example, Roma people living in shacks in Roma settlements), there is a need to undertake educational activities – owing to a lack of basic education – and then to do training activities for selected professions.”⁴

Activity The activity rate in the dimension of Labour Market Access is 49 percent, which is exactly the EU median (11/19). However, the activity rate is even higher with regards to increasing employment for the entire population (73%), the young (89%) and the long-term employed (70%), which is the subgroup most urgently in need.

The experts report a number of specific measures taken in this regard: Health and social security contributions for employees with low wages have been reduced, and subsidies have been provided to companies for employing the long-term unemployed or young people in their first job. With regard to women, child care benefits have been increased and maternity leave benefits introduced.

Quality The quality of the reforms introduced so far is assessed at 0.91, ranking the country 2nd out of 17 EU member states. The positive impact on the employment of the long-term unemployed people is evaluated as being particularly high (1.25). However, some experts also comment critically, stating that “generally, the money for active labour market policies is insufficient”⁵, especially when considering the high unemployment rate. Furthermore, as one expert notes: “Financial aid is relatively very low from the point of view of entrepreneurs. Employers should receive more services free of charge, and special information from specialized state agencies should be at their disposal, to be successful in the tough competition in the market. The state

³ Michal Páleník, Employment Institute, Bratislava

⁴ Rastislav Bednárík, Institute for Labour and Family Research, Bratislava

⁵ Ján Košta, Institute of Economic Research, Bratislava

should help them to sell their products.”⁶ Another adds: “The policies are slight; they target only 1 to 5 percent of the problem.”⁷

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The need to improve Social Cohesion is evaluated as being very low (1.54, rank 2/18), especially with regard to gender equality (1.38, rank 2/17), integration policies (0.87, rank 2/17) and the NEETs rate (1.75, rank 3/15). The need to decrease income and wealth inequality is assessed as being slightly higher (2.18, rank 7/22).

Activity In the dimension of social cohesion, 43 percent of the need to reform has been addressed (9/18). With regard to the most pressing objective of decreasing income and wealth inequality, only 33 percent of the need has been met. While the experts assess that no action has been taken to promote integration policies for foreign-born people or refugees, 70 percent of the need to advance gender equality has been addressed, ranking the country 3rd out of 17 for this policy objective. Here, a number of experts specifically point to the ‘National Strategy for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic 2014–2019’. The strategy does not set specific targets, but rather identifies main goals, such as strengthening women’s economic independence by removing gender gaps in the labour market, reducing gender differences in the participation of women and men in executive positions, as well as improving gender equality in education, science and research.

Quality The experts expect the measures taken to have quite a positive effect on social cohesion and non-discrimination; quality is rated at 0.86, ranking the country 6th out of 12. An even stronger impact is expected on income and wealth inequality (1.00, rank 2/9).

Health

Need Based on the experts’ assessment, the reform of the health system should be a priority for policymakers, as the need is evaluated as being the highest in this dimension (2.30, rank 14/20). For five of the eight policy objectives, the need is assessed as being much higher than in other EU countries: Reforms are needed to improve health care governance (2.50, rank 16/19), the outcome performance of the health system (2.55, rank 15/19), public health (2.57, rank 15/24), the quality of health care (2.58, rank 17/22) and – most urgently – the efficiency of the health system (2.73, rank 17/20). One expert explains: “There is a strong need for public health system reform. There is a strong need to highlight that a health impact assessment is crucial within any policy decision-making. Public health is a result of health- and non-health-sector activities and cooperation, under the leadership of public health experts. Public health is not a priority for politicians today because health priority is focused on the health care system and its organiza-

⁶ Ján Košta, Institute of Economic Research, Bratislava

⁷ Michal Páleník, Employment Institute, Bratislava

tion, and not on prevention based on the determinants of a health model. We need to improve advocacy for good health through all society segments. There is a big gap between the theory of public health and practice. Lack of awareness and interest in public health issues among policymakers outside health needs remedying.”⁸ Another expert adds: “We are lacking evidence-based public health policy.”⁹

Activity Slovakia is awarded the lowest activity rate: Only 19 percent of the need for reforms was addressed. No activity is registered for two policy objectives: health care governance and outcome performance of the health system. With regard to the most pressing issue in this dimension, improving the efficiency of the health system, only 18 percent of the need has been addressed (19/20).

Quality Though the experts expect a positive influence from the reforms in the Health dimension, they don’t anticipate a strong impact. The quality of reforms is assessed at 0.54 (13/19). With regard to the improvement of public health, reforms are assessed as being ineffective (0.00, rank 18/19).

⁸ Daniela Kállayová, Public Health Department, Trnava University

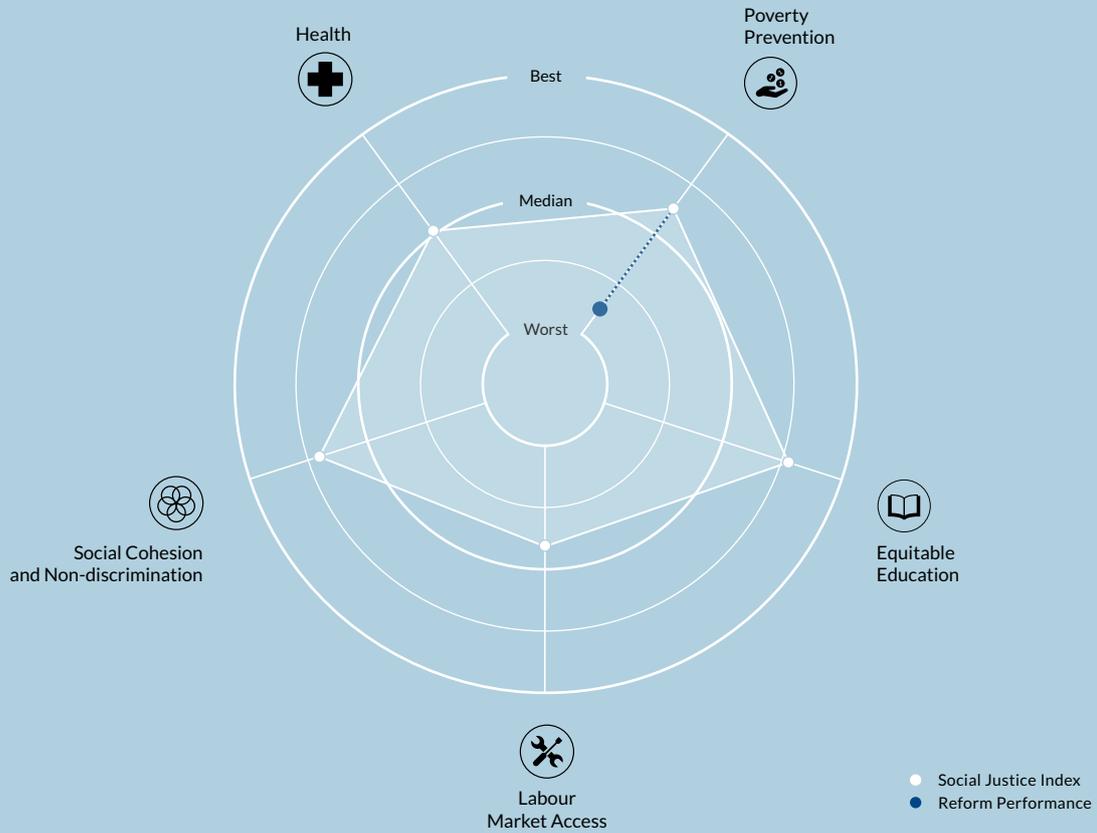
⁹ Tomáš Szalay, Health Policy Institute, Bratislava

Findings by Country



Slovenia

How does the country rank in the EU?



Dimension Findings

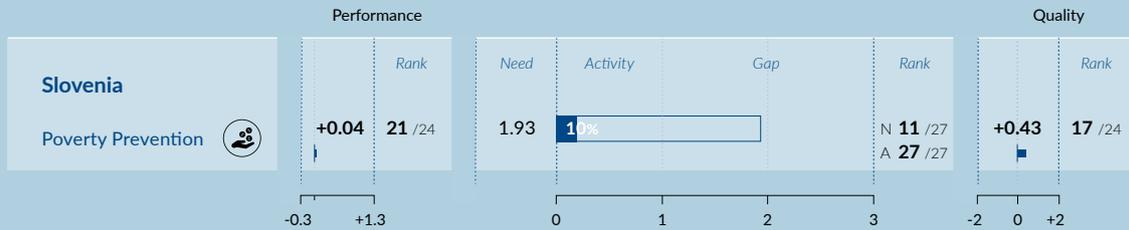
Poverty Prevention

Need The need to reform Poverty Prevention in Slovenia is assessed at 1.93, ranking the country 11th out of 27 EU member states. While the need to address child poverty is fairly low compared to other EU member states (2.00), it is comparatively high concerning senior citizens (2.50).

Activity Slovenia's activity rate in this dimension is the lowest out of 27 EU member states. No actions have been taken to target Poverty Prevention for the total population, senior citizens, single parents, the foreign-born population or refugees. Only a few initiatives have been taken to address child poverty (58%).

Overall Reform Performance Ranking

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Equitable Education

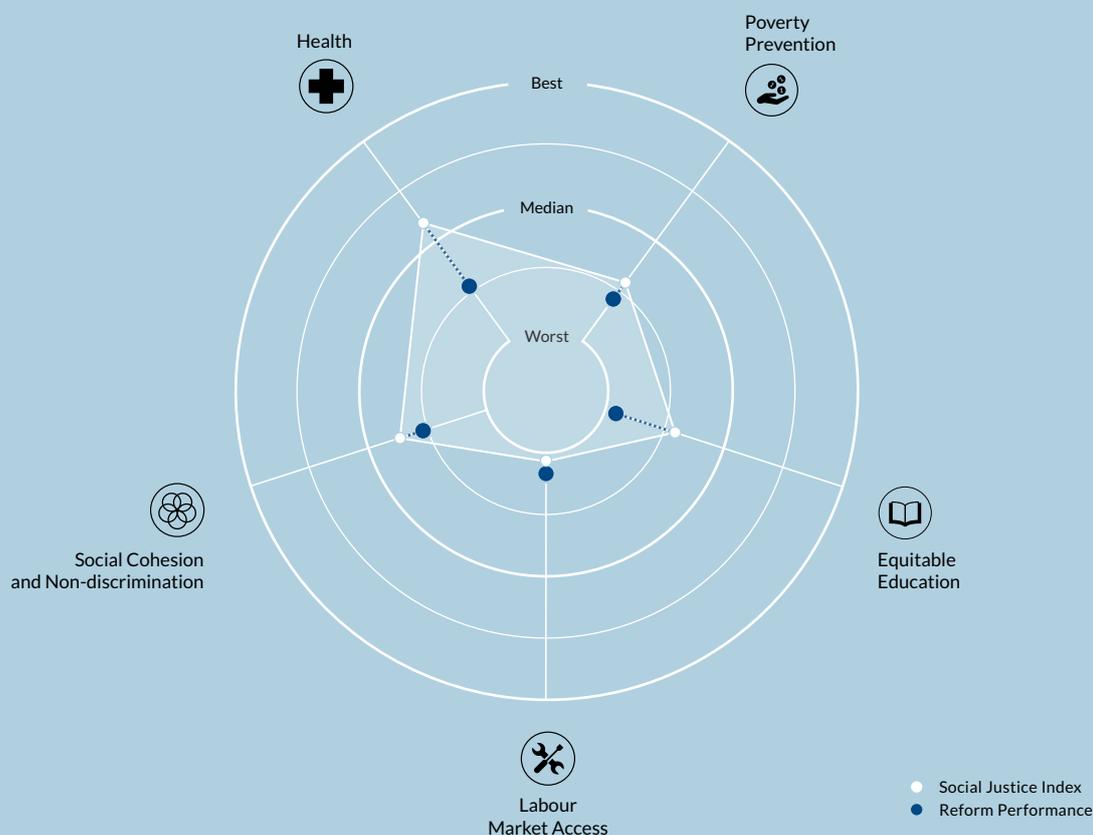
Need Slovenia performed comparatively well in the dimension of Equitable Education in the 2015 SJI, scoring 6.89 out of 10 and ranking 7th out of 27 EU member states. Based on the experts' assessment, Slovenia performs equally well with regard to equal opportunities in education (1.56), ranking 5th out of 25 EU member states. Only Bulgaria (1.38), Sweden (1.38), Estonia (1.33) and Denmark (1.21) have less need to reform to meet this policy objective.

Activity Overall, the activity rate for the policy objective of equal opportunities in education is 34 percent, ranking Slovenia 18th out of 25 EU member states. However, the distribution of reforms across the different educational levels varies widely. Based on the experts' assessment, no reforms have been introduced regarding equal opportunities in early and secondary education or lifelong learning. In stark contrast, high activity rates are assessed for pre-primary (60%) and primary schooling (75%) as well as for tertiary education (70%).

Findings by Country



How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

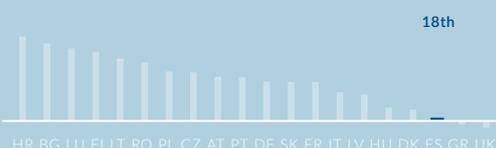
Need Overall, the need for reform in Spain is assessed as being the fourth highest among 23 EU member states.

The most pressing issue is Labour Market Access; the experts assess the need at 2.76, ranking Spain last out of 19 assessed countries. Within this dimension, they identify in-work poverty as a pressing issue (2.91, rank 17/18) and the need to increase job opportunities as high for all subgroups (2.73, rank 22/22). This accords with the findings of the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), which ranks Spain second to last out of 28 EU countries on the dimension of labour market inclusiveness.

Furthermore, the need for reform is very high with regard to Social Cohesion (2.42, rank 16/18), Equitable Education (2.27, rank 16/22) and Poverty Prevention (2.29, rank 21/27). Spain only performs comparatively well with regard to Health (1.91, rank 6/20).

However, in addition to facing a number of policy challenges, Spain's performance in the SJI has also continually decreased since 2008. When it comes to social justice, the country is simply functioning poorly.

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Activity In addition to the high need for reform, Spain has the lowest activity rate of 23 EU member states, as only 23 percent of the need for reforms has been addressed. Activity is low across all five dimensions: The lowest rates are assessed for Poverty Prevention (17%, rank 26/27) and Equitable Education (11%, rank 20/22). Social Cohesion and Health receive more attention (29 and 24%, respectively), but the rates are still low when compared to other countries, ranking the country 15th out of 18 and 18th out of 20, respectively. When looking at the most pressing issue, improving Labour Market Access, high activity rates are discerned for increasing employment for the total population (78%) and the long-term unemployed specifically (77%). However, the overall activity rate for this dimension is just 30 percent, ranking Spain 16th out of 19 countries.

Quality The quality of the reforms introduced in Spain is assessed as being critically low (0.11, rank 18/20). While labour market reforms (-0.08, rank 16/17) and reforms in the education sector (-0.09, rank 20/21) are evaluated as being practically ineffective, reforms regarding social cohesion and non-discrimination (-0.26, rank 10/12) are even expected to be counterpro-

ductive. The quality of poverty-alleviation programmes is assessed as being higher (0.70), though the level is relatively low compared to other EU member states (rank 15/24).

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need Generally, the need to introduce new policies aiming to prevent poverty among Spain's population is assessed as being high (2.29, rank 21/27). Based on the experts' assessment, children are at the greatest risk of poverty (2.72), while senior citizens fare comparatively well (1.69). Similar findings were also stated in the 2015 SJI. Moreover, the report found that the gap between generations has increased over the years. While the poverty rate among children has increased over the years due to falling income levels, old-age poverty has decreased. One expert comments: "Spain is one of the EU countries where child poverty is higher. It seems clear that the most urgent reforms to reduce child income poverty have to be implemented in the social benefits scheme."¹ Another expert adds: "The problem of child poverty is high on the agenda at central and regional levels, but so far there is no overall view as to what package of measures should be introduced. There is a recent initiative by the Catalan Parliament, signed by all political parties and relevant stakeholders, to take action. The economic crisis has had a devastating effect on low-income households in terms of employment loss as well as on the working poor. Any poverty-reduction initiative should consider the low-income problem of an increasing number of households."²

Activity While the need to take action in the fight against poverty is pressing, very little has been accomplished. The activity rate for the dimension of poverty is critically low (17%), ranking the country second to last. The activity rate is highest in the fight against child poverty, though still only about a third of the need for reform has been met (37%). The experts mainly report minor fiscal measures, such as the family benefit for dependent children ('Prestación familiar por hijo a cargo'), a fiscal deduction applied to income tax that is equivalent to €291 a year and only applicable to families on low incomes.

Multiple experts suggest that the minimum income must be increased at the regional level, and that the Spanish government should introduce a minimum income scheme at the national level. One expert comments on the improvement of the minimum income scheme: "Nowadays, the system depends on regional authorities, and the level and coverage is quite different by region. The Basque Country, Navarra or Asturias are doing quite well, but Murcia or Castilla-La Mancha present very weak results. The Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality launched a programme in 2015 to study the minimum income scheme and to harmonise the system across Spain. But there are no new measures or proposals."³ Another expert voices similar concerns: "Minimum income programmes are completely decentralized, with serious problems of coordination and financing. This shortcoming, over and above natural regional differences, has produced a mosaic of highly varied schemes

¹ Luis Ayala, University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid

² Margarita León, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

³ Amadeo Fuenmayor, Faculty of Economics, University of Valencia

with a striking disparity of regulations and results and, above all, a certain widening of the differences the poorest citizens experience.”⁴

Quality Though only few concrete steps have been taken to combat poverty, the experts assess that they will have a moderately positive effect on poverty eradication in Spain (0.70, rank 15/24). However, one expert criticises the scope of policy reforms, stating: “There is no new measure concerning unemployment benefits. Nevertheless, as the crisis is continuing, unemployment benefit comes to an end for more and more people. After it, there is another benefit, much reduced and strictly applied (‘Renta Activa de Inserción’). But in this period (mid-2014 to 2015), the government has not introduced any improvement in the system to fight poverty.”⁵ One expert concludes that a holistic approach is much needed, stating: “The existence of a varied set of benefits has not helped to define an ultimate net of economic security. The coverage of certain households – especially those of the long-term unemployed – largely depends on the differing extent of regional minimum income schemes. A first issue in the reform of welfare programmes in Spain is therefore how to ensure a guaranteed income for any individual at risk of poverty.”⁶ Another states: “The ‘plan nacional inclusión social 2013–2016’ tries to mitigate the effects of the crisis and austerity politics, but given a worsening of the overall conditions – general poverty rate at 22 percent – it is highly unlikely that the plan will counteract the general trend. There should have been greater selectivity in the reduction of public spending in the worse years of the crisis (2010–2014). The first budget cuts precisely happened in social cohesion and integration policies targeting the most vulnerable groups.”⁷

Equitable Education

Need The need for improving education in Spain is assessed as being comparatively high (2.27, rank 16/22). When looking at the policy objectives, reducing the rate of early school leavers has the highest need, ranking the country 19th out of 21 on this objective. Ensuring the independence of learning success from children’s socioeconomic background is assessed as being the second-most-pressing issue for Spain (2.43, rank 8/21), and multiple experts state in their written comments that this matter should be one of Spain’s priorities in reforming the education system.

Activity Spain is awarded the third-lowest activity rate, just 11 percent. Three of six policy objectives in this dimension have activity rates of 0 percent or close to that: the aforementioned pressing issue of decreasing the dependence of learning success from a person’s socioeconomic background (0%), integrating refugees into the educational system (0%) and improving the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources in education (4%). While the three other objectives have higher activity rates (11 to 26%), it is still a poor performance compared to other EU member states as well as in the face of the challenges ahead.

⁴ Luis Ayala, University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid

⁵ Amadeo Fuenmayor, Faculty of Economics, University of Valencia

⁶ Luis Ayala, University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid

⁷ Margarita León, Universitat Autònoma Barcelona

Quality In the dimension of Equitable Education, Spain receives the second-lowest quality rating of 21 countries. The experts expect the reforms introduced by the government to be practically ineffective at the education level (-0.09, rank 20/21). One expert even goes so far as to state that the reforms of the past four years promote rather than decrease inequality in school.

Labour Market Access

Need Labour market access is the most pressing challenge for Spain. The experts assess the need to reform in this dimension at 2.76, ranking the country last out of 19 EU member states. This is not surprising, as Spain also performed poorly in the 2015 SJI, scoring only 3.68 out of 10, which ranks the country second to last out of 28 EU member states. Based on the experts' assessment, the need to reform is extremely high with regard to reducing in-work poverty (2.91, rank 17/18) and increasing employment (2.73, rank 22/22). New job opportunities are particularly needed for young and long-term unemployed people (3.00 each). Multiple experts also state that temporary work contracts are a challenging issue (2.64, rank 13/16), noting that the proportion of temporary contracts is particularly high in comparison to other OECD countries.

Activity Though the activity rate of 30 percent is the highest across the five assessed dimensions, it is still fairly low in comparison to other EU member states (16/22). Fifty-one percent of the need to increase employment has been addressed (12/22). Most initiatives are directed at the total population (78%), while some also target youth unemployment (62%) and long-term unemployment (77%). Only about a fifth of the need to reduce the number of temporary work employments on an involuntary basis and to alleviate in-work poverty has been addressed (21 and 19%, respectively).

Many experts explicitly mention the 'Spanish Strategy for Employment Activation' as an instrument of the government to increase employment. One expert explains: "As a result of the economic crisis, employment policy has undergone some reforms in both design and structure which have led to a profound change in the previous configuration. Pre-crisis policies had been based on 'passive' protection against unemployment, whereas the new policy design is based on giving the unemployed encouragement to work. The Spanish Strategy for Employment Activation 2014-2016 (La Estrategia Española de Activación para el Empleo 2014-2016) was the new scenario. The final aim of the strategy is coordinating and identifying the efforts needed from various actors to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of active employment policies."⁸

Quality The experts evaluated new policy initiatives as being practically ineffective (-0.08, rank 16/17). They do not expect labour market access in Spain to improve as a consequence of new legislation. One expert explains: "In 2012, a labour reform to reduce labour rights and to cut redundancy payments was passed. It was approved by Partido Popular (centre-right) with

⁸ María Milagros Paniagua, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Madrid

the opposition of the other political parties. The reform has had a positive impact on employment; but, on the other hand, the employment generated since 2012 has been more precarious, temporary and with lower wages. In sum, the reform has contributed to a deflation policy through wages.”⁹

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need Social cohesion and non-discrimination are in high need of reform. Based on the experts’ assessment as well as their written comments, the two most pressing issues in this dimension are income and wealth inequality (2.69, rank 18/22) and the rate of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET rate) (2.88, rank 13/15). One expert says that income and wealth inequality has even increased over the past few years and therefore remains in urgent need of reform, noting: “Income inequality has risen during this period. There was an income tax reform that mainly consists of reducing taxes for everybody. It was criticised in terms of being a tax reform for purely election purposes. Wealth inequality has risen sharply. The crisis has hit middle- and low-income families hard. But wealth taxation is very weak in Spain.”¹⁰ With regard to young people, the expert adds: “Young people in Spain are in a very bad situation: Migration has risen to unprecedented rates, youth unemployment has reached 40 percent, [and] it is usual for young people to live at their parents’ house until almost 30. There are several general plans, but there are no real or specific measures.”¹¹

Activity Similar to other dimensions, the activity rate is fairly low (29%, rank 15/18). More attention is being given to reducing the NEET rate, though it is still very little compared to other EU member states (39%, rank 11/15).

Quality The experts assess the quality of policy changes as being fairly low, and they even expect a moderately negative impact (-0.26, rank 10/12).

Health

Need Health is the one dimension in which Spain performs comparatively well. Overall, the experts assess the need for reform at 1.91, ranking the country 6th out of 20 EU member states. At the level of policy objectives, Spain ranks in the top eight across seven objectives. Only with regards to sustainable and fair financing of the health system is the need higher (2.50, rank 12/20).

With regard to the need to reform, one expert explains: “The creation of the National Health System has been one of the great achievements of our welfare state, given its quality, its universal vocation, the breadth of its services, its support in the progressive scheme of taxes, and [its] solidarity with the disadvantaged, which has placed them in the forefront of health as a global reference model. However, the absence of common rules on insurance throughout the national territory, uneven growth in the performance of the catalogue, the inadequacy of some of them to meet the socioeconomic real-

⁹ Obdulia Taboadela, University of A Coruña

¹⁰ Amadeo Fuenmayor, Faculty of Economics, University of Valencia

¹¹ Amadeo Fuenmayor, Faculty of Economics, University of Valencia

ity, and the sheer lack of rigour and emphasis on efficiency have brought the National Health System to a situation of serious economic difficulty unprecedented since its inception. It has lost effective management of available resources, which has resulted in an unsustainable public deficit.”¹²

Activity Similar to other dimensions, the activity rate is fairly low. Only a quarter of the need for reform has been addressed through government action (24%, rank 18/20). When looking at the policy objectives, the activity rate is also very low (27% and below). Only with regard to the health system’s efficiency is more being done (46%, rank 15/20).

Quality The experts expect the new policies to have a moderately positive effect on health in Spain (0.63, rank 9/19).

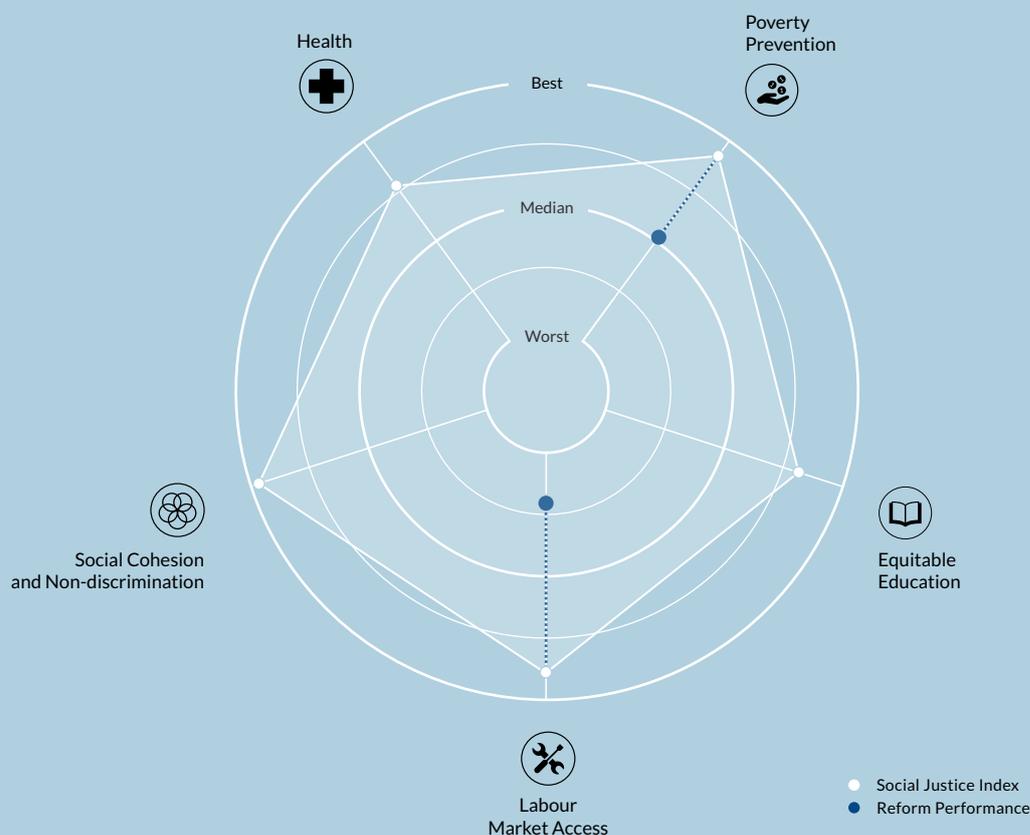
¹² Sara Darias-Curvo, University of La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands

Findings by Country



Sweden

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need As Sweden is the best-performing country in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), it comes as no surprise that the experts see a much lower overall need for social reforms there than in most other EU countries (1.84, rank 5/23). Looking at the different categories of social inclusion, the highest reform need is seen in the dimension of Labour Market Access (2.14, rank 7/19), followed by the dimension related to Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (2.08, rank 8/18). With regard to Equitable Education, the need for reforms is estimated to be the lowest in the EU (1.31, rank 1). Over all dimensions, the most pressing challenges for the Swedish government are to:

- increase employment for young people (2.6), the long-term unemployed (2.6), the low-skilled (2.7), refugees (2.7) and the foreign-born population in general (2.8)
- improve the integration of refugees and of the foreign-born population in general (2.33)
- reduce poverty among single parents (2.2), refugees (2.1) and the foreign-born population (2.2)

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Activity The experts say that 43 percent of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in Sweden has been addressed (15/23). This is far behind the leaders in this respect, Luxembourg (65%) and Bulgaria (60%), and also slightly behind the average activity rate in the EU (46%). The highest activity rate in Sweden can be seen in the dimension Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (71%, rank 1/20). In the other dimensions, the extent to what the reform need has been addressed is much lower, at 39 percent (Labour Market Access), 34 percent (Poverty Prevention) and 26 percent (Education).

Looking at the pressing challenges mentioned above, the number of experts who see relevant reform activities varies greatly. Between 77 and 87 percent identified relevant government action to increase employment for the specific 'problem groups'. With regard to integration policies, 100 percent of the experts report government measures to improve the integration of refugees, whereas only one in every two experts sees initiatives to improve integration policies for the foreign-born population in general or to reduce poverty within these groups.

Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The experts report a low need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.1) but a high one with regard to specific subgroups that are more likely to become poor, such as refugees (2.2), the foreign-born population (2.0) and single parents (2.2). With regard to the latter group, one expert explains: “During the last few years, the at-risk-of-poverty rate has skyrocketed among single parents despite the fairly generous family policy schemes. This indicates a need for policy reforms directed at the needs of this particular group. Probably the old-age pensions need reformation, as well, since we have witnessed a worrying increase in the poverty rate among old people, too. Due to long-term inequalities in the labour market, retired women fare poorly, with a majority of female pensioners living in poverty in Sweden.”

Activity Looking at these specific subgroups, all activity rates are below 50 percent, with the highest identified rate relating to poverty among refugees (43%). The respective activity rates for the other groups are even lower, at 32 percent (foreign-born population) and 29 percent (single parents).

Quality The experts expect the reforms concerning poverty among refugees and the foreign-born population to have slightly positive effects (0.65/0.31). Some experts recommend raising benefit levels of the universal child allowance.



Equitable Education

Need Not only for the Education dimension in general, but also for nearly all of the included (sub-)policy objectives is the need for reforms rated low or mediocre, with scores ranging between 0.3 and 1.7. The only exception can be seen with regard to ‘quality of teaching in secondary education’, where the need is quite high (2.3).

Activity All activity rates in this dimension are below 50 percent, with two exceptions: According to the experts, 67 percent of the reform need to improve the quality of teaching in secondary education and 75 percent of the need to improve the structural conditions in primary education have been addressed.



Labour Market Access

Need As in most other EU countries, the need to improve access to the labour market for the total population (2.2) in Sweden is assessed as being significantly lower than for some specific subgroups, such as refugees (2.7), young people (2.6), the long-term unemployed (2.6), the low-skilled (2.7) and the foreign-born population (2.8).

Activity According to the experts, between 77 and 85 percent of the reform need to increase employment for the above-mentioned subgroups have been addressed. One expert notes that there have been “several efforts to make

the transition to the labour market smoother for refugees. These include subsidized jobs and efforts to speed up the process of certifying exams achieved in another country.”



Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

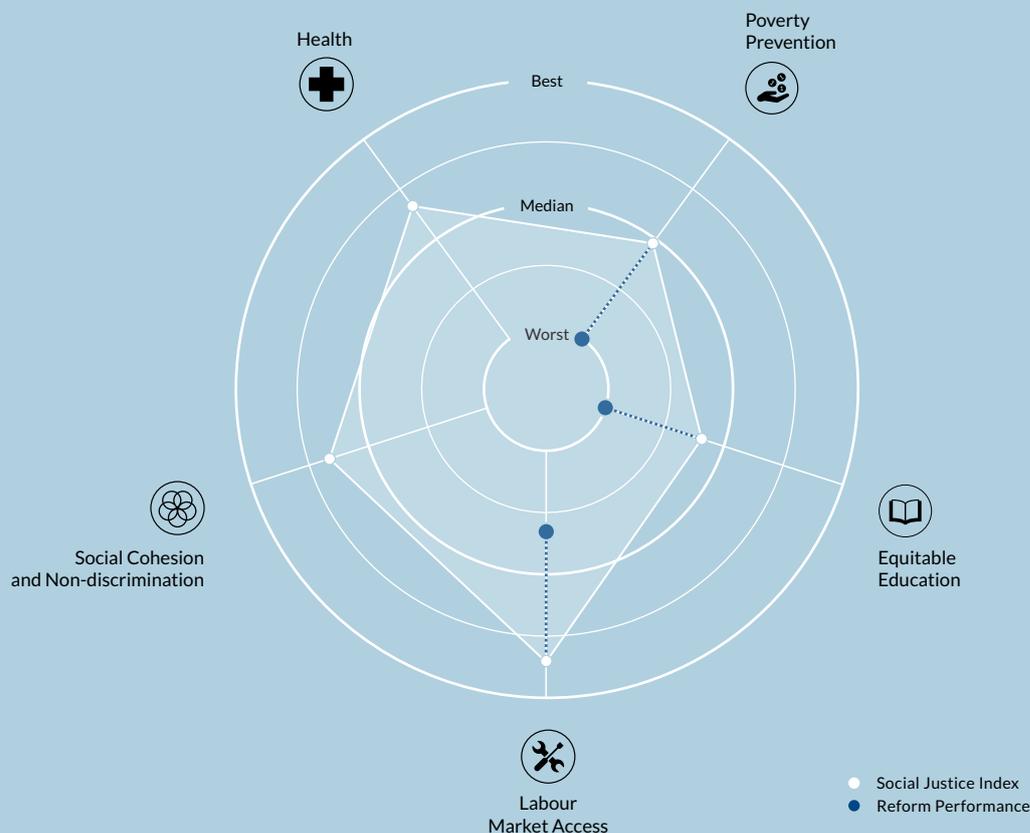
Need The highest needs for reform in this dimension are seen as improving integration policies for refugees and the foreign-born population in general (2.3 each). But the experts also see quite high reform needs (2.0 each) for the other policy objectives: ‘reducing gender inequality’, ‘reducing income inequality’ and ‘reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)’.

Activity According to the experts’ assessments, the activity rates in this dimension differ greatly. While the experts think that 100 percent of reform need to tackle income inequality and improve the integration of refugees has been met, the activity rates to reduce the number of NEETs or to improve integration policies for the foreign-born population in general are assessed as being much lower (about 40% each).

Findings by Country

United Kingdom

How does the country rank in the EU?



Overall Findings

Need Based on the experts' assessment, the need to reform is fairly high (2.28), ranking the United Kingdom (UK) 18th out of 23 EU member states. Moreover, the need is particularly high with regard to Poverty Prevention (2.34, rank 25/27), especially concerning children, as well as Labour Market Access, particularly in reducing in-work poverty (2.44, rank 15/19). The need to reform is assessed as being slightly lower for the dimensions of Equitable Education (2.17, rank 13/22) – though a person's learning success is still very dependent on his/her socioeconomic background – and Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (2.18, rank 11/18) – though income and wealth inequality is a pressing issue.

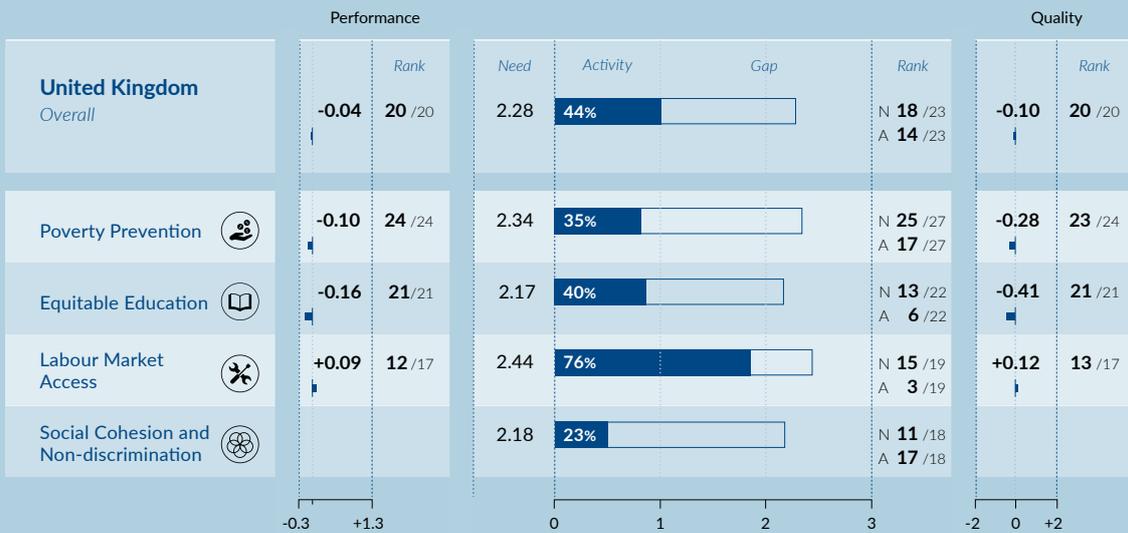
One of the UK's achievements includes the low need to advance gender equality. The experts rated the need at 1.25, ranking the country 1st out of 17 countries.

Activity The activity rate is 44 percent, which is within the middle range (14/23). Furthermore, the rate is rather low for the dimensions of Poverty

Overall Reform Performance Ranking



Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Prevention (35%, rank 17/27) and Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (23%, rank 17/18). In contrast, much of the need to reform has been addressed regarding Equitable Education (40%, rank 6/22), especially independence of learning success from a person’s socioeconomic background, and to an even greater extent regarding Labour Market Access (76%, rank 3/19).

Quality The experts are very critical of the quality of newly introduced reforms (-0.10), ranking the country last out of 20 EU member states. They even expect an undesirable effect on Poverty Prevention (-0.28, rank 23/24) and Equitable Education (-0.41, rank 21/21).

Dimension Findings

Poverty Prevention

Need As stated in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), children are especially at risk of poverty in the UK, while senior citizens are less at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This gap between the generations is also reflected in the ex-

perts' assessment: While the need to introduce new poverty-alleviation programmes targeting children received the highest need score (2.74), the need for policies directed at elderly people is the lowest (1.96). Moreover, more needs to be done regarding the poverty risk of refugees (2.68). Overall, the need within this dimension is assessed as being the third highest (2.34, rank 25/27).

Regarding child and youth poverty, one expert comments: "For young people, more needs to be done in reducing unemployment, providing jobs at a decent living wage that is sustainable over a long period of time. Children and young people are affected by the adverse circumstances their parents experience, and cuts to benefits and services have impacted on families. These need to be reviewed. More support is needed for lower-income families. There are also concerns in the UK around fuel poverty, which can be experienced by families and by older people, and more government intervention is needed to ensure that pricing and tariffs are fairer. Food poverty is also a concern, alongside the increased use of food banks, but this relates to government cuts in benefits and lower wages. The agenda of austerity politics has impacted harshly on the most disadvantaged in society."¹

Activity While the activity rate for this dimension is rather mediocre (35%, rank 17), it is significantly higher for the total population (54%) as well as for the at-risk group of children (57%). Although the experts also evaluate the need to reform as being high for refugees, their assessment is that only 20 percent of this need is being addressed.

Quality Based on the experts' assessment, newly introduced policies are not likely to improve the situation for people who already are or are at risk of becoming poor and socially excluded (-0.28, rank 23/24), mainly because they consist of austerity measures and benefit cuts. The current gap between generations is expected to widen. While initiatives directed at elderly people receive a positive quality score (0.36), programmes directed at children receive a negative quality score (-0.73). The situation for single parents is also expected to deteriorate (-1.00). One expert comments on this low quality, stating: "The policy reforms instituted by the government – in particular, reforms to the benefit system – are alleged to reduce poverty, but by all independent measures (including the government's own statistics), they have increased poverty (e.g. child poverty, child health, child mortality, inadequate housing, food bank use etc). The latest budget controversy is a case in point, with tax concessions for higher earners and proposed cuts to benefits for disabled people."² Another expert adds: "The reforms all tended to increase poverty (e.g. freeze on benefits, cuts to tax credits) [...] Reversing recent policies would help. The raising of the national minimum wage also won't help these groups due to benefit cuts."³



Equitable Education

Need The greatest challenge within the dimension of Equitable Education is ensuring the independence of learning success from a person's socioeco-

¹ Sandra Shaw, University of Salford

² Stephanie Petrie, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool

³ Jill Rubery, University of Manchester

conomic background. This policy objective receives the highest need score possible (3.00). Moreover, the need to reform is comparatively high with regard to equal opportunities in education (2.23, rank 20/25), especially in tertiary education (2.40). In contrast, the need is relatively low (1.47) for improving the structural conditions regarding financial and human resources in education, ranking the country 4th out of 23.

Activity The overall activity rate is 40 percent, ranking the UK 6th out of 22 countries. Most policy initiatives have been directed at the objectives in greatest need of them: improving equal opportunities, especially in secondary (63%) and tertiary education (65%); and reducing the dependence of learning success from a person's socioeconomic background (67%, rank 2/21).

Quality The quality of educational reforms is assessed as being the lowest in the EU (-0.41, rank 21/21). A negative effect is also expected on equality of opportunities in education (-0.29, rank 18/18), in particular on the level of tertiary education (-1.47). Some experts state that the introduction of tuition fees for university would discourage students from a poor socioeconomic background from applying for higher education. One expert criticises: "All recently introduced changes affect adversely parents on low incomes and BME [black and minority ethnic] families disproportionately. They embed a market-based hierarchy across all levels of education, they reduce social mobility opportunities, and they deny poorer kids educational opportunities."⁴

Labour Market Access

Need One of the main pressing issues for the UK is improving Labour Market Access. The experts assess the need to reform at 2.44, ranking the country 15th out of 19 EU member states. The need is even higher for the policy objectives of reducing temporary contracts on involuntary basis (2.60, rank 12/16) and in-work poverty (2.75, rank 15/18). Contrarily, the UK has the fifth-lowest need for increasing employment (1.97, rank 5/22). These differences in need between the three policy objectives also emerged in the 2015 SJI: While the UK has a well-functioning labour market characterized by a low unemployment rate, real wages fell after the 2008 financial crisis, and so-called zero-hour contracts have been introduced.

With regard to the low need to increase employment, it has to be pointed out that – similar to the dimension of Poverty Prevention – an age gap exists: While the need to increase job opportunities for senior citizens is assessed as being fairly low (1.25), it was quite the opposite for the youth (2.67).

Addressing the nexus of unemployment and education, one expert states: "The UK has so far not managed to raise the attainment level at school or the labour markets of a substantial proportion of the population. The middle ranking of the UK in the PISA study hides the fact that there are actually two large groups of students: one doing exceptionally well and one doing exceptionally poorly. There is not much provision for the latter group once they leave school, often without any or very poor qualifications, and this group will then re-appear in various ways in statistics, either as youth unemployment,

⁴ Spyros Themelis, University of East Anglia, Norwich

long-term unemployment or lone parents not in work. Thus, I would argue that the biggest challenge that will address a number of these issues in the longer term is to tackle the poor performance in education, which for a number of reasons particular to the UK is strongly linked to income inequality.”⁵

Activity The UK’s activity rate in the dimension of Labour Market Access (76%) is the third highest among 19 EU member states assessed. The rate is even higher for reducing temporary contracts on involuntary basis (77%, rank 2/16) and in-work poverty (100%, rank 1/18). One specific decision to this end reported by the experts is the ban on exclusivity clauses in zero-hour contracts, which prevented employees from working for two or more employers.

As for increasing employment, the activity rate is significantly lower (41%, rank 17/22). However, 85 percent of the need to decrease youth unemployment has been addressed. One instrument reported by the experts is the introduction of a new apprenticeship programme, which aims to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020.

Quality The experts are very critical of the newly introduced reforms (0.12, rank 13/17). On the one hand, they expect them to have a desirable impact on the reduction of temporary contracts on involuntary basis (0.79, rank 7/12) and a slightly positive effect on youth employment rates (0.36). On the other hand, precarious employment, in-work poverty and the number of low-wage earners are all expected to increase (-0.36).

One expert states that the reforms will not be successful “because they are not intended to be supportive (child care cuts), because they are only supply-side focused (raising of retirement age), and because the apprenticeships are not being properly developed (expanded too fast, so not real training).”⁶

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

Need The need to reform Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination policies is assessed at 2.18, ranking the UK 11th out of 18 EU member states. The main pressing issue in this dimension is income and wealth inequality (2.80), ranking the country second to last out of 22 EU member states. The experts already addressed this issue across multiple dimensions. With income and wealth gaps wide and educational success highly dependent on a person’s socioeconomic background, chances of social mobility are slim.

Furthermore, the experts see a high need to improve integration policies (2.50, rank 15/17), particularly with regard to the foreign-born population (2.67). In contrast, the UK performs very well concerning gender equality. The experts assess the need at 1.25, ranking the country 1st out of 17 EU member states.

Activity The activity rate for the dimension of Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination is comparatively low (23%, rank 17/18), especially with regard to the most pressing issues of income and wealth inequality (21%, rank 20/22) and integration policies (13%, rank 13/17).

⁵ Tina Haux, University of Kent

⁶ Jill Rubery, University of Manchester

About the Authors

External Authors

Torben M. Andersen is Professor of Economics at Aarhus University, Denmark. He holds a MSc from the London School of Economics and a PhD from CORE, Belgium. He is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR, London), the Center of Economic Studies (CESifo, Munich) and the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA, Bonn). He has had various short-term visiting positions at other universities, and been a member of the editorial boards of several international journals. He has been extensively involved in policy advice in Denmark, the Nordic countries and the European Commission. Most of his research has been on macroeconomics, public economics, labour economics and the economics of the welfare state.

Marius R. Busemeyer is Professor of Political Science at the University of Konstanz, Germany. His research focuses on comparative political economy and welfare state research, education and social policy, public spending, theories of institutional change and, more recently, public opinion on the welfare state. Busemeyer studied political science, economics, public administration and public law at the University of Heidelberg and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Heidelberg. He worked as a senior researcher with Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne and was a post-doc visiting fellow at the Center for European Studies at Harvard before coming to Konstanz. He has received two major grants, from the Emmy Noether programme of the German Research Foundation (DFG), and from the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant scheme. He has published several books and articles in a large number of scientific journals.

Ulf Gerdtham holds a joint professorship in the Departments of Economics and Medicine at Lund University, where he is also Research Director of the Division of Health Economics at the Department of Clinical Sciences. He was previously a Professor at the University of Aberdeen. His research explores the relationship between economic factors and individuals' health-related behaviour. He is particularly interested in explaining income-related inequality in health as well as the consequences of risky behaviour and chronic diseases. He also works on economic evaluations of health interventions, health system effects on health care costs and productivity.

Karin Heitzmann is Professor at the Institute of Social Policy and Director of the Research Institute Economics of Inequality at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) in Vienna, Austria. Her research interests are the analysis of social policy and welfare states, particularly in the field of poverty policies. She studied at the WU, Austria, the University of Bath, UK, and St. Patrick's College in Maynooth, Ireland.

[Viktor Steiner](#) has been Professor of Economics at the School of Business & Economics at Freie Universität Berlin since 2002. He received his PhD in Economics from the University of Linz, Austria, and his Habilitation in Economics and Econometrics from the University of Frankfurt/Main. From 2002 to 2010, he also was Director of the Public Economics Department at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin). From October 2001 to April 2002, he was Professor of Economics at the Center for Economic Studies (CES) at the University of Munich, and Research Director at the ifo Institute for Economic Research. Until September 2001, he was Head of the ‘Labour Economics and Social Policy’ Department at the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim, Germany. He has also worked as a consultant for the European Commission, OECD and World Bank.

The SIM Europe Reform Barometer Team

Partnering Institutions

[The Bertelsmann Stiftung](#) was founded by Reinhard Mohn in 1977. It is an independent, non-political, private operating foundation, which focuses its activities on projects that can decisively influence society’s long-term viability. Working with a wide range of partners, the foundation relies on knowledge and expertise to stimulate lively dialogue on the most pressing issues of our day. “Inspiring people. Shaping the future. Participating in a globalized world.” That phrase sums up the work carried out by the Bertelsmann Stiftung. If everyone is to participate, then everyone must have the ability to get involved and society must offer all of its citizens the chance to succeed.

[The European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna](#), launched in 2016, was founded by Bernd Marin to be a forum for social science intelligence and policy. Cooperating with other institutions, it is engaged in a wide range of activities, including scholarly research, strategic expert advice, and professional publishing and media. In addition to generating, it also aims to transfer knowledge and findings into the popular understanding of comparative empirical research. In other words, it aims to turn social science into a “pop science” for civic discourse and public debate.

[WPZ - Wirtschaftspolitisches Zentrum](#), founded in 2015, is a competence center of the Institute of Economics of the University of St. Gallen. In providing topical academic research in a widely accessible format, WPZ is dedicated to an informed public debate and to theory- and evidence-based policymaking for sustainable growth and inclusive welfare.

Representatives of Partnering Institutions

[Aart De Geus](#) is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh. He has been a member of Bertelsmann Stiftung's Executive Board since September 2011, overseeing projects on Europe, Employment, and Globalization. Prior to joining the Stiftung, Aart De Geus served as Deputy Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris. From 2002 to 2007, Aart De Geus was Minister of Social Affairs and Employment in the Netherlands.

[Christian Keuschnigg](#) is Professor of Economics at the University of St. Gallen and Director of WPZ Vienna, a policy research institute in Austria. He holds a doctorate in Economics from the University of Innsbruck and a PhD (Habilitation) from the University of Vienna. He was a Professor of Economics at the University of Saarland and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna. He is a research fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR, London), the Center of Economic Studies (CESifo, Munich) and the Oxford University Centre for Business Taxation. His research interests are in public economics and related fields, including the economics of the welfare state, economic growth and European integration.

[Bernd Marin](#) is Director of the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research in Vienna. From 2015 to 2016, he was Director ('Rektor') of the Webster Vienna Private University, a branch of Webster University in St. Louis, USA. Between 1988 and 2015, he served as Executive Director of the Vienna-based European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV), which is affiliated with the United Nations. From 1984 to 1988, he was Professor of Comparative Political and Social Research at the European University Institute (EUI), the EU university in Florence, where he was also Head of the Department of Political and Social Sciences from 1986 to 1987. His most recent books are *The Future of Welfare in a Global Europe* (ed.), 2015, and *Welfare in an Idle Society?*, 2013.

Project Team

Jan Arpe is a Senior Project Manager at the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research in Vienna. Until August 2016, he was Project Manager in the Europe's Future programme at the Bertelsmann Stiftung. Before taking over the responsibility for the SIM Europe Reform Barometer project in April 2015, he worked on global economics, societal trust and demographic change. Jan studied mathematics at the University of Mainz and the LMU Munich and holds a PhD in Theoretical Computer Science from the University of Lübeck. Prior to joining the Bertelsmann Stiftung in 2008, he had been a postdoctoral research fellow at the Department of Statistics, University of California, Berkeley.

Thorsten Hellmann studied economics at the University of Münster and was awarded his doctorate in 2003. Since 2004, he has been working as a Project Manager for the Bertelsmann Stiftung, where he has spent several years analysing national and international benchmarks for labour market, economic and social policy as part of the Evidence-Based Policy Strategies programme. He was responsible for the 'Benchmarking German States' project, in which the German states were compared and assessed in terms of incomes, employment and evidence-based security. In addition to his work for the Bertelsmann Stiftung, he is a Lecturer in Economics at Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences.

Patrick Kenis has been a Senior Project Manager for the SIM Europe Reform Barometer at the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research Vienna since November 2016. He is also a Visiting Professor at the WU Vienna University of Economics and Business (Institute for Public Management and Governance) and a Guest Professor at the Department of Organisation Studies of Tilburg University. He studied Sociology at the Free University in Brussels (VUB) and holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. Previously, he worked in Antwerp, at the VU University Amsterdam, at the University of Konstanz (Germany), and at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Vienna). His research field is policy and organizational responses in a range of areas, including health, education and innovation.

Doreen Löber studied Translation and Multilingual Communication (German, English and French) at the University of Applied Sciences Cologne. She has been working as a translator and project assistant for various Brussels-based organizations. In her current position at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, she contributed to the survey by establishing the Reform Barometer expert database.

Stephan Muehlbacher currently works as Project Manager for the European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research in Vienna. He studied Economic Psychology, received a doctorate in Natural Sciences, and holds the Venia Legendi for Psychology from the University of Vienna since 2014. His research is on decision-making and the psychology of tax compliance. He has taught at various universities in Germany, Hungary and Austria, and has published in several scientific journals and specialised books.

Board of Experts

We would like to thank the 1,058 experts who invested their valuable time to participate in our survey. Below you find those who allowed to be listed by name.

<i>Abrahamson, Peter</i>	University of Copenhagen
<i>Ágh, Attila</i>	Budapest Corvinus University
<i>Agustoni, Alfredo</i>	University of Chieti-Pescara “G. d’Annunzio”
<i>Ahn, Namkee</i>	University of Cantabria
<i>Ahonen, Arto</i>	University of Jyväskylä
<i>Aizsilniece, Ilze</i>	Latvian Medical Association, Riga
<i>Altreiter, Carina</i>	University of Vienna
<i>Andersen, Torben M.</i>	Aarhus University
<i>Andriopoulou, Eirini</i>	Council of Economic Advisors (C.E.A.), Athens
<i>Arriba, Ana</i>	University of Alcalá
<i>Ayala, Luis</i>	University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid
<i>Azzopardi Muscat, Natasha</i>	University of Malta, Msida
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Data Appendix

The following tables contain the aggregated data for all dimensions and policy objectives. These data can also be explored interactively and downloaded at www.social-inclusion-monitor.eu. For information on how these data were calculated, please refer to the Methodology chapter. Anonymised raw data are available upon request.

Table A-O

Overall Social Policy (all dimensions)

		Scores ^a				Rank ^b				N ^c	
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
Austria	AT	0.30	1.91	46%	0.65	9	7	12	12	5	5
Belgium	BE									1	0
Bulgaria	BG	0.53	2.37	60%	0.88	2	22	2	3	5	5
Croatia	HR	0.57	2.06	56%	1.02	1	8	3	1	3	3
Cyprus	CY									0	0
Czech Republic	CZ	0.33	1.64	46%	0.71	8	2	11	9	5	4
Denmark	DK	0.08	1.55	45%	0.17	17	1	13	17	5	4
Estonia	EE									1	0
Finland	FI	0.47	1.89	47%	1.01	4	6	10	2	4	3
France	FR	0.27	2.33	42%	0.63	13	21	17	13	4	4
Germany	DE	0.27	2.18	35%	0.76	11	12	20	8	5	5
Greece	GR	-0.01	2.39	34%	-0.04	19	23	21	19	5	4
Hungary	HU	0.09	2.09	36%	0.26	16	9	19	16	5	5
Ireland	IE									2	2
Italy	IT	0.20	2.31	37%	0.53	14	19	18	14	5	5
Latvia	LV	0.18	2.21	47%	0.39	15	14	9	15	4	4
Lithuania	LT	0.42	2.24	51%	0.84	5	15	6	4	5	5
Luxembourg	LU	0.49	2.15	65%	0.76	3	11	1	7	4	4
Malta	MT		2.27	52%			17	4		3	2
Netherlands	NL		1.72	48%			3	8		4	2
Poland	PL	0.34	2.13	49%	0.68	7	10	7	11	4	4
Portugal	PT	0.30	2.20	42%	0.70	10	13	16	10	3	3
Romania	RO	0.40	2.27	51%	0.77	6	16	5	6	5	4
Slovakia	SK	0.27	1.75	32%	0.83	12	4	22	5	5	5
Slovenia	SI									1	1
Spain	ES	0.02	2.33	23%	0.11	18	20	23	18	5	5
Sweden	SE		1.84	43%			5	15		4	2
United Kingdom	UK	-0.04	2.28	44%	-0.10	20	18	14	20	4	3
<i>Number of Countries</i>		20	23	23	20	20	23	23	20		
<i>EU Median</i>		0.28	2.18	46%	0.69						
<i>EU Average</i>		0.27	2.09	45%	0.58						
<i>Min</i>		-0.04	1.55	23%	-0.10						
<i>Max</i>		0.57	2.39	65%	1.02						
<i>Average EU-15²</i>		0.21	2.08	42%	0.47						
<i>Average Non-EU-15³</i>		0.35	2.10	48%	0.71						



Table A-P1.1

Primary Policy Objective
P1.1 – Total Population

		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵	
Austria	AT	0.39	1.22	58%	0.66	11	5	10	11	27	8
Belgium	BE	0.11	1.93	65%	0.17	17	17	8	18	14	2
Bulgaria	BG	0.61	2.50	61%	1.00	5	27	9	3	24	11
Croatia	HR	0.49	2.00	83%	0.59	7	19	1	14	16	7
Cyprus	CY									1	1
Czech Republic	CZ	0.69	1.00	69%	1.00	3	2	5	3	13	2
Denmark	DK		0.55	1%		1	26			11	1
Estonia	EE	0.33	1.25	47%	0.71	12	7	15	10	4	2
Finland	FI	0.12	1.25	42%	0.28	15	7	18	16	16	4
France	FR		1.46	43%		11	17			13	1
Germany	DE	0.13	1.24	35%	0.36	14	6	20	15	25	3
Greece	GR	0.44	2.31	44%	1.00	9	25	16	3	26	8
Hungary	HU	0.11	1.94	55%	0.20	18	18	11	17	17	5
Ireland	IE	0.00	1.50	76%	0.00	21	12	3	21	6	3
Italy	IT	0.47	2.19	41%	1.15	8	23	19	2	31	7
Latvia	LV	-0.24	2.25	31%	-0.77	23	24	22	23	8	2
Lithuania	LT	0.59	1.71	68%	0.87	6	16	7	9	17	5
Luxembourg	LU	0.78	1.33	78%	1.00	1	9	2	3	9	4
Malta	MT	0.69	1.67	69%	1.00	4	15	6	3	12	4
Netherlands	NL		1.00	19%		2	24			7	1
Poland	PL	0.32	1.63	50%	0.64	13	14	14	12	19	8
Portugal	PT	0.08	2.11	50%	0.15	19	22	13	19	18	4
Romania	RO	0.70	2.35	70%	1.00	2	26	4	3	23	5
Slovakia	SK	0.41	1.36	32%	1.30	10	10	21	1	22	3
Slovenia	SI	0.00	1.50	0%	0.00	21	12	27	21	4	0
Spain	ES	0.11	2.10	18%	0.61	16	21	25	13	29	3
Sweden	SE		1.06	23%		4	23			18	1
United Kingdom	UK	0.04	2.00	54%	0.08	20	19	12	20	24	6
Number of Countries		23	27	27	23	23	27	27	23		
EU Median		0.33	1.63	50%	0.64						
EU Average		0.32	1.64	47%	0.57						
Min		-0.24	0.55	0%	-0.77						
Max		0.78	2.50	83%	1.30						
Average EU-15²		0.24	1.55	43%	0.50						
Average Non-EU-15³		0.39	1.76	53%	0.63						



Table A-P1.2

Primary Policy Objective
P1.2 – Senior Citizens (> 65 years)

		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵					
Austria	AT	0.44	1.71	47%	0.96	11	15	15	7	24	7				
Belgium	BE	0.55	1.54	83%	0.66	6	9	2	12	13	3				
Bulgaria	BG	0.79	2.96	69%	1.15	1	27	4	4	24	14				
Croatia	HR	0.30	2.63	49%	0.62	12	24	13	13	16	6				
Cyprus	CY									1	1				
Czech Republic	CZ	-0.21	2.08	85%	-0.25	21	18	1	21	13	3				
Denmark	DK	-0.09	0.91	40%	-0.23	20	3	19	20	11	2				
Estonia	EE		2.50	40%		22	17			4	1				
Finland	FI		1.50	28%		7	24			16	1				
France	FR	0.28	1.38	55%	0.50	13	4	11	14	13	2				
Germany	DE	0.27	1.69	36%	0.73	14	14	20	10	26	4				
Greece	GR		1.96	19%		17	25			26	1				
Hungary	HU	0.00	1.47	36%	0.00	18	5	22	18	17	2				
Ireland	IE	0.24	1.50	51%	0.48	15	7	12	15	6	3				
Italy	IT	0.45	1.61	33%	1.37	10	10	23	1	31	3				
Latvia	LV	0.55	2.88	40%	1.37	5	26	16	2	8	3				
Lithuania	LT	0.47	2.82	49%	0.96	9	25	14	6	17	4				
Luxembourg	LU		0.56	40%		1	18			9	1				
Malta	MT	0.78	2.08	66%	1.18	2	19	6	3	12	5				
Netherlands	NL		0.86	56%		2	10			7	1				
Poland	PL	0.57	1.68	75%	0.76	4	12	3	9	19	5				
Portugal	PT	0.48	2.42	60%	0.80	7	21	8	8	19	6				
Romania	RO	0.62	2.08	62%	1.00	3	19	7	5	24	5				
Slovakia	SK	0.48	1.65	68%	0.71	8	11	5	11	23	4				
Slovenia	SI	0.00	2.50	0%	0.00	18	22	27	18	4	0				
Spain	ES	0.06	1.69	15%	0.43	17	13	26	16	29	2				
Sweden	SE		1.47	36%		5	21			17	1				
United Kingdom	UK	0.21	1.96	57%	0.36	16	16	9	17	24	5				
Number of Countries		21	27	27	21	21	27	27	21						
EU Median		0.44	1.69	49%	0.71										
EU Average		0.35	1.86	48%	0.65										
Min		-0.21	0.56	0%	-0.25										
Max		0.79	2.96	85%	1.37										
Average EU-15²		0.29	1.52	44%	0.61										
Average Non-EU-15³		0.40	2.28	53%	0.68										



Table A-P1.3

Primary Policy Objective
P1.3 – Children (0-17 years)

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality												
0.23	1.63	28%	0.81	21	3	24	15	27	4						
	2.14	50%			11	15		14	1						
0.81	2.67	70%	1.15	6	17	7	10	24	14						
0.44	2.44	41%	1.06	14	13	19	12	16	5						
								1	1						
-0.08	2.00	56%	-0.14	22	6	13	22	13	3						
-0.11	1.45	19%	-0.59	23	2	26	23	11	2						
1.00	2.75	67%	1.50	4	23	8	4	4	2						
	1.69	25%			4	25		16	1						
0.39	2.15	82%	0.48	15	12	5	18	13	4						
0.32	2.04	60%	0.54	16	9	11	17	26	7						
0.58	2.58	38%	1.54	11	14	21	3	26	4						
0.24	2.76	61%	0.40	19	24	10	20	17	5						
0.27	3.00	80%	0.33	17	27	6	21	6	3						
0.51	2.61	42%	1.20	12	15	18	9	31	5						
0.45	2.88	45%	1.00	13	26	17	13	8	3						
0.63	2.71	47%	1.33	10	20	16	7	17	3						
0.88	2.63	88%	1.00	5	16	2	13	8	3						
1.46	2.00	86%	1.69	1	6	4	2	12	6						
	1.43	13%			1	27		7	1						
1.21	2.68	88%	1.38	3	18	3	6	19	10						
0.71	2.68	62%	1.15	8	18	9	11	19	6						
1.28	2.79	90%	1.43	2	25	1	5	24	7						
0.66	2.05	52%	1.27	9	10	14	8	22	4						
0.25	2.00	58%	0.43	18	6	12	19	4	2						
0.24	2.72	37%	0.64	20	21	22	16	29	6						
0.72	1.78	36%	2.00	7	5	23	1	18	2						
-0.29	2.74	39%	-0.73	24	22	20	24	23	3						
24	27	27	24	24	27	27	24								
0.48	2.58	52%	1.03												
0.53	2.33	54%	0.87												
-0.29	1.43	13%	-0.73												
1.46	3.00	90%	2.00												
0.37	2.22	47%	0.70												
0.70	2.48	63%	1.04												



Table A-P1.4

Primary Policy Objective
P1.4 – Single Parents

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
0.44	2.22	38%	1.17	6	8	9	3	27	7	AT	Austria				
	2.57	66%			19	4		14	1	BE	Belgium				
0.58	2.63	50%	1.16	5	21	6	4	24	9	BG	Bulgaria				
0.67	2.50	67%	1.00	4	18	3	6	16	6	HR	Croatia				
								1	1	CY	Cyprus				
-0.03	2.77	39%	-0.07	21	24	8	21	13	3	CZ	Czech Republic				
-0.14	1.18	30%	-0.47	22	1	17	22	11	2	DK	Denmark				
	3.00	33%			27	15		4	1	EE	Estonia				
0.06	2.19	34%	0.17	18	7	14	18	16	2	FI	Finland				
0.14	2.00	36%	0.40	17	4	11	17	13	2	FR	France				
0.19	2.15	35%	0.55	14	5	12	14	26	4	DE	Germany				
0.28	2.27	28%	1.00	9	11	19	6	26	3	GR	Greece				
0.26	2.35	26%	1.00	10	12	20	6	17	3	HU	Hungary				
0.25	2.83	50%	0.50	11	26	7	15	6	2	IE	Ireland				
0.19	2.35	19%	1.00	15	13	25	6	31	3	IT	Italy				
0.31	2.75	31%	1.00	8	23	16	6	8	2	LV	Latvia				
	2.81	21%			25	22		16	1	LT	Lithuania				
1.00	2.44	100%	1.00	2	15	1	6	9	3	LU	Luxembourg				
1.14	2.25	79%	1.45	1	9	2	1	12	5	MT	Malta				
0.00	1.43	0%	0.00	19	2	26	19	7	0	NL	Netherlands				
0.40	1.95	37%	1.07	7	3	10	5	19	3	PL	Poland				
0.25	2.63	25%	1.00	12	22	21	6	19	3	PT	Portugal				
0.77	2.46	65%	1.19	3	16	5	2	24	5	RO	Romania				
	2.41	21%			14	23		22	1	SK	Slovakia				
0.00	2.25	0%	0.00	19	9	26	19	4	0	SI	Slovenia				
0.20	2.46	20%	1.00	13	17	24	6	28	3	ES	Spain				
0.15	2.17	29%	0.50	16	6	18	15	18	2	SE	Sweden				
-0.34	2.58	34%	-1.00	23	20	13	23	24	3	UK	United Kingdom				
23	27	27	23	23	27	27	23								Number of Countries
0.25	2.41	34%	1.00												EU Median
0.29	2.36	38%	0.64												EU Average
-0.34	1.18	0%	-1.00												Min
1.14	3.00	100%	1.45												Max
0.19	2.23	36%	0.49												Average EU-15 ²
0.46	2.51	39%	0.87												Average Non-EU-15 ³

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table AP.1.5

Primary Policy Objective
P1.5 – Foreign-born Population

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	-0.30	2.00	28%	-1.06	14	15	6	14	26	4						
Belgium	BE		2.64	34%			26	4		14	0						
Bulgaria	BG		1.58	13%			7	11		12	1						
Croatia	HR	0.09	1.77	15%	0.62	3	13	9	2	13	2						
Cyprus	CY									1	0						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.00	1.33	0%	0.00	5	6	21	5	9	0						
Denmark	DK	-0.08	2.00	22%	-0.37	13	15	8	13	11	2						
Estonia	EE		1.67	58%			9	3		3	1						
Finland	FI	0.00	1.73	0%	0.00	5	12	21	5	15	0						
France	FR	0.71	2.33	71%	1.00	1	21	1	1	12	3						
Germany	DE	0.07	2.04	12%	0.58	4	17	12	3	26	2						
Greece	GR		2.24	4%			20	17		25	0						
Hungary	HU	0.00	0.73	0%	0.00	5	2	21	5	15	0						
Ireland	IE		2.40	23%			22	7		5	1						
Italy	IT		2.47	3%			24	18		30	1						
Latvia	LV		1.14	2%			4	20		7	1						
Lithuania	LT		1.62	6%			8	15		13	0						
Luxembourg	LU	0.00	2.67	58%	0.00	5	27	2	5	9	2						
Malta	MT	0.00	1.89	0%	0.00	5	14	21	5	9	0						
Netherlands	NL	0.00	1.71	0%	0.00	5	11	21	5	7	0						
Poland	PL		1.29	7%			5	14		14	0						
Portugal	PT		2.42	5%			23	16		19	0						
Romania	RO	0.00	0.87	0%	0.00	5	3	21	5	15	0						
Slovakia	SK		0.60	8%			1	13		15	1						
Slovenia	SI	0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	5	9	21	5	3	0						
Spain	ES		2.59	2%			25	19		29	0						
Sweden	SE	0.10	2.11	32%	0.31	2	19	5	4	18	3						
United Kingdom	UK		2.10	14%			18	10		20	1						
Number of Countries		14	27	27	14	14	27	27	14								
EU Median		0.00	1.89	7%	0.00												
EU Average		0.04	1.84	15%	0.08												
Min		-0.30	0.60	0%	-1.06												
Max		0.71	2.67	71%	1.00												
Average EU-15²		0.06	2.23	21%	0.06												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.02	1.35	9%	0.10												



Table AP.1.6

Primary Policy Objective
P1.6 – Refugees

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
		-0.19	2.43	37%	-0.52	12	21	5	12	28	5						
			2.54	32%			22	8		13	1						
		0.06	2.31	30%	0.21	7	19	10	7	16	4						
			2.00	10%			10	22		12	1						
										0	0						
		-0.37	1.25	29%	-1.29	13	5	11	13	8	2						
		-0.08	2.18	33%	-0.23	11	14	7	11	11	3						
			0.67	50%			1	3		3	1						
			2.08	17%			12	19		13	1						
		0.66	2.38	66%	1.00	2	20	2	2	13	3						
		0.00	2.28	20%	0.00	8	18	15	8	25	3						
		0.13	2.58	19%	0.67	5	23	17	4	24	3						
			1.20	5%			3	24		15	1						
			2.80	25%			27	14		5	1						
			2.67	4%			24	25		27	0						
		0.27	1.50	27%	1.00	4	6	12	2	6	3						
			2.00	30%			10	9		14	0						
		1.35	2.71	81%	1.67	1	26	1	1	7	3						
			2.27	14%			16	21		11	1						
			1.75	34%			9	6		4	1						
		0.09	1.58	17%	0.54	6	7	18	6	12	2						
			2.28	26%			17	13		18	0						
			1.22	15%			4	20		18	0						
		0.00	0.67	0%	0.00	8	1	26	8	15	0						
		0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	8	8	26	8	3	0						
			2.17	6%			13	23		23	0						
		0.28	2.24	43%	0.65	3	15	4	5	17	3						
			2.68	20%			25	16		22	1						
Number of Countries		13	27	27	13	13	27	27	13								
EU Median		0.06	2.18	25%	0.21												
EU Average		0.17	2.00	26%	0.28												
Min		-0.37	0.67	0%	-1.29												
Max		1.35	2.80	81%	1.67												
Average EU-15²		0.31	2.38	31%	0.46												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.01	1.53	19%	0.08												



Table AE
Dimension
Equitable Education

Scores				Rank ¹				N [†]	
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
0.47	2.24	39%	1.22	4	14	8	3	6	6
								0	0
0.48	2.34	51%	0.95	3	19	4	5	6	4
0.37	1.74	36%	1.02	6	7	10	4	6	5
								0	1
0.15	1.50	33%	0.47	11	2	13	14	6	6
0.29	1.67	54%	0.54	7	5	3	12	6	5
								1	0
0.00	1.57	20%	0.00	17	3	15	17	6	3
0.22	2.29	39%	0.56	10	17	7	10	6	3
0.13	2.30	19%	0.69	12	18	17	8	6	4
0.06	1.98	10%	0.58	15	10	22	9	6	6
-0.01	2.13	17%	-0.05	19	12	19	19	6	6
								2	1
0.01	2.26	20%	0.03	16	15	16	16	6	4
0.25	2.05	33%	0.77	9	11	12	6	6	6
0.00	1.81	10%	0.00	17	8	21	17	6	3
0.28	2.58	55%	0.50	8	22	2	13	6	5
0.51	2.52	68%	0.75	1	21	1	7	6	6
								0	0
0.08	1.68	45%	0.17	14	6	5	15	5	3
0.44	1.93	35%	1.26	5	9	11	2	6	5
0.50	2.47	38%	1.31	2	20	9	1	5	3
0.10	1.63	18%	0.54	13	4	18	11	6	4
								1	1
-0.01	2.27	11%	-0.09	20	16	20	20	6	5
	1.31	26%		1	14			4	2
-0.16	2.17	40%	-0.41	21	13	6	21	4	3
21	22	22	21	21	22	22	21		
0.15	2.09	34%	0.54						
0.20	2.02	33%	0.52						
-0.16	1.31	10%	-0.41						
0.51	2.58	68%	1.31						
0.16	2.05	31%	0.44						
0.24	1.99	35%	0.59						



Table AE.1
Composite Policy Objective
E1 – Equal Opportunities

Score				Rank ¹				N [†]			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality		
0.38	2.14	37%	1.04	8	18	15	5	6	6	AT	Austria
								0	0	BE	Belgium
0.61	1.38	68%	0.90	5	4	5	7	6	6	BG	Bulgaria
0.93	2.25	84%	1.12	2	21	1	3	6	5	HR	Croatia
								0	0	CY	Cyprus
0.22	1.67	65%	0.35	14	8	6	15	6	5	CZ	Czech Republic
	1.21	30%			1	19		6	2	DK	Denmark
	1.33	44%			2	12		6	1	EE	Estonia
	1.64	21%			6	23		6	1	FI	Finland
0.25	2.30	47%	0.54	13	24	10	14	6	4	FR	France
0.28	2.08	36%	0.78	12	16	16	8	6	3	DE	Germany
0.39	1.75	61%	0.64	7	9	8	11	6	6	GR	Greece
0.33	2.17	60%	0.55	9	19	9	12	6	6	HU	Hungary
1.22	2.57	83%	1.47	1	25	2	1	6	3	IE	Ireland
	2.05	29%			14	20		6	0	IT	Italy
0.32	2.03	29%	1.08	11	13	21	4	6	5	LV	Latvia
	1.92	17%			11	25		6	1	LT	Lithuania
0.33	2.28	44%	0.75	10	22	11	9	6	5	LU	Luxembourg
0.74	2.14	72%	1.03	4	17	4	6	6	6	MT	Malta
								0	0	NL	Netherlands
0.52	1.89	77%	0.67	6	10	3	10	6	6	PL	Poland
	1.98	43%			12	13		6	2	PT	Portugal
0.91	2.28	65%	1.41	3	23	7	2	6	5	RO	Romania
0.19	1.66	36%	0.54	15	7	17	13	6	3	SK	Slovakia
0.00	1.56	34%	0.00	16	5	18	16	6	3	SI	Slovenia
-0.03	2.06	26%	-0.13	17	15	22	17	6	3	ES	Spain
	1.38	21%			3	24		6	2	SE	Sweden
-0.12	2.23	42%	-0.29	18	20	14	18	6	6	UK	United Kingdom
18	25	25	18	18	25	25	18			Number of Countries	
0.33	2.03	43%	0.71							EU Median	
0.42	1.92	47%	0.69							EU Average	
-0.12	1.21	17%	-0.29							Min	
1.22	2.57	84%	1.47							Max	
0.34	1.97	40%	0.60							Average EU-15 ²	
0.48	1.86	54%	0.77							Average Non-EU-15 ³	

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).
² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.
³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.
[†] Number of policy objectives contained in this dimension for which data is available.
[‡] Number of primary policy objectives contained in this composite policy objective for which data is available.
[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-E1.1

Primary Policy Objective
E1.1 – Early Childhood Education

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.46	2.32	38%	1.22	9	20	15	6	19	6						
Belgium	BE									1	1						
Bulgaria	BG	1.31	1.63	100%	1.31	2	4	1	5	8	6						
Croatia	HR	0.53	2.13	100%	0.53	7	12	1	12	8	2						
Cyprus	CY									2	0						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.09	1.57	27%	0.33	15	3	18	15	7	2						
Denmark	DK		1.25	8%			2	23		12	0						
Estonia	EE		2.00	85%			8	6		4	0						
Finland	FI		2.09	27%			11	19		11	1						
France	FR		1.78	2%			7	24		9	1						
Germany	DE	0.31	2.17	57%	0.53	13	14	11	11	12	2						
Greece	GR	0.62	1.63	62%	1.00	6	4	9	7	8	2						
Hungary	HU	0.46	2.00	92%	0.50	10	8	4	13	7	2						
Ireland	IE	1.46	2.80	100%	1.46	1	25	1	2	5	2						
Italy	IT		2.26	24%			18	20		19	0						
Latvia	LV	0.48	2.18	35%	1.38	8	15	17	3	11	2						
Lithuania	LT		2.00	18%			8	21		10	1						
Luxembourg	LU	0.45	2.50	90%	0.50	11	22	5	13	4	2						
Malta	MT	0.93	2.20	68%	1.37	4	16	8	4	10	3						
Netherlands	NL									0	0						
Poland	PL	0.85	2.67	85%	1.00	5	23	7	7	9	5						
Portugal	PT		2.30	41%			19	13		10	1						
Romania	RO	1.17	2.70	59%	2.00	3	24	10	1	10	3						
Slovakia	SK	0.34	2.13	57%	0.59	12	12	12	10	8	2						
Slovenia	SI	0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	16	6	25	16	3	0						
Spain	ES		2.38	14%			21	22		16	1						
Sweden	SE		1.13	39%			1	14		8	1						
United Kingdom	UK	0.26	2.20	37%	0.70	14	16	16	9	5	2						
Number of Countries		16	25	25	16	16	25	25	16								
EU Median		0.47	2.13	41%	0.85												
EU Average		0.61	2.07	51%	0.90												
Min		0.00	1.13	0%	0.00												
Max		1.46	2.80	100%	2.00												
Average EU-15²		0.59	2.06	42%	0.90												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.62	2.07	60%	0.90												



Table A-E1.2

Primary Policy Objective
E1.2 – Pre-primary Education

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.62	1.50	62%	1.00	10	5	13	6	8	2						
Belgium	BE	1.00	2.14	100%	1.00	4	17	1	6	7	2						
Bulgaria	BG	1.46	2.80	100%	1.46	1	25	1	3	5	2						
Croatia	HR		1.63	35%			8	19		19	0						
Cyprus	CY	0.43	1.91	29%	1.50	12	13	20	2	11	2						
Czech Republic	CZ		2.18	19%			18	23		11	0						
Denmark	DK	0.70	2.50	70%	1.00	6	22	9	6	4	3						
Estonia	EE	0.63	1.80	76%	0.83	9	11	8	11	10	4						
Finland	FI									0	0						
France	FR	0.42	2.56	100%	0.42	13	23	1	15	9	7						
Germany	DE	0.64	1.70	70%	0.92	8	10	10	10	10	3						
Greece	GR	1.27	2.73	81%	1.57	3	24	7	1	11	5						
Hungary	HU	0.23	2.13	57%	0.41	16	16	15	17	8	2						
Ireland	IE		1.67	60%			9	14		3	0						
Italy	IT	0.18	2.00	24%	0.74	17	14	22	12	16	2						
Latvia	LV		1.25	38%			2	18		8	1						
Lithuania	LT	0.33	2.00	50%	0.67	15	14	16	13	5	2						
Luxembourg	LU																
Malta	MT	17	25	25	17	17	25	25	17								
Netherlands	NL	0.63	1.91	62%	1.00												
Poland	PL	0.69	1.92	60%	0.95												
Portugal	PT	0.18	1.20	13%	0.41												
Romania	RO	1.46	2.80	100%	1.57												
Slovakia	SK	0.68	1.86	49%	1.02												
Slovenia	SI	0.70	1.98	72%	0.89												
Spain	ES		2.17	6%			13	23		23	0						
Sweden	SE	0.28	2.24	43%	0.65	3	15	4	5	17	3						
United Kingdom	UK		2.68	20%			25	16		22	1						
Number of Countries		13	27	27	13	13	27	27	13								
EU Median		0.06	2.18	25%	0.21												
EU Average		0.17	2.00	26%	0.28												
Min		-0.37	0.67	0%	-1.29												
Max		1.35	2.80	81%	1.67												
Average EU-15²		0.31	2.38	31%	0.46												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.01	1.53	19%	0.08												



Table A-E1.3

Primary Policy Objective
E1.3 – Primary Education

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality												
0.31	1.95	25%	1.24	11	18	21	3	19	5						
								1	1						
0.44	1.13	78%	0.57	7	3	3	10	8	5						
0.86	1.75	43%	2.00	1	13	14	1	8	2						
								2	1						
0.38	1.57	100%	0.38	9	11	1	13	7	5						
0.54	1.17	54%	1.00	6	4	12	6	12	4						
0.00	0.75	0%	0.00	15	1	24	15	4	0						
0.00	1.20	0%	0.00	15	5	24	15	10	0						
0.28	2.67	72%	0.39	13	25	6	12	9	3						
	2.00	13%			19	23		12	1						
0.58	1.38	58%	1.00	4	9	10	6	8	2						
0.29	2.43	65%	0.45	12	24	9	11	7	2						
	2.40	71%			23	7		5	1						
	1.58	36%			12	16		19	0						
0.35	2.00	35%	1.00	10	19	17	6	11	3						
	1.50	25%			10	20		10	1						
0.56	2.25	67%	0.83	5	21	8	9	4	3						
0.81	1.90	76%	1.06	3	17	4	5	10	4						
								1	0						
0.10	1.33	87%	0.11	14	7	2	14	9	4						
0.41	1.00	34%	1.20	8	2	18	4	10	2						
0.84	2.27	58%	1.43	2	22	11	2	11	4						
	1.75	15%			13	22		8	0						
	1.33	75%			7	5		3	0						
-0.13	1.88	28%	-0.48	18	16	19	18	16	3						
	1.25	38%			6	15		8	1						
0.00	1.80	50%	0.00	15	15	13	15	5	2						
18	25	25	18	18	25	25	18								
0.37	1.75	50%	0.70												
0.37	1.69	48%	0.68												
-0.13	0.75	0%	-0.48												
0.86	2.67	100%	2.00												
0.28	1.73	42%	0.58												
0.45	1.64	55%	0.78												



Table A-E1.4

Primary Policy Objective
E1.4 – Secondary Education (and Post-secondary Non-tertiary)

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
0.19	2.11	52%	0.37	10	14	11	11	19	7	AT	Austria				
								1	1	BE	Belgium				
0.36	1.38	73%	0.50	7	5	5	9	8	5	BG	Bulgaria				
1.53	2.13	76%	2.00	1	15	4	1	8	2	HR	Croatia				
								2	1	CY	Cyprus				
-0.30	2.14	60%	-0.50	16	16	10	16	7	4	CZ	Czech Republic				
0.73	1.25	67%	1.10	3	3	7	2	12	4	DK	Denmark				
	0.50	5%			1	24		4	0	EE	Estonia				
	1.60	15%			7	22		10	0	FI	Finland				
0.70	2.44	85%	0.82	4	23	2	6	9	4	FR	France				
	2.08	36%			12	17		12	0	DE	Germany				
-0.07	1.75	64%	-0.11	13	10	8	13	8	3	GR	Greece				
0.25	2.29	50%	0.50	9	21	13	9	7	2	HU	Hungary				
	2.40	71%			22	6		5	1	IE	Ireland				
	2.26	35%			20	18		19	1	IT	Italy				
0.45	2.00	45%	1.00	6	11	15	3	11	3	LV	Latvia				
	1.73	14%			9	23		11	0	LT	Lithuania				
	2.50	20%			24	20		4	1	LU	Luxembourg				
0.47	2.50	80%	0.59	5	24	3	8	10	4	MT	Malta				
								1	0	NL	Netherlands				
0.30	1.33	49%	0.61	8	4	14	7	9	3	PL	Poland				
	2.10	40%			13	16		10	0	PT	Portugal				
0.91	2.18	91%	1.00	2	17	1	3	11	4	RO	Romania				
0.18	1.22	18%	1.00	11	2	21	3	9	2	SK	Slovakia				
0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	12	8	25	12	3	0	SI	Slovenia				
-0.17	2.25	51%	-0.33	14	19	12	14	16	4	ES	Spain				
	1.50	22%			6	19		8	0	SE	Sweden				
-0.26	2.20	63%	-0.41	15	18	9	15	5	3	UK	United Kingdom				
16	25	25	16	16	25	25	16								Number of Countries
0.27	2.10	50%	0.55												EU Median
0.33	1.90	47%	0.51												EU Average
-0.30	0.50	0%	-0.50												Min
1.53	2.50	91%	2.00												Max
0.19	2.03	48%	0.24												Average EU-15 ²
0.41	1.75	47%	0.67												Average Non-EU-15 ³

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-E1.5

Primary Policy Objective
E1.5 – Tertiary Education

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.21	1.89	18%	1.18	7	9	20	5	19	3						
Belgium	BE									1	1						
Bulgaria	BG	0.00	0.63	40%	0.00	9	1	11	9	8	3						
Croatia	HR	1.00	2.63	74%	1.35	2	25	2	3	8	3						
Cyprus	CY									2	1						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.64	2.00	50%	1.29	4	11	8	4	7	2						
Denmark	DK		1.17	21%			4	19		12	1						
Estonia	EE		0.75	5%			2	22		4	0						
Finland	FI		2.00	33%			11	13		10	1						
France	FR	0.00	2.33	18%	0.00	9	20	21	9	9	2						
Germany	DE		2.08	35%			15	12		12	1						
Greece	GR	0.39	2.00	63%	0.63	6	11	5	7	8	4						
Hungary	HU	0.00	2.29	50%	0.00	9	19	8	9	7	2						
Ireland	IE	1.13	2.40	75%	1.50	1	21	1	2	5	2						
Italy	IT		2.47	26%			24	16		19	1						
Latvia	LV	0.12	2.27	24%	0.50	8	18	18	8	11	3						
Lithuania	LT	0.00	1.90	0%	0.00	9	10	23	9	10	0						
Luxembourg	LU	0.00	2.25	0%	0.00	9	17	23	9	4	0						
Malta	MT	0.86	2.20	56%	1.54	3	16	6	1	10	2						
Netherlands	NL									1	1						
Poland	PL	0.45	1.33	54%	0.83	5	5	7	6	9	4						
Portugal	PT		2.40	50%			21	10		10	1						
Romania	RO		2.00	26%			11	17		11	1						
Slovakia	SK		1.00	33%			3	14		9	0						
Slovenia	SI		1.67	70%			7	3		3	1						
Spain	ES		1.88	27%			8	15		16	1						
Sweden	SE	0.00	1.63	0%	0.00	9	6	23	9	8	0						
United Kingdom	UK	-0.96	2.40	65%	-1.47	15	21	4	15	5	4						
Number of Countries		15	25	25	15	15	25	25	15								
EU Median		0.12	2.00	33%	0.50												
EU Average		0.26	1.90	37%	0.49												
Min		-0.96	0.63	0%	-1.47												
Max		1.13	2.63	75%	1.54												
Average EU-15 ²		0.11	2.07	33%	0.26												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.38	1.72	40%	0.69												



Table A-E1.6

Primary Policy Objective
E1.6 – Lifelong Learning

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
		0.21	2.35	24%	0.91	6	19	11	4	17	2						
										1	0						
		0.03	2.14	23%	0.12	7	15	13	7	7	2						
			2.63	100%			23	1		8	1						
										2	0						
			1.17	54%			1	8		6	1						
			1.17	17%			1	16		12	1						
			2.50	42%			21	9		4	1						
			1.73	14%			6	17		11	0						
		0.32	2.67	64%	0.50	4	24	6	6	9	2						
		0.00	1.89	0%	0.00	8	11	20	8	9	0						
		0.32	2.25	56%	0.57	5	18	7	5	8	3						
		0.00	1.86	0%	0.00	8	10	20	8	7	0						
			2.60	77%			22	2		5	1						
			2.06	22%			13	14		16	1						
			1.80	7%			8	19		10	0						
			2.20	27%			16	10		10	1						
		0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	8	5	20	8	3	0						
		0.77	2.22	77%	1.00	1	17	3	1	9	3						
										0	1						
		0.67	2.13	67%	1.00	3	14	5	1	8	3						
			2.40	24%			20	12		10	1						
		0.67	1.80	67%	1.00	2	8	4	1	10	2						
			1.75	17%			7	15		8	0						
		0.00	1.33	0%	0.00	8	3	20	8	3	0						
			2.00	11%			12	18		14	1						
		0.00	1.50	0%	0.00	8	4	20	8	8	0						
		0.00	2.75	0%	0.00	8	25	20	8	4	0						
Number of Countries		13	25	25	13	13	25	25	13								
EU Median		0.03	2.06	23%	0.12												
EU Average		0.23	2.02	32%	0.39												
Min		0.00	1.17	0%	0.00												
Max		0.77	2.75	100%	1.00												
Average EU-15 ²		0.12	2.08	24%	0.28												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.36	1.96	40%	0.52												



Table A-E2.4

Primary Policy Objective
E2.4 – Secondary Education
 (and Post-secondary Non-tertiary)

	Performance			Need			Activity			Quality			Rank ¹		N [§]	
	Score	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need		
	2.15	19%			13	14			13	1						
	0.77	2.50	77%	1.00	1	20	3	1	6	4						
	0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	7	17	17	7	3	0						
	2.00	20%			11	13			5	1						
	0.72	1.44	86%	0.84	2	4	1	3	9	4						
	0.00	1.60	0%	0.00	7	6	17	7	5	0						
		1.40	14%		3	15			5	1						
		1.60	22%		6	12			5	1						
	0.00	2.50	0%	0.00	7	20	17	7	6	0						
	-0.75	3.00	50%	-1.50	14	23	6	14	4	2						
		1.67	70%		8	4			3	0						
	0.10	2.31	33%	0.30	6	16	9	6	13	3						
	0.65	2.11	78%	0.83	3	12	2	4	9	5						
	0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	7	17	17	7	6	0						
		2.25	56%		15	5			4	1						
	0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	7	17	17	7	3	0						
		1.80	25%		10	11			5	0						
	0.30	1.67	30%	1.00	4	8	10	1	6	2						
	0.20	2.83	40%	0.50	5	22	8	5	6	2						
		1.33	41%		1	7			6	0						
		2.22	10%		14	16			9	1						
	0.00	1.33	0%	0.00	7	1	17	7	3	0						
	0.00	1.50	0%	0.00	7	5	17	7	4	0						
	14	23	23	14	14	23	23	14								
	0.00	2.11	22%	0.00												
	0.14	2.01	29%	0.21												
	-0.75	1.33	0%	-1.50												
	0.77	3.00	86%	1.00												
	0.16	1.82	26%	0.31												
	0.12	2.26	33%	0.12												



Table A-E2.5

Primary Policy Objective
E2.5 – Tertiary Education

	Performance			Need			Activity			Quality			Rank ¹		N [§]		Country
	Score	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need	Activity	Quality	Rank	Need			
	0.32	2.15	16%	2.00	1	15	16	1	13	2						AT Austria	
																BE Belgium	
	0.24	2.00	34%	0.71	4	8	9	2	6	2						BG Bulgaria	
		2.25	37%			19	8		4	1						HR Croatia	
									2	0						CY Cyprus	
	0.25	2.00	40%	0.63	3	8	7	3	4	2						CZ Czech Republic	
	0.26	1.33	72%	0.36	2	2	1	4	9	5						DK Denmark	
									0	0						EE Estonia	
	0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	5	8	19	5	6	0						FI Finland	
		2.00	30%			8	10		5	1						FR France	
	0.00	2.20	0%	0.00	5	18	19	5	5	0						DE Germany	
		2.00	27%			8	11		6	0						GR Greece	
	-0.25	3.00	50%	-0.50	13	23	4	12	4	2						HU Hungary	
		2.67	44%			22	5		3	0						IE Ireland	
	-0.06	2.62	13%	-0.50	12	21	18	12	13	2						IT Italy	
	-0.06	2.25	44%	-0.14	11	19	6	11	8	3						LV Latvia	
	0.00	2.17	0%	0.00	5	16	19	5	6	0						LT Lithuania	
	0.00	1.75	0%	0.00	5	7	19	5	4	0						LU Luxembourg	
		2.00	25%			8	13		4	1						MT Malta	
									0	0						NL Netherlands	
	0.00	1.40	58%	0.00	5	3	2	5	5	2						PL Poland	
		2.00	18%			8	15		6	1						PT Portugal	
		2.17	26%			16	12		6	1						RO Romania	
		1.50	57%			4	3		6	0						SK Slovakia	
									2	1						SI Slovenia	
		1.70	13%			6	17		10	1						ES Spain	
	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	5	1	19	5	3	0						SE Sweden	
		1.50	20%			4	14		4	1						UK United Kingdom	
	13	23	23	13	13	23	23	13								Number of Countries	
	0.00	2.00	26%	0.00												EU Median	
	0.05	1.98	27%	0.20												EU Average	
	-0.25	1.00	0%	-0.50												Min	
	0.32	3.00	72%	2.00												Max	
	0.07	1.92	19%	0.27												Average EU-15 ²	
	0.03	2.07	37%	0.11												Average Non-EU-15 ³	

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-E2.6

Primary Policy Objective
E2.6 – Lifelong Learning

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ²							
Austria	AT	0.35	2.18	17%	2.00	2	14	9	1	11	2						
Belgium	BE																1 0
Bulgaria	BG		2.80	21%			20	7								5 1	
Croatia	HR															2 0	
Cyprus	CY															1 0	
Czech Republic	CZ	0.00	1.75	0%	0.00	3	5	11	3	4	0						
Denmark	DK	0.84	1.13	68%	1.24	1	3	1	2	8	3						
Estonia	EE															1 1	
Finland	FI	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	3	1	11	3	5	0						
France	FR	0.00	1.40	0%	0.00	3	4	11	3	5	1						
Germany	DE	0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	8	11	3	4	0						
Greece	GR		2.17	11%			12	10								6 0	
Hungary	HU	0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	3	16	11	3	3	0						
Ireland	IE															2 0	
Italy	IT	0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	8	11	3	10	0						
Latvia	LV		1.83	24%			7	6								6 1	
Lithuania	LT	0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	3	16	11	3	6	0						
Luxembourg	LU	0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	8	11	3	3	0						
Malta	MT		2.50	36%			19	3								4 1	
Netherlands	NL															0 0	
Poland	PL		2.00	25%			8	5								6 0	
Portugal	PT		2.17	18%			12	8								6 1	
Romania	RO		2.20	38%			15	2								5 1	
Slovakia	SK		2.40	28%			18	4								5 0	
Slovenia	SI															1 0	
Spain	ES	0.00	1.78	0%	0.00	3	6	11	3	9	0						
Sweden	SE	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	3	1	11	3	3	0						
United Kingdom	UK															2 1	
Number of Countries		12	20	20	12	12	20	20	12								
EU Median		0.00	2.00	5%	0.00												
EU Average		0.10	1.95	14%	0.27												
Min		0.00	1.00	0%	0.00												
Max		0.84	2.80	68%	2.00												
Average EU-15²		0.13	1.71	10%	0.36												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.00	2.24	19%	0.00												



Table A-E3

Composite Policy Objective
E3 – Quality of Teaching / Pedagogical Quality

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ²							
		0.53	1.73	44%	1.21	2	9	5	2	6	6						
																	0 0
		1.02	2.64	75%	1.37	1	22	2	1	6	6						
			1.85	90%			12	1								4 1	
																	0 0
		0.23	1.86	34%	0.68	6	13	7	7	6	4						
		0.26	1.15	30%	0.87	5	3	9	5	6	4						
																	0 0
		0.00	0.97	6%	0.00	8	1	20	8	6	5						
			1.45	27%			6	11								5 2	
			1.65	43%			7	6								5 1	
		0.00	2.48	0%	0.00	8	20	22	8	6	6						
		0.00	1.78	9%	0.00	8	10	19	8	6	4						
																	0 0
		-0.03	2.00	4%	-0.61	15	15	21	15	6	6						
		0.43	2.03	45%	0.97	4	17	4	4	6	5						
		0.00	1.85	13%	0.00	8	11	17	8	6	3						
			2.47	30%			19	10								5 2	
		0.47	2.59	65%	0.72	3	21	3	6	6	5						
																	0 0
		0.00	1.25	27%	0.00	8	4	12	8	6	3						
		0.13	1.67	13%	1.00	7	8	16	3	6	4						
			2.11	22%			18	14								6 2	
			1.13	25%			2	13								4 2	
																	0 0
		0.00	1.87	11%	0.00	8	14	18	8	6	3						
		0.00	1.27	34%	0.00	8	5	8	8	5	3						
			2.00	18%			15	15								3 2	
Number of Countries		15	22	22	15	15	22	22	15								
EU Median		0.00	1.85	27%	0.00												
EU Average		0.20	1.81	30%	0.41												
Min		-0.03	0.97	0%	-0.61												
Max		1.02	2.64	90%	1.37												
Average EU-15²		0.11	1.73	22%	0.31												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.31	1.91	40%	0.53												



Table A-E3.3

Primary Policy Objective
E3.3 – Primary Education

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.29	1.45	40%	0.72	7	6	10	7	11	3						
Belgium	BE																0 0
Bulgaria	BG	1.47	2.83	100%	1.47	1	21	1	2	6	4						
Croatia	HR		2.00	100%			14	1		3	1						
Cyprus	CY									2	0						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.25	1.60	25%	1.00	8	10	14	3	5	2						
Denmark	DK	0.59	1.17	77%	0.77	4	3	3	6	6	4						
Estonia	EE									0	0						
Finland	FI		1.00	33%			1	13		5	1						
France	FR		1.50	50%			7	8		4	1						
Germany	DE		1.50	51%			7	7		4	1						
Greece	GR	0.00	2.60	0%	0.00	9	18	19	9	5	0						
Hungary	HU		2.00	25%			14	14		4	1						
Ireland	IE									0	0						
Italy	IT	0.00	1.78	0%	0.00	9	12	19	9	9	0						
Latvia	LV	0.67	2.00	67%	1.00	3	14	5	3	8	4						
Lithuania	LT		1.86	23%			13	17		7	1						
Luxembourg	LU		2.67	25%			19	14		3	1						
Malta	MT	0.50	2.80	75%	0.67	5	20	4	8	5	3						
Netherlands	NL									0	0						
Poland	PL		1.00	63%			1	6		4	1						
Portugal	PT	0.38	1.33	38%	1.00	6	4	12	3	6	2						
Romania	RO	0.70	1.67	40%	1.75	2	11	11	1	6	2						
Slovakia	SK	0.00	1.33	0%	0.00	9	4	19	9	3	0						
Slovenia	SI									2	0						
Spain	ES		2.00	14%			14	18		8	1						
Sweden	SE		1.50	44%			7	9		4	1						
United Kingdom	UK									2	0						
Number of Countries		11	21	21	11	11	21	21	11								
EU Median		0.38	1.67	40%	0.77												
EU Average		0.44	1.79	42%	0.76												
Min		0.00	1.00	0%	0.00												
Max		1.47	2.83	100%	1.75												
Average EU-15²		0.25	1.68	34%	0.50												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.60	1.91	52%	0.98												



Table A-E3.4

Primary Policy Objective
E3.4 – Secondary Education
(and Post-secondary Non-tertiary)

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.44	1.91	40%	1.11	5	8	13	3	11	3						
Belgium	BE																0 0
Bulgaria	BG	1.07	2.83	79%	1.35	1	22	2	1	6	3						
Croatia	HR		2.00	100%			9	1		3	1						
Cyprus	CY									2	0						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.29	2.40	50%	0.58	7	18	10	7	5	2						
Denmark	DK	0.54	1.25	54%	1.00	3	3	9	4	4	2						
Estonia	EE									0	0						
Finland	FI	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	9	1	19	9	5	0						
France	FR		2.00	60%			9	7		4	1						
Germany	DE		1.75	49%			6	12		4	1						
Greece	GR	0.00	2.60	0%	0.00	9	19	19	9	5	0						
Hungary	HU		1.75	29%			6	15		4	1						
Ireland	IE															1 1	
Italy	IT	-0.14	2.20	23%	-0.61	13	14	17	13	10	2						
Latvia	LV	0.84	2.25	69%	1.23	2	15	4	2	8	4						
Lithuania	LT	0.00	2.17	0%	0.00	9	12	19	9	6	0						
Luxembourg	LU	0.25	2.67	63%	0.40	8	20	6	8	3	2						
Malta	MT	0.53	2.75	73%	0.72	4	21	3	6	4	3						
Netherlands	NL									0	0						
Poland	PL		1.50	50%			4	10		4	1						
Portugal	PT	0.33	1.50	33%	1.00	6	4	14	4	6	2						
Romania	RO		2.17	18%			12	18		6	1						
Slovakia	SK	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	9	1	19	9	4	0						
Slovenia	SI									2	0						
Spain	ES		2.25	26%			15	16		8	1						
Sweden	SE		2.25	67%			15	5		4	1						
United Kingdom	UK		2.00	54%			9	8		3	1						
Number of Countries		13	22	22	13	13	22	22	13								
EU Median		0.29	2.08	49%	0.58												
EU Average		0.32	2.01	43%	0.52												
Min		-0.14	1.00	0%	-0.61												
Max		1.07	2.83	100%	1.35												
Average EU-15²		0.20	1.95	39%	0.41												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.46	2.08	47%	0.65												



Table A-E4

Primary Policy Objective

E4 – Independence of Learning Success from Socioeconomic Background

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.47	2.83	41%	1.14	4	17	7	3	12	5						
Belgium	BE																0 0
Bulgaria	BG		2.50	17%			9	13		6	1						
Croatia	HR	0.00	2.75	0%	0.00	9	16	16	9	4	0						
Cyprus	CY									2	1						
Czech Republic	CZ	0.23	2.25	37%	0.62	7	5	9	6	4	2						
Denmark	DK	0.63	2.00	57%	1.11	3	2	5	4	7	4						
Estonia	EE																0 0
Finland	FI	0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	9	1	16	9	6	0						
France	FR		3.00	67%			18	2		4	1						
Germany	DE		3.00	25%			18	11		5	1						
Greece	GR	0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	9	2	16	9	5	0						
Hungary	HU	0.00	2.50	0%	0.00	9	9	16	9	4	0						
Ireland	IE									1	1						
Italy	IT		2.55	7%			13	15		11	1						
Latvia	LV	0.07	2.57	23%	0.29	8	14	12	8	7	2						
Lithuania	LT		2.17	16%			4	14		6	1						
Luxembourg	LU	0.33	3.00	67%	0.50	5	18	4	7	3	2						
Malta	MT	0.90	2.67	68%	1.33	1	15	1	2	6	3						
Netherlands	NL																0 0
Poland	PL	-0.20	2.50	40%	-0.50	15	9	8	15	4	2						
Portugal	PT	0.29	2.33	29%	1.00	6	7	10	5	6	2						
Romania	RO	0.72	2.50	48%	1.50	2	9	6	1	6	2						
Slovakia	SK	0.00	2.25	0%	0.00	9	5	16	9	4	0						
Slovenia	SI									2	0						
Spain	ES	0.00	2.43	0%	0.00	9	8	16	9	7	0						
Sweden	SE									2	0						
United Kingdom	UK	-0.33	3.00	67%	-0.50	16	18	2	15	3	2						
Number of Countries		16	21	21	16	16	21	21	16								
EU Median		0.03	2.50	25%	0.14												
EU Average		0.19	2.50	29%	0.41												
Min		-0.33	1.67	0%	-0.50												
Max		0.90	3.00	68%	1.50												
Average EU-15²		0.17	2.53	33%	0.41												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.21	2.47	25%	0.41												



Table A-E5

Primary Policy Objective

E5 – Reduce Rate of Early School Leavers

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
		0.73	2.25	50%	1.45	2	13	5	2	8	4						
																	0 0
		0.37	2.67	79%	0.47	4	14	2	7	6	2						
		0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	9	2	15	10	3	0						
					1.00					3	2						
		0.00	0.75	0%	0.00	9	1	15	10	4	0						
		0.30	2.00	48%	0.63	7	10	6	5	8	2						
																	0 0
			1.60	20%			6	13		5	1						
		0.36	2.75	64%	0.57	5	18	3	6	4	2						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	9	10	15	10	4	0						
		0.00	1.20	0%	0.00	9	4	15	10	5	0						
		0.00	2.67	0%	0.00	9	14	15	10	3	0						
																	1 0
		-0.21	2.73	32%	-0.67	16	17	9	17	11	3						
		0.31	1.63	38%	0.80	6	7	8	4	8	3						
		0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	9	8	15	10	6	0						
		0.25	2.67	63%	0.40	8	14	4	9	3	2						
		0.40	2.83	100%	0.40	3	19	1	8	6	5						
																	0 0
			1.00	25%			2	11		4	1						
		0.83	2.00	42%	2.00	1	10	7	1	6	2						
			2.83	15%			19	14		6	0						
		0.00	1.40	0%	0.00	9	5	15	10	5	0						
																	2 0
			2.83	25%			19	12		6	1						
			1.67	30%			8	10		3	1						
																	2 0
Number of Countries		16	21	21	17	16	21	21	17								
EU Median		0.13	2.00	25%	0.40												
EU Average		0.21	2.01	30%	0.41												
Min		-0.21	0.75	0%	-0.67												
Max		0.83	2.83	100%	2.00												
Average EU-15²		0.28	2.15	34%	0.55												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.13	1.84	26%	0.30												



Table A-E6

Primary Policy Objective

E6 – Integration of Refugees

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality				N [§]		
Score	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality					
0.37	2.42	37%	1.00	2	14	6	1	12	3	AT	Austria							
								0	0	BE	Belgium							
	2.25	21%			11	9		4	1	BG	Bulgaria							
0.00	0.33	0%	0.00	7	1	11	7	3	0	HR	Croatia							
								1	0	CY	Cyprus							
0.00	0.67	0%	0.00	7	2	11	7	3	0	CZ	Czech Republic							
0.00	2.38	81%	0.00	7	13	1	7	8	4	DK	Denmark							
								1	0	EE	Estonia							
	2.20	54%			9	5		5	1	FI	Finland							
0.00	2.50	0%	0.00	7	15	11	7	4	0	FR	France							
0.00	3.00	0%	0.00	7	17	11	7	5	0	DE	Germany							
0.00	2.20	0%	0.00	7	9	11	7	5	0	GR	Greece							
0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	7	3	11	7	3	0	HU	Hungary							
								1	0	IE	Ireland							
0.32	2.13	32%	1.00	4	8	8	1	8	2	IT	Italy							
0.29	2.00	36%	0.80	5	7	7	4	6	2	LV	Latvia							
	1.00	9%			3	10		6	1	LT	Lithuania							
0.33	3.00	67%	0.50	3	17	2	5	3	2	LU	Luxembourg							
0.15	2.67	58%	0.26	6	16	4	6	6	3	MT	Malta							
								0	0	NL	Netherlands							
								2	0	PL	Poland							
0.60	1.80	60%	1.00	1	6	3	1	5	2	PT	Portugal							
								2	0	RO	Romania							
0.00	1.25	0%	0.00	7	5	11	7	4	0	SK	Slovakia							
								2	0	SI	Slovenia							
0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	7	12	11	7	6	0	ES	Spain							
								2	1	SE	Sweden							
								2	0	UK	United Kingdom							
15	18	18	15	15	18	18	15			Number of Countries								
0.00	2.20	15%	0.00							EU Median								
0.14	1.95	25%	0.30							EU Average								
0.00	0.33	0%	0.00							Min								
0.60	3.00	81%	1.00							Max								
0.18	2.40	33%	0.39							Average EU-15 ²								
0.07	1.40	15%	0.18							Average Non-EU-15 ³								

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-L1.3

Primary Policy Objective
L1.3 – Youth (15-24 years)

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.72	2.13	89%	0.81	7	3	7	8	16	6						
Belgium	BE		3.00	100%			15	1			4	0					
Bulgaria	BG	1.00	2.77	83%	1.20	3	13	10	3	13	11						
Croatia	HR										1	1					
Cyprus	CY										2	2					
Czech Republic	CZ		2.00	19%			2	22			8	1					
Denmark	DK	0.83	2.22	83%	1.00	6	5	11	5	9	5						
Estonia	EE										2	1					
Finland	FI		3.00	25%			15	21			4	1					
France	FR		2.75	39%			11	19			8	0					
Germany	DE	0.00	1.73	28%	0.00	16	1	20	16	15	2						
Greece	GR	0.56	3.00	75%	0.75	9	15	12	9	13	4						
Hungary	HU	0.16	2.64	50%	0.32	15	8	18	15	11	5						
Ireland	IE	1.00	3.00	100%	1.00	3	15	1	5	4	3						
Italy	IT	0.33	3.00	100%	0.33	12	15	1	14	13	6						
Latvia	LV										2	2					
Lithuania	LT	1.26	2.75	100%	1.26	2	11	1	2	8	4						
Luxembourg	LU	0.67	3.00	67%	1.00	8	15	15	5	3	2						
Malta	MT										2	0					
Netherlands	NL	0.33	2.13	61%	0.55	11	3	17	11	8	4						
Poland	PL	0.49	2.25	71%	0.69	10	6	14	10	8	4						
Portugal	PT		3.00	75%			15	12			4	0					
Romania	RO	1.33	2.86	100%	1.33	1	14	1	1	7	6						
Slovakia	SK	0.96	2.73	89%	1.07	5	10	6	4	11	5						
Slovenia	SI										2	1					
Spain	ES	0.21	3.00	62%	0.33	14	15	16	13	15	6						
Sweden	SE	0.00	2.60	85%	0.00	16	7	8	16	10	2						
United Kingdom	UK	0.31	2.67	85%	0.36	13	9	9	12	9	3						
Number of Countries		17	22	22	17	17	22	22	17								
EU Median		0.56	2.75	79%	0.75												
EU Average		0.60	2.65	72%	0.71												
Min		0.00	1.73	19%	0.00												
Max		1.33	3.00	100%	1.33												
Average EU-15 ²		0.45	2.68	71%	0.56												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.87	2.57	73%	0.98												



Table A-L1.4

Primary Policy Objective
L1.4 – Women

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
		0.38	1.81	62%	0.61	5	9	4	5	16	3						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	10	11	20	10	4	0						
		0.47	1.77	56%	0.83	4	7	8	3	13	5						
											1	1					
											2	1					
		0.60	2.00	44%	1.38	2	11	13	1	8	3						
		-0.08	1.44	45%	-0.17	14	4	10	14	9	2						
											2	0					
			1.25	40%			1	14			4	1					
		0.00	2.13	0%	0.00	10	15	20	10	8	0						
		-0.22	1.67	45%	-0.50	16	6	11	16	15	2						
		0.33	2.69	67%	0.50	7	21	3	6	13	4						
		0.05	2.00	40%	0.14	9	11	15	9	11	4						
			2.25	61%			17	5			4	1					
		0.51	2.92	51%	1.00	3	22	9	2	13	4						
											2	0					
			1.38	30%			3	17			8	1					
		0.38	2.67	75%	0.50	6	19	2	6	3	2						
											2	1					
		0.00	1.29	56%	0.00	10	2	7	10	7	2						
			2.38	12%			18	19			8	1					
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	10	11	20	10	3	0						
		0.63	2.17	82%	0.77	1	16	1	4	6	3						
		0.27	1.91	60%	0.46	8	10	6	8	11	2						
											2	0					
		-0.13	2.67	44%	-0.30	15	19	12	15	15	3						
			1.60	17%			5	18			10	0					
			1.78	31%			8	16			9	1					
Number of Countries		16	22	22	16	16	22	22	16								
EU Median		0.16	2.00	45%	0.30												
EU Average		0.20	1.99	42%	0.33												
Min		-0.22	1.25	0%	-0.50												
Max		0.63	2.92	82%	1.38												
Average EU-15 ²		0.11	2.01	40%	0.15												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.41	1.94	46%	0.72												



Table A-L1.5

Primary Policy Objective

L1.5 – Long-term Unemployed

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality												
0.55	2.33	55%	1.00	8	5	15	4	15	3						
	2.75	67%			14	11		4	0						
0.60	2.69	89%	0.68	6	12	4	7	13	10						
								1	1						
								2	1						
	2.25	19%			3	21		8	1						
0.74	2.11	74%	1.00	4	2	8	4	9	3						
								2	0						
0.00	2.75	0%	0.00	13	14	22	13	4	0						
	2.88	37%			17	18		8	0						
	2.40	33%			6	20		15	1						
0.17	3.00	67%	0.25	12	19	10	11	13	4						
-0.40	2.91	90%	-0.44	15	18	2	15	11	9						
1.00	3.00	100%	1.00	2	19	1	4	4	3						
0.65	2.69	51%	1.26	5	12	16	2	13	4						
								2	2						
0.57	2.63	86%	0.67	7	9	5	8	8	3						
	2.67	38%			11	17		3	1						
								2	1						
0.24	1.75	57%	0.42	9	1	14	9	8	3						
0.21	2.63	58%	0.36	10	9	13	10	8	3						
	2.75	36%			14	19		4	0						
1.48	2.29	89%	1.67	1	4	3	1	7	3						
0.88	3.00	70%	1.25	3	19	9	3	10	4						
								2	1						
0.19	3.00	77%	0.25	11	19	7	11	15	8						
0.00	2.60	85%	0.00	13	8	6	13	10	2						
	2.56	58%			7	12		9	1						
15	22	22	15	15	22	22	15								
0.55	2.68	62%	0.67												
0.46	2.62	61%	0.62												
-0.40	1.75	0%	-0.44												
1.48	3.00	100%	1.67												
0.39	2.62	56%	0.58												
0.56	2.63	71%	0.70												



Table A-L1.6

Primary Policy Objective

L1.6 – Low-skilled Citizens

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
0.31	2.40	31%	1.00	8	8	16	3	15	2	AT	Austria				
0.00	2.75	0%	0.00	10	17	21	10	4	0	BE	Belgium				
0.69	2.69	94%	0.73	3	15	3	7	13	11	BG	Bulgaria				
								1	1	HR	Croatia				
								2	1	CY	Cyprus				
	2.38	32%			7	15		8	1	CZ	Czech Republic				
0.54	2.22	71%	0.77	4	3	6	6	9	4	DK	Denmark				
								1	0	EE	Estonia				
0.00	2.25	0%	0.00	10	4	21	10	4	0	FI	Finland				
	2.63	17%			12	20		8	0	FR	France				
	2.27	20%			5	19		15	0	DE	Germany				
-0.12	2.75	45%	-0.27	14	17	11	14	12	4	GR	Greece				
-0.50	2.91	70%	-0.71	15	22	7	15	11	7	HU	Hungary				
1.00	2.75	100%	1.00	2	17	1	3	4	3	IE	Ireland				
0.48	2.08	44%	1.08	6	2	12	2	13	4	IT	Italy				
								2	2	LV	Latvia				
	2.63	29%			12	18		8	1	LT	Lithuania				
0.00	2.67	75%	0.00	10	14	5	10	3	2	LU	Luxembourg				
								2	0	MT	Malta				
0.36	2.29	65%	0.55	7	6	8	9	7	4	NL	Netherlands				
0.21	2.00	35%	0.59	9	1	14	8	7	2	PL	Poland				
	2.50	40%			10	13		4	0	PT	Portugal				
1.40	2.43	100%	1.40	1	9	1	1	7	4	RO	Romania				
0.48	2.82	48%	1.00	5	20	10	3	11	2	SK	Slovakia				
								1	0	SI	Slovenia				
0.00	2.87	52%	0.00	10	21	9	10	15	5	ES	Spain				
	2.70	82%			16	4		10	1	SE	Sweden				
	2.56	29%			11	17		9	0	UK	United Kingdom				
15	22	22	15	15	22	22	15								Number of Countries
0.31	2.59	45%	0.59												EU Median
0.32	2.52	49%	0.48												EU Average
-0.50	2.00	0%	-0.71												Min
1.40	2.91	100%	1.40												Max
0.26	2.51	45%	0.41												Average EU-15 ²
0.46	2.55	58%	0.60												Average Non-EU-15 ³

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-L1.7

Primary Policy Objective
L1.7 – Foreign-born Population

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
Austria	AT	0.16	2.47	53%	0.30	6	14	6	6	15	3						
Belgium	BE	0.00	3.00	0%	0.00	7	20	14	7	4	0						
Bulgaria	BG		1.60	26%			8	8		5	1						
Croatia	HR									1	0						
Cyprus	CY									1	1						
Czech Republic	CZ		1.00	17%			3	10		5	1						
Denmark	DK	0.75	2.89	75%	1.00	2	19	3	2	9	5						
Estonia	EE									1	1						
Finland	FI	0.00	3.00	0%	0.00	7	20	14	7	4	0						
France	FR	0.00	2.63	0%	0.00	7	15	14	7	8	0						
Germany	DE		2.21	12%			12	12		14	0						
Greece	GR	0.00	2.38	0%	0.00	7	13	14	7	13	0						
Hungary	HU	0.00	1.00	0%	0.00	7	3	14	7	11	0						
Ireland	IE	0.75	2.00	75%	1.00	1	11	2	2	4	2						
Italy	IT	0.31	1.69	16%	1.92	3	9	11	1	13	2						
Latvia	LV									2	0						
Lithuania	LT	0.00	0.71	0%	0.00	7	2	14	7	7	0						
Luxembourg	LU	0.25	2.67	63%	0.40	5	16	4	4	3	2						
Malta	MT									2	0						
Netherlands	NL	-0.07	1.88	47%	-0.14	16	10	7	15	8	3						
Poland	PL	0.00	1.40	0%	0.00	7	7	14	7	5	0						
Portugal	PT									2	0						
Romania	RO		0.33	62%			1	5		3	1						
Slovakia	SK	0.00	1.11	0%	0.00	7	5	14	7	9	0						
Slovenia	SI									1	0						
Spain	ES	-0.06	2.87	24%	-0.27	15	18	9	16	15	3						
Sweden	SE	0.29	2.80	87%	0.33	4	17	1	5	10	3						
United Kingdom	UK		1.38	11%			6	13		8	0						
Number of Countries		16	21	21	16	16	21	21	16								
EU Median		0.00	2.00	16%	0.00												
EU Average		0.15	1.95	27%	0.28												
Min		-0.07	0.33	0%	-0.27												
Max		0.75	3.00	87%	1.92												
Average EU-15²		0.20	2.42	33%	0.38												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.00	1.02	15%	0.00												



Table A-L1.8

Primary Policy Objective
L1.8 – Refugees

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
		2.50	20%			14	7			16	1						
		0.00	2.75	0%	0.00	3	19	9	3	4	0						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	7	9	3	6	0						
										1	0						
										1	1						
		0.00	0.60	0%	0.00	3	2	9	3	5	0						
		1.04	2.67	87%	1.20	1	16	1	2	9	5						
										1	0						
		0.00	2.67	0%	0.00	3	16	9	3	3	0						
		0.00	2.29	0%	0.00	3	11	9	3	7	0						
			2.53	23%			15	6		15	0						
			2.36	12%			12	8		11	0						
		0.00	1.55	0%	0.00	3	5	9	3	11	0						
										2	0						
		0.39	1.75	23%	1.69	2	6	5	1	12	2						
										2	0						
		0.00	0.71	0%	0.00	3	3	9	3	7	0						
										2	1						
										2	0						
		-0.22	2.00	50%	-0.44	15	7	4	15	6	2						
		0.00	2.40	0%	0.00	3	13	9	3	5	0						
										2	0						
			0.33	62%			1	3		3	1						
		0.00	1.11	0%	0.00	3	4	9	3	9	0						
										1	0						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	7	9	3	10	0						
		0.00	2.70	77%	0.00	3	18	2	3	10	2						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	3	7	9	3	7	0						
Number of Countries		15	19	19	15	15	19	19	15								
EU Median		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00												
EU Average		0.08	1.94	19%	0.16												
Min		-0.22	0.33	0%	-0.44												
Max		1.04	2.75	87%	1.69												
Average EU-15²		0.14	2.35	24%	0.27												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.00	1.24	9%	0.00												



Table A-L2

Primary Policy Objective

L2 – Reduce Precarious Employment:
Temporary Contracts

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Scores				Rank ¹				N [§]							
0.34	1.73	34%	1.00	6	3	9	4	11	2						
								1	0						
0.58	2.22	39%	1.50	3	8	8	1	9	2						
								1	1						
								2	0						
0.38	1.86	31%	1.25	5	4	11	3	7	2						
	0.50	14%			1	15		6	1						
								1	1						
								2	0						
	2.25	56%			9	6		4	1						
0.58	2.71	42%	1.38	4	14	7	2	7	3						
	2.44	18%			10	13		9	1						
	2.10	16%			6	14		10	1						
								2	0						
-0.07	2.80	89%	-0.08	10	15	1	10	10	9						
								2	0						
								2	2						
								2	1						
								2	1						
-0.47	2.14	69%	-0.68	11	7	4	11	7	4						
0.71	2.83	71%	1.00	1	16	3	4	6	4						
								2	0						
-0.64	2.50	64%	-1.00	12	11	5	12	4	2						
0.33	1.50	33%	1.00	7	2	10	4	6	2						
								1	1						
0.00	2.64	21%	0.00	8	13	12	8	11	3						
0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	8	5	16	8	5	0						
0.61	2.60	77%	0.79	2	12	2	7	5	4						
12	16	16	12	12	16	16	12								
0.34	2.24	37%	0.90												
0.20	2.18	42%	0.51												
-0.64	0.50	0%	-1.00												
0.71	2.83	89%	1.50												
0.14	2.18	42%	0.34												
0.27	2.17	42%	0.75												



Table A-L3

Primary Policy Objective

L3 – Reduce Precarious Employment:
In-work Poverty / Low-wage Earners

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Score				Rank ¹				N [§]							
	1.64	17%			3	15		11	1	AT	Austria				
								1	0	BE	Belgium				
-0.06	2.42	68%	-0.09	12	10	6	12	12	5	BG	Bulgaria				
								1	1	HR	Croatia				
								2	0	CY	Cyprus				
1.00	2.00	86%	1.17	1	6	4	1	7	6	CZ	Czech Republic				
	1.33	16%			1	17		6	1	DK	Denmark				
								2	2	EE	Estonia				
								2	0	FI	Finland				
0.00	2.25	0%	0.00	11	8	18	11	4	0	FR	France				
0.33	2.57	33%	1.00	7	13	10	2	7	2	DE	Germany				
	2.44	18%			11	14		9	1	GR	Greece				
0.18	2.20	18%	1.00	9	7	13	2	10	2	HU	Hungary				
0.43	2.33	100%	0.43	4	9	1	9	3	2	IE	Ireland				
0.12	2.67	17%	0.72	10	14	16	7	9	2	IT	Italy				
								2	0	LV	Latvia				
0.50	3.00	75%	0.67	2	18	5	8	4	3	LT	Lithuania				
0.40	1.67	100%	0.40	5	4	1	10	3	2	LU	Luxembourg				
								1	0	MT	Malta				
	1.33	57%			1	7		3	1	NL	Netherlands				
0.35	2.83	47%	0.75	6	16	9	6	6	3	PL	Poland				
								2	1	PT	Portugal				
0.32	2.50	32%	1.00	8	12	11	2	6	2	RO	Romania				
0.45	1.83	55%	0.83	3	5	8	5	6	4	SK	Slovakia				
								1	1	SI	Slovenia				
-0.09	2.91	19%	-0.50	13	17	12	14	11	2	ES	Spain				
								2	0	SE	Sweden				
-0.36	2.75	100%	-0.36	14	15	1	13	4	4	UK	United Kingdom				
14	18	18	14	14	18	18	14						Number of Countries		
0.33	2.38	40%	0.69										EU Median		
0.26	2.26	48%	0.50										EU Average		
-0.36	1.33	0%	-0.50										Min		
1.00	3.00	100%	1.17										Max		
0.12	2.17	43%	0.24										Average EU-15 ²		
0.39	2.40	54%	0.76										Average Non-EU-15 ³		

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-5

Dimension

Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

		Scores				Rank ¹				N ¹	
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
Austria	AT	0.18	2.31	52%	0.35	8	14	5	8	4	4
Belgium	BE									0	0
Bulgaria	BG	0.63	2.26	59%	1.06	1	13	3	1	4	4
Croatia	HR									0	0
Cyprus	CY									0	0
Czech Republic	CZ		1.28	23%			1	16		2	1
Denmark	DK	-0.12	2.16	41%	-0.29	11	10	11	11	4	2
Estonia	EE									0	0
Finland	FI		1.98	44%			4	8		4	1
France	FR	0.40	2.74	46%	0.87	4	18	7	5	4	3
Germany	DE	0.34	2.22	38%	0.89	6	12	13	4	4	3
Greece	GR	-0.28	2.40	23%	-1.22	12	15	18	12	4	3
Hungary	HU	-0.09	2.13	42%	-0.21	10	9	10	9	4	4
Ireland	IE									0	0
Italy	IT	0.56	2.48	58%	0.96	2	17	4	3	4	4
Latvia	LV	0.23	2.04	66%	0.35	7	6	2	7	4	3
Lithuania	LT	0.51	2.03	51%	1.00	3	5	6	2	4	2
Luxembourg	LU									1	0
Malta	MT									1	0
Netherlands	NL		2.04	41%			7	12		2	0
Poland	PL									1	3
Portugal	PT									1	0
Romania	RO		1.83	32%			3	14		4	1
Slovakia	SK	0.37	1.54	43%	0.86	5	2	9	6	4	4
Slovenia	SI									0	0
Spain	ES	-0.08	2.42	29%	-0.26	9	16	15	10	4	4
Sweden	SE		2.08	71%			8	1		4	1
United Kingdom	UK		2.18	23%			11	17		3	1
Number of Countries		12	18	18	12	12	18	18	12		
EU Median		0.29	2.14	42%	0.61						
EU Average		0.22	2.12	44%	0.36						
Min		-0.28	1.28	23%	-1.22						
Max		0.63	2.74	71%	1.06						
Average EU-15²		0.14	2.27	42%	0.19						
Average Non-EU-15³		0.33	1.87	45%	0.61						



Table A-S3

Composite Policy Objective
S3 – Integration Policy



Table A-S3.1

Primary Policy Objective
S3.1 – Foreign-born Population

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
		Scores				Rank ¹				N ²							
Austria	AT	-0.29	2.43	61%	-0.47	14	14	4	13	2	2						
Belgium	BE																0 0
Bulgaria	BG	0.00	2.00	22%	0.00	4	6	11	4	2	1						3 0
Croatia	HR																0 0
Cyprus	CY																1 0
Czech Republic	CZ	0.00	1.17	0%	0.00	4	5	15	4	2	2						3 0
Denmark	DK	-0.50	2.60	59%	-0.85	15	16	5	15	2	2						10 5
Estonia	EE																0 0
Finland	FI		2.25	33%			10	8		2	0						4 1
France	FR	0.00	2.88	17%	0.00	4	17	12	4	2	1						4 0
Germany	DE	0.17	2.33	29%	0.59	3	11	9	3	2	2						6 0
Greece	GR	0.00	2.06	11%	0.00	4	8	14	4	2	1						8 1
Hungary	HU	0.00	1.14	0%	0.00	4	4	15	4	2	2						7 0
Ireland	IE																0 0
Italy	IT	0.47	2.43	62%	0.76	2	13	3	2	2	2						7 4
Latvia	LV	-0.17	1.00	83%	-0.20	13	3	1	12	2	2						3 2
Lithuania	LT	0.50	2.00	50%	1.00	1	6	6	1	2	1						6 1
Luxembourg	LU																1 1
Malta	MT																1 0
Netherlands	NL																2 1
Poland	PL																1 0
Portugal	PT																1 0
Romania	RO		0.83	43%			1	7		2	0						3 1
Slovakia	SK	0.00	0.87	0%	0.00	4	2	15	4	2	2						8 0
Slovenia	SI																0 0
Spain	ES	-0.14	2.13	24%	-0.60	12	9	10	14	2	1						8 2
Sweden	SE	-0.10	2.33	71%	-0.14	11	12	2	11	2	1						3 1
United Kingdom	UK	0.00	2.50	13%	0.00	4	15	13	4	2	1						3 0
Number of Countries		15	17	17	15	15	17	17	15								
EU Median		0.00	2.13	29%	0.00												
EU Average		0.00	1.94	34%	0.01												
Min		-0.50	0.83	0%	-0.85												
Max		0.50	2.88	83%	1.00												
Average EU-15²		-0.04	2.39	38%	-0.08												
Average Non-EU-15³		0.06	1.29	28%	0.13												



Table A-S3.2

Primary Policy Objective
S3.2 – Refugees

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality												
-0.27	2.71	63%	-0.42	10	15	4	10	14	7						
	2.33	38%			9	9									
0.00	1.33	0%	0.00	4	4	14	4	3	0						
-0.47	2.60	62%	-0.77	11	14	5	11	10	6						
	2.50	20%			12	12			4	1					
	3.00	33%			17	10			4	1					
0.32	2.50	55%	0.59	3	12	7	3	6	3						
0.00	2.13	0%	0.00	4	7	14	4	8	0						
0.00	1.43	0%	0.00	4	5	14	4	7	0						
									0	0					
0.37	2.71	58%	0.64	2	15	6	2	7	3						
0.00	1.00	100%	0.00	4	3	1	4	3	3						
0.67	2.00	67%	1.00	1	6	3	1	6	2						
									1	1					
									1	0					
									2	1					
									1	0					
	0.67	50%			1	8			3	1					
0.00	0.86	0%	0.00	4	2	14	4	7	0						
									0	0					
	2.13	18%			7	13			8	1					
-0.14	2.33	100%	-0.14	9	9	1	9	3	2						
	2.33	29%			9	11			3	1					
11	17	17	11	11	17	17	11								
0.00	2.33	38%	0.00												
0.04	2.03	41%	0.08												
-0.47	0.67	0%	-0.77												
0.67	3.00	100%	1.00												
-0.03	2.49	44%	-0.02												
0.13	1.37	36%	0.20												



Table A-S4

Primary Policy Objective
S4 – Reduce NEET Rate

Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
0.59	2.00	59%	1.00	4	4	7	1	12	7	AT	Austria				
										BE	Belgium				
0.75	3.00	75%	1.00	1	14	3	1	4	3	BG	Bulgaria				
										HR	Croatia				
										CY	Cyprus				
										CZ	Czech Republic				
0.18	2.33	63%	0.29	7	8	5	8	9	4	DK	Denmark				
										EE	Estonia				
	1.50	33%			1	13			4	1	FI	Finland			
0.75	3.00	75%	1.00	1	14	3	1	4	2	FR	France				
0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	8	4	15	9	5	0	DE	Germany				
	2.71	35%			12	12			7	1	GR	Greece			
-0.34	2.50	88%	-0.39	10	9	2	10	8	6	HU	Hungary				
										IE	Ireland				
0.50	2.57	50%	1.00	5	10	9	1	7	3	IT	Italy				
0.63	2.67	63%	1.00	3	11	6	1	3	2	LV	Latvia				
	1.67	100%			2	1			3	1	LT	Lithuania			
										1	0	LU	Luxembourg		
										1	1	MT	Malta		
										2	1	NL	Netherlands		
										7	2	2	PL	Poland	
										0.50	2	0	PT	Portugal	
	2.25	33%			7	13			4	1	RO	Romania			
0.44	1.75	56%	0.78	6	3	8	6	8	3	SK	Slovakia				
										0	0	SI	Slovenia		
-0.26	2.88	39%	-0.67	9	13	11	11	8	3	ES	Spain				
	2.00	42%			4	10			3	1	SE	Sweden			
										2	1	UK	United Kingdom		
10	15	15	11	10	15	15	11								
0.47	2.33	56%	0.78												Number of Countries
0.32	2.32	54%	0.50												EU Median
-0.34	1.50	0%	-0.67												EU Average
0.75	3.00	100%	1.00												Min
															Max
0.29	2.33	44%	0.44												Average EU-15 ²
0.37	2.31	69%	0.58												Average Non-EU-15 ³

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[†] Number of primary policy objectives contained in this composite policy objective for which data is available.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-S
Dimension
Health

		Scores				Rank ¹				N ¹	
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality
Austria	AT	0.43	1.27	75%	0.58	7	2	4	10	8	4
Belgium	BE									0	0
Bulgaria	BG	0.62	2.53	78%	0.80	4	16	3	6	8	8
Croatia	HR	0.95	2.23	83%	1.14	2	9	2	3	8	6
Cyprus	CY									0	0
Czech Republic	CZ	0.70	1.84	70%	1.00	3	4	7	4	8	6
Denmark	DK	0.32	1.23	58%	0.55	11	1	10	12	8	6
Estonia	EE									0	0
Finland	FI	1.14	2.28	85%	1.34	1	12	1	1	8	8
France	FR									3	3
Germany	DE	0.37	2.06	53%	0.70	8	8	14	7	6	5
Greece	GR	-0.09	2.74	73%	-0.12	19	19	5	18	8	6
Hungary	HU	0.36	2.30	55%	0.65	9	13	11	8	8	6
Ireland	IE									2	1
Italy	IT	-0.06	1.91	24%	-0.25	18	6	19	19	8	6
Latvia	LV	0.00	2.54	54%	0.00	16	17	12	16	8	7
Lithuania	LT	0.59	2.65	72%	0.82	6	18	6	5	7	5
Luxembourg	LU	0.61	1.90	46%	1.33	5	5	16	2	5	4
Malta	MT		2.25	33%			11	17		8	3
Netherlands	NL	-0.03	1.68	63%	-0.04	17	3	8	17	8	6
Poland	PL	0.26	2.43	47%	0.56	12	15	15	11	8	7
Portugal	PT	0.17	2.24	54%	0.31	13	10	13	15	8	7
Romania	RO	0.32	2.78	62%	0.52	10	20	9	14	7	4
Slovakia	SK	0.10	2.30	19%	0.54	15	14	20	13	8	7
Slovenia	SI									0	0
Spain	ES	0.15	1.91	24%	0.63	14	6	18	9	8	4
Sweden	SE									1	1
United Kingdom	UK									1	0
Number of Countries		19	20	20	19	19	20	20	19		
EU Median		0.32	2.25	57%	0.58						
EU Average		0.36	2.15	56%	0.58						
Min		-0.09	1.23	19%	-0.25						
Max		1.14	2.78	85%	1.34						
Average EU-15 ²		0.30	1.92	55%	0.50						
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.43	2.38	57%	0.67						



Table A-S1

Primary Policy Objective

H1 – Improve Population Health

Performance				Rank ¹				N [§]	
Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality		
1.50	76%		1	9		4	1		
						2	0		
0.80	2.91	100%	0.80	6	21	1	10	11	8
0.83	2.57	100%	0.83	5	15	1	8	7	5
						1	1		
0.24	2.43	59%	0.40	15	13	18	16	7	3
0.33	2.00	60%	0.55	14	4	17	13	8	2
								1	0
1.00	2.17	100%	1.00	1	7	1	3	6	5
0.79	2.33	79%	1.00	7	9	8	3	6	2
0.98	2.00	92%	1.07	3	4	7	2	8	3
-0.33	3.00	67%	-0.50	19	22	13	19	6	2
	2.60	8%		17	24			5	1
0.55	2.50	55%	1.00	10	14	20	3	6	2
	2.25	39%		8	22			8	1
0.55	3.00	73%	0.75	11	22	11	11	10	4
0.61	2.88	74%	0.82	9	20	10	9	8	6
0.75	1.60	63%	1.20	8	2	16	1	5	3
	2.33	57%		9	19			3	1
0.36	2.33	65%	0.55	13	9	14	14	6	2
0.88	2.73	100%	0.88	4	19	1	7	11	9
0.18	2.38	63%	0.28	16	12	15	17	13	6
0.43	3.00	71%	0.60	12	22	12	12	8	5
0.00	2.57	44%	0.00	18	15	21	18	14	3
								2	0
0.11	2.10	23%	0.50	17	6	23	15	10	2
1.00	1.67	100%	1.00	1	3	1	3	3	2
	2.67	100%		18	1			3	0
19	24	24	19	19	24	24	19		
0.55	2.41	69%	0.80						
0.53	2.40	69%	0.67						
-0.33	1.50	8%	-0.50						
1.00	3.00	100%	1.20						
0.52	2.18	70%	0.70						
0.54	2.70	69%	0.64						



Table A-S2

Primary Policy Objective

H2 – Quality of Health Care

Performance				Rank ¹				N [§]			
Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Activity	Quality	Need	Quality				
1.00	1.67	100%	1.00	1	3	1	4	3	2	AT	Austria
								1	0	BE	Belgium
0.63	2.63	63%	1.00	8	19	11	4	8	3	BG	Bulgaria
0.44	2.33	76%	0.58	12	12	5	14	6	4	HR	Croatia
								1	1	CY	Cyprus
0.67	1.60	67%	1.00	7	2	9	4	5	2	CZ	Czech Republic
0.50	1.00	50%	1.00	11	1	13	4	5	2	DK	Denmark
								1	0	EE	Estonia
0.80	1.83	80%	1.00	4	5	4	4	6	4	FI	Finland
0.00	2.33	0%	0.00	17	12	21	17	3	0	FR	France
0.83	2.00	83%	1.00	3	7	2	4	3	2	DE	Germany
	2.50	27%			14	20		4	1	GR	Greece
0.71	2.60	71%	1.00	5	18	7	4	5	2	HU	Hungary
	2.67	56%			20	12		3	1	IE	Ireland
0.00	1.75	0%	0.00	17	4	21	17	4	0	IT	Italy
0.25	2.29	73%	0.34	14	11	6	16	7	5	LV	Latvia
0.70	2.50	70%	1.00	6	14	8	4	8	4	LT	Lithuania
1.00	2.25	67%	1.50	1	10	10	1	4	2	LU	Luxembourg
	2.67	38%			20	16		3	1	MT	Malta
0.15	2.00	40%	0.38	16	7	15	15	4	2	NL	Netherlands
0.00	2.56	30%	0.00	17	16	18	17	9	3	PL	Poland
0.55	2.00	50%	1.10	10	7	13	3	10	5	PT	Portugal
0.60	3.00	80%	0.75	9	22	3	12	7	4	RO	Romania
0.21	2.58	32%	0.67	15	17	17	13	12	3	SK	Slovakia
								1	0	SI	Slovenia
0.36	1.83	27%	1.33	13	5	19	2	6	2	ES	Spain
								1	0	SE	Sweden
								2	0	UK	United Kingdom
19	22	22	19	19	22	22	19			Number of Countries	
0.55	2.31	60%	1.00							EU Median	
0.50	2.21	54%	0.77							EU Average	
0.00	1.00	0%	0.00							Min	
1.00	3.00	100%	1.50							Max	
0.52	1.99	48%	0.83							Average EU-15 ²	
0.47	2.47	60%	0.70							Average Non-EU-15 ³	

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[†] Number of policy objectives contained in this dimension for which data is available.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.



Table A-H3

Primary Policy Objective

H3 – Health System Efficiency

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Scores		Rank ¹		N ²											
Austria	AT	0.50	1.67	100%	0.50	6	2	1	8	3	2						
Belgium	BE																1 1
Bulgaria	BG	1.00	2.86	82%	1.21	3	19	9	4	7	5						
Croatia	HR		2.00	36%			4	17								6 1	
Cyprus	CY															1 1	
Czech Republic	CZ	1.00	2.40	100%	1.00	2	12	1	5	5	2						
Denmark	DK	0.37	1.50	83%	0.44	7	1	7	9	4	3						
Estonia	EE															1 0	
Finland	FI	1.63	2.25	81%	2.00	1	9	10	1	4	2						
France	FR															2 1	
Germany	DE	0.00	2.00	83%	0.00	14	4	7	14	3	2						
Greece	GR	0.00	3.00	100%	0.00	14	20	1	14	4	3						
Hungary	HU	-0.30	2.50	100%	-0.30	17	13	1	17	4	3						
Ireland	IE															1 0	
Italy	IT	0.11	2.25	56%	0.20	11	9	12	12	4	2						
Latvia	LV	0.36	2.50	36%	1.00	8	13	18	5	6	2						
Lithuania	LT	0.74	2.50	100%	0.74	4	13	1	7	6	4						
Luxembourg	LU	0.67	2.00	54%	1.23	5	4	13	3	3	2						
Malta	MT		2.00	17%			4	20		3	1						
Netherlands	NL	-0.30	1.75	95%	-0.32	18	3	6	18	4	2						
Poland	PL	0.10	2.63	38%	0.25	12	16	16	11	8	3						
Portugal	PT	0.07	2.33	62%	0.11	13	11	11	13	9	5						
Romania	RO	0.00	2.80	50%	0.00	14	18	14	14	5	2						
Slovakia	SK	0.28	2.73	18%	1.56	9	17	19	2	11	2						
Slovenia	SI															1 0	
Spain	ES	0.15	2.17	46%	0.33	10	8	15	10	6	3						
Sweden	SE															2 0	
United Kingdom	UK															1 0	
Number of Countries		18	20	20	18	18	20	20	18								
EU Median		0.22	2.29	72%	0.39												
EU Average		0.35	2.29	67%	0.55												
Min		-0.30	1.50	17%	-0.32												
Max		1.63	3.00	100%	2.00												
Average EU-15 ²		0.32	2.09	76%	0.45												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.40	2.49	58%	0.68												



Table A-H4

Primary Policy Objective

H4 – Sustainable and Fair Financing

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality			
		Scores		Rank ¹		N ²											
		0.00	1.33	75%	0.00	8	1	5	8	3	2						
																	1 0
		0.82	2.83	82%	1.00	4	19	2	5	6	5						
		1.08	2.40	79%	1.37	3	11	3	3	5	4						
																	1 1
		1.40	2.00	70%	2.00	1	4	6	1	5	2						
			1.60	19%			2	16									5 1
																	1 0
		1.25	2.00	100%	1.25	2	4	1	4	4	3						
		0.40	1.67	40%	1.00	6	3	11	5	3	2						
		0.00	2.00	0%	0.00	8	4	19	8	3	0						
		-0.45	2.75	64%	-0.71	13	18	8	13	4	2						
		0.70	2.50	40%	1.75	5	12	11	2	4	2						
																	1 0
			2.50	30%			12	13									4 1
			2.63	16%			16	17									8 1
			2.60	50%			15	9									5 1
																	1 0
		0.00	2.67	0%	0.00	8	17	19	8	3	0						
		-0.39	2.33	70%	-0.56	12	7	7	12	3	2						
			2.38	26%			9	14									8 1
		-0.05	2.38	76%	-0.07	11	9	4	11	8	4						
			3.00	50%			20	9									4 1
		0.11	2.36	11%	1.00	7	8	18	5	11	2						
																	1 0
			2.50	23%			12	15									6 1
																	0 0
																	1 0
Number of Countries		13	20	20	13	13	20	20	13								
EU Median		0.11	2.39	45%	1.00												
EU Average		0.37	2.32	46%	0.62												
Min		-0.45	1.33	0%	-0.71												
Max		1.40	3.00	100%	2.00												
Average EU-15 ²		0.11	2.11	50%	0.13												
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.69	2.54	42%	1.19												



Table A-H7

Primary Policy Objective

H7 – Accessibility and Range of Health Services



Table A-H8

Primary Policy Objective

H8 – Reduce Unmet Needs for Medical Help

		Performance				Need				Activity				Quality									
		Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality						
		Scores				Rank ¹				N [§]													
Austria	AT	0.00	0.33	0%	0.00	11	1	18	11	3	0												
Belgium	BE										0	0											
Bulgaria	BG	0.07	2.33	100%	0.07	10	13	1	10	6	6		0.30	2.00	70%	0.43	4	11	6	4	5	4	
Croatia	HR	1.50	2.25	100%	1.50	1	11	1	1	4	2			2.25	100%			15	1			4	1
Cyprus	CY									1	1											1	1
Czech Republic	CZ	0.29	1.75	57%	0.50	6	6	8	7	4	2		0.79	2.00	79%	1.00	3	11	5	1	3	2	
Denmark	DK	0.58	1.00	92%	0.64	3	2	4	6	4	2		0.00	0.75	0%	0.00	6	3	14	6	4	0	
Estonia	EE									1	0											1	0
Finland	FI	1.29	2.33	86%	1.50	2	13	5	1	3	2		0.86	2.33	86%	1.00	2	16	4	1	3	2	
France	FR									2	1											1	0
Germany	DE									2	0											2	0
Greece	GR	-0.50	3.00	100%	-0.50	14	19	1	14	3	2		1.00	2.00	100%	1.00	1	11	1	1	3	2	
Hungary	HU	0.33	2.00	50%	0.67	5	7	10	5	3	2			1.67	20%			7	10			3	1
Ireland	IE									1	1											0	0
Italy	IT	0.00	1.25	0%	0.00	11	4	18	11	4	0		0.00	1.50	0%	0.00	6	5	14	6	4	0	
Latvia	LV	-0.65	2.75	73%	-0.90	15	18	6	15	8	5		-0.17	2.88	48%	-0.36	10	17	7	10	8	3	
Lithuania	LT		2.33	30%			13	15		3	1											2	0
Luxembourg	LU		2.00	38%			7	12		4	1		0.00	1.67	0%	0.00	6	7	14	6	3	0	
Malta	MT	0.00	2.00	50%	0.00	11	7	10	11	3	2			1.67	20%			7	10			3	1
Netherlands	NL		1.00	33%			2	13		3	1		0.00	0.67	0%	0.00	6	1	14	6	3	0	
Poland	PL	0.43	2.25	62%	0.70	4	11	7	4	8	3		0.12	2.13	35%	0.33	5	14	8	5	8	3	
Portugal	PT	0.24	2.43	29%	0.80	8	17	16	3	7	2			1.83	16%			10	12			6	1
Romania	RO	0.27	2.33	54%	0.50	7	13	9	7	6	2											2	0
Slovakia	SK	0.11	1.67	32%	0.34	9	5	14	9	12	4			1.43	15%			4	13			7	1
Slovenia	SI									1	0											1	0
Spain	ES		2.00	20%			7	17		5	1			1.50	24%			5	9			4	1
Sweden	SE									0	0											1	0
United Kingdom	UK									1	0											1	0
Number of Countries		15	19	19	15	15	19	19	15				10	17	17	10	10	17	17	10			
EU Median		0.24	2.00	50%	0.50								0.06	1.67	24%	0.17							
EU Average		0.26	1.95	53%	0.39								0.29	1.70	42%	0.34							
Min		-0.65	0.33	0%	-0.90								-0.17	0.67	0%	-0.36							
Max		1.50	3.00	100%	1.50								1.00	2.88	100%	1.00							
Average EU-15 ²		0.27	1.71	44%	0.41								0.31	1.44	36%	0.33							
Average Non-EU-15 ³		0.26	2.17	61%	0.38								0.26	2.00	48%	0.35							

¹ All ranks refer to decreasing orders (i.e. rank 1 = highest score), except for the Need score, where the order is increasing (i.e. rank 1 = lowest Need score).

² EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU before 2004: AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK.

³ Non-EU-15 refers to countries that joined the EU in or after 2004: BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI.

[§] Number of experts who indicated a score.

Table A-CY

Cross-cutting Policies
Children and Young People**

Performance				Activity				Quality				Need			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
Scores				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
0.56	2.17	54%	1.04	6	9	11	6	5	5						
								2	0						
0.63	2.72	66%	0.96	5	18	3	9	5	4						
0.17	2.06	16%	1.06	15	6	22	4	3	3						
								0	2						
0.06	1.75	33%	0.18	17	1	19	17	4	3						
0.40	2.00	57%	0.70	11	3	8	14	5	5						
								1	1						
	1.89	21%			2	21		5	1						
0.46	2.73	65%	0.71	10	19	4	13	5	3						
0.09	2.15	23%	0.39	16	8	20	16	5	4						
0.36	2.30	36%	0.99	13	11	17	8	5	4						
0.02	2.61	40%	0.05	19	15	16	19	5	5						
								2	2						
0.23	2.69	48%	0.48	14	17	13	15	5	4						
0.37	2.43	43%	0.87	12	12	15	10	4	5						
0.71	2.19	55%	1.28	4	10	9	3	5	3						
0.53	2.82	71%	0.75	7	22	2	12	4	4						
0.86	2.50	85%	1.02	1	13	1	7	3	3						
								2	1						
0.48	2.11	62%	0.78	8	7	6	11	4	4						
0.73	2.50	54%	1.34	3	14	10	2	4	3						
0.82	2.65	59%	1.40	2	16	7	1	5	3						
0.47	2.03	44%	1.06	9	5	14	5	5	5						
								1	1						
0.04	2.77	34%	0.13	18	20	18	18	5	4						
	2.01	52%			4	12		4	2						
-0.12	2.80	64%	-0.18	20	21	5	20	3	3						
20	22	22	20	20	22	22	20								
0.43	2.37	53%	0.82												
0.39	2.36	49%	0.75												
-0.12	1.75	16%	-0.18												
0.86	2.82	85%	1.40												
0.33	2.40	48%	0.63												
0.46	2.31	50%	0.87												

Table A-R

Cross-cutting Policies
Refugees††

Performance				Activity				Quality				Need			
Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality	Performance	Need	Activity	Quality
Score				Rank ¹				N ⁵							
-0.03	2.51	40%	-0.08	15	20	7	15	4	3	AT	Austria				
	2.64	16%			23	17		4	1	BE	Belgium				
0.05	2.22	23%	0.21	9	12	14	10	4	2	BG	Bulgaria				
	1.17	9%			4	19		2	1	HR	Croatia				
								0	0	CY	Cyprus				
-0.12	0.96	9%	-1.29	16	2	18	16	4	4	CZ	Czech Republic				
0.14	2.46	67%	0.21	6	18	3	9	4	4	DK	Denmark				
								1	0	EE	Estonia				
	2.36	21%			16	15		4	1	FI	Finland				
0.25	2.54	25%	1.00	4	21	12	2	4	3	FR	France				
0.10	2.58	23%	0.44	7	22	13	8	4	3	DE	Germany				
0.06	2.32	8%	0.67	8	14	20	5	4	3	GR	Greece				
0.00	1.29	1%	0.00	12	5	23	12	4	3	HU	Hungary				
								1	0	IE	Ireland				
0.26	2.31	30%	0.89	3	13	11	4	4	3	IT	Italy				
0.22	1.50	47%	0.46	5	7	4	7	3	3	LV	Latvia				
0.35	1.43	35%	1.00	2	6	9	2	4	2	LT	Lithuania				
0.82	2.86	73%	1.11	1	24	2	1	2	2	LU	Luxembourg				
	2.47	37%			19	8		2	1	MT	Malta				
	1.88	43%			8	5		4	1	NL	Netherlands				
0.04	1.99	7%	0.54	11	9	21	6	2	2	PL	Poland				
	2.04	41%			10	6		2	1	PT	Portugal				
	0.74	32%			1	10		3	0	RO	Romania				
0.00	0.97	0%	0.00	12	3	24	12	4	4	SK	Slovakia				
								1	1	SI	Slovenia				
0.00	2.16	6%	0.00	12	11	22	12	4	2	ES	Spain				
0.04	2.42	74%	0.06	10	17	1	11	3	3	SE	Sweden				
	2.34	17%			15	16		3	1	UK	United Kingdom				
16	24	24	16	16	24	24	16				Number of Countries				
0.05	2.27	24%	0.32								EU Median				
0.14	2.01	29%	0.33								EU Average				
-0.12	0.74	0%	-1.29								Min				
0.82	2.86	74%	1.11								Max				
0.18	2.39	35%	0.48								Average EU-15 ²				
0.08	1.47	20%	0.13								Average Non-EU-15 ³				

** This aggregation includes the following primary policy objectives: P1.3 Reduce Risk of Poverty among Children (0-17 years), E4 Independence of Learning Success from Socioeconomic Background, E5 Reduce Rate of Early School Leavers, L1.3 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment of Youth (15-24) and S4 Reduce NEET Rate.

†† This aggregation includes the following primary policy objectives: P1.6 Reduce Risk of Poverty among Refugees, E6 Integration of Refugees into the Educational System, L1.8 Increase Employment / Decrease Unemployment of Refugees and S3.2 Integration Policies for Refugees.

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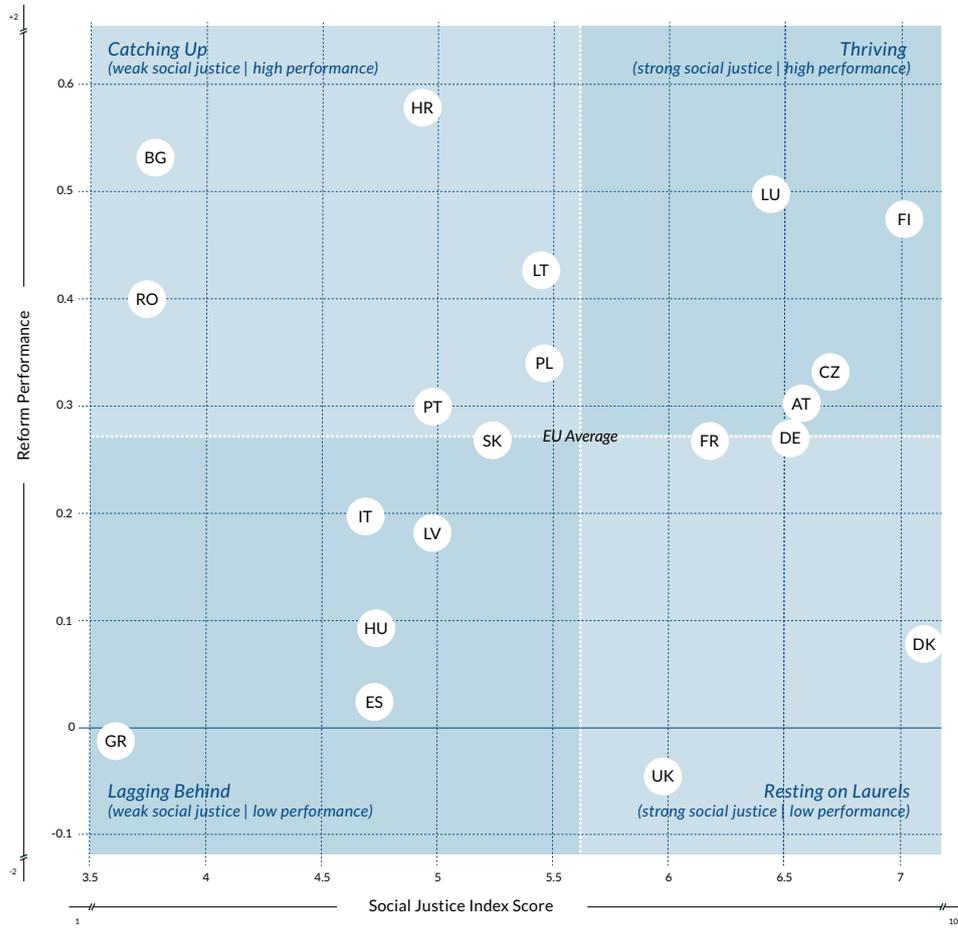
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