



EU Network of
Independent Experts
on Social Inclusion

Assessment of the implementation of
the European Commission
Recommendation on **active
inclusion**

[A Study of National Policies](#)

Spain

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Assessment of the implementation of the
European Commission Recommendation on
active inclusion

A Study of National Policies

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COUNTRY REPORT – SPAIN

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Summary

The European Commission's active inclusion recommendation (AI) has been progressively but patchily adopted in Spain institutionally and politically speaking, whilst the dominant element is that referring to labour inclusion, the linkage thereof with the other two pillars being either weak (guarantee of appropriate income) or patchy (in the case of access to quality public services).

Moreover, specific practice in institutions shows that in the period spanning 2008 to 2012, the AI has not been an all-encompassing strategy, nor have the integrated measures thereof up to 2011 been, in which for the first time steps were taken towards a Comprehensive Strategy including all at-risk groups, albeit with an almost exclusive focus on labour insertion and with low visibility for income guarantee and service access strands. All the above has taken place against an institutional backdrop wherein patchwork income guarantee programmes prevail, with low levels of inter-coordination. Nonetheless, since 2003 have been established new coordination instruments include those of the National Employment System via the Spanish Employment Strategy, the Annual Employment Policy Plan, the State Employment Public Service Information System (SEPE in its Spanish acronym) and the Public Employment Services of Autonomous Communities, which aim to improve vertical and horizontal coordination of employment.

Furthermore, the development of AI policies has varied between Public Administrations (thus posing obvious coordination issues) and has been dependent on different excluded social groups, to the point that there are a number of different programmes that respond to the categorical inclusion needs, according to the type of labour market and socio-demographic nature of the group in need.

The general vulnerability of the Spanish employment market in Spain, high unemployment rates and the precarious nature of work mean that design of policies and programmes is affected from the outset, as is the impact of actions into which they will materialise. In the specific cases of the groups most vulnerable and most excluded from the labour market, active inclusion problems are exacerbated due to the juxtaposition of high poverty rates, limited influence before public authorities (being represented by NGOs and social economy institutions) and active inclusion measures that are either too general, or which do not take into account that labour inclusion possibilities are limited. Hence, access to the labour market does not necessarily entail poverty relief, nor does a combination of income guarantee and occupational training activities. Consequently, protected employment, social companies and the social economy continue to be the platform guaranteeing social and labour integration for the not-insignificant numbers of at-risk groups.

There are some recommendations to improve the AIS set-up, as well as to develop certain improvement and rationalisation actions of the current fragmented system of AI programmes:

a) Priority actions

- AI policies must form part of the NRP each year, with sufficient visibility in terms of targets, commitments and forecast results. They must not get lost amid the general active policy, but stand out. This is also the case with respect to the NSR (National Social Report) published in December 2012. The mainstreaming of active inclusion and poverty in general policy has still yet to be achieved.
- Simplification and harmonisation of the existing MIS into a single one adaptable to various social exclusion groups and situations. This is where the Central State must take the initiative, given its constitutional competence to do so and the means to carry it out in conjunction with Autonomous Communities which, in

addition to carrying out a significant part of state employment policies, have their own capacities with regard to employment. Certainly, social agents and NGOs representatives will participate in achieving this aim. The AII (Active Insertion Income) could be the source of a national MI scheme, as a social protection cushion for the vulnerable as well as a catalyst to active inclusion.

- Swift progress in AI policy evaluation protocols. This requires agreement on indicators, information collection, minimum and homogenous data collected by all programmes, and evaluation and dissemination between the State, social agents and social action NGOs.
- Lastly, continuing the development of progress made in vertical and horizontal institutional coordination in active inclusion in recent years. These are currently insufficient due to the limited weight of active inclusion in public policies.

b) Measures

- Coverage levels must be increased and, above all, the level of protection of the MIS in order to avoid not only severe poverty but also relative poverty. Specifically, improving protection for poor families with children is crucial in order to reduce the very high levels of child poverty in Spain. In this same vein, progress must be made in the compatibility of income and benefits in terms of those experiencing poverty in-work.
- Public employment services must integrate employment guidance for groups at risk of exclusion via specific pathways that allow the coordination of income guarantee with training and labour inclusion programmes and access to health and housing services. Here, coordination between personal social services and local employment services could be an important step forward.
- In the current economic and financial crisis, measures should be taken that ease at-risk groups' access to health, housing and education in coordination with personal social services, above all of the immigrant population that suffer unemployment levels nearly two times above the national average.
- Progress made in governance through the growing presence of Social Action NGOs in NAPin and in the various inclusion strategies (Roma, the disabled, immigrants) must be increased and consolidated due to these being organisations that represent the interests of at-risk groups. The current crisis cannot entail the transfer of responsibility from the Welfare State to NGOs in the protection of excluded groups.

c) At EU level

Fiscal consolidation policies are weakening anti-poverty and pro-inclusion policies in countries with greater economic and financial difficulties (mainly Southern and Eastern Europe EU countries), which can be seen in rising poverty rates and greater labour exclusion. In this regard, Social Europe is an option to avoid negative impact for social cohesion. This means new institutional commitments with inclusion and social cohesion in the European social areas that balance the scales in favour of social policies rather than the almost overwhelming dominance of spending cuts and austerity policies.

1. Integrated comprehensive strategy

In order to understand the development of the active inclusion strategy in Spain (hereinafter, AIS), and of the policies and programmes that materialise therefrom, the nature of the Spanish economy and its unique labour market must be considered. Effectively, the Spanish economy is characterised by the chronic nature of high unemployment and acute segmentation of the labour market in which the irregular economy is still very wide (NRP 2011). Although unemployment rates dropped between 1994 and 2006 from 24% to 8.3%, the 2008 economic and financial crisis once again drew a spotlight on unemployment (sitting at 22.8% in 2011 and 25.0% in IIIQ012) and a labour market that, at least since 1980, is characterised by intense creation and destruction of employment.

This is explained (**Serrano et al, 2008; Toharia, 2008**) by the peculiar corporate fabric in Spain which, aside from a nucleus of large corporations with high technological and export capacities, is swamped by an abundance of small and medium size businesses, mostly basing their business models on cheap, unskilled and temporary labour. In short, the AIS operates against a backdrop of sky high unemployment rates, a segmented labour market, the progressive strengthening since 2002 of labour flexibility and the relative deterioration of safety mechanisms. As such, the discourse of *flexigurity* as an ideological framework of active inclusion contrasts with the practice of flexibility in a predominantly precarious labour market. This, together with the limited influence of trade unions amongst small companies, has led to activation methods in which active inclusion is more aimed at the development of individual responsibility of the employee before his professional future than the creation of collective responsibility before the challenge of socio-labour integration. It would be no exaggeration to state that active inclusion strongly leans towards individual responsibility and the distinct tendency of herding to the labour market all those that have the potential to work, without considering the limits of employment demand and real capacities of access.

It is partly the result of this segmented labour market, as well as a fairly inefficient social protection system as regards the reduction of relative poverty, that the relative poverty rate remained stable in the first decade of the 21st century (at around 20%) despite high rates of economic growth and significant job creation during 1997-2007 decade. The current economic and financial crisis has exacerbated relative poverty, which reached 21.8% in 2011, with an acute effect on child poverty, which rose from 24% in 2008, to 26.5% in 2011¹ (**González Bueno, Bello, Arias, 2012**).

These features of the Spanish labour market explain the nature of AI in Spain as a general, limited strategy, which has a limited, partial and unequal effectiveness. As shall be seen in what follows, this is partly due to the fact that the different strands of the AI are located in a number of different Public Administrations, thus showing its problematic design and implementation.

1.1 Comprehensive policy design

Spain has gradually adopted the AIS political discourse, above all since 2008, although its practical development is disparate across institutional and social stakeholders and in terms of ideological visions. The AIS appears to be an open ideological field with a number of different meanings that reflect a wide variety of interests (**Serrano et. al., 2008**).

¹ This is an increase of 200,000 children living in poverty, of which nearly 14% live in severely impoverished homes. According to the AROPE indicator, this rose by 26.3% in 2008 and 29.8% in 2010. Also, "Council Recommendation on Spain's 2012 NRP and delivering a Council opinion on Spain's stability programme for 2012-2015", paragraph 14.

In general, the AIS is not all all-encompassing in its various levels: its strategic design is certainly not. It is an unevenly shared strategy among the various levels of government and social stakeholders (weak governance), although progress was made in this respect in 2011. It is not so in terms of the balances existing in the coordination of the three active inclusion pillars, which are increasingly geared towards employment rather than efficient income guarantee (heavily relying on social assistance benefits) and quality services (imbalance of service coordination). Lastly, it is not so as regards the differing influence it has according to the type of labour market and, above all, it is not always suitable for vulnerable groups and those with the greatest social inclusion problems.

If we focus on the period following the 2008 Recommendation on active inclusion, we can see that the **NAPin 2008-2010** proposed two significant targets: to foster the AI, and tackle socio-demographic changes that affect poverty and social inclusion. The **NAP 2008-2010** adopted a strategy that effectively combined adequate income support, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services, above all those concerning education and professional training. When this target was set, Spain was entering an economic crisis whose gravity in terms of unemployment and poverty was not yet seen in its full severity. Stimulus plans (in Spain, the so-called Plan E) were considered to be sufficient to overcome the crisis and return to economic growth and job creation, a stance that has been wholeheartedly discredited by the progression from crisis situation to acute economic depression.

Moreover, the **NAPin 2008-2010** sets as a specific target to focus the AIS on marginalized groups in the labour market and those most vulnerable (immigrants, young women, the over 55s, and the disabled) as well as setting targets to reduce early school leaving and reduction of child poverty. It is true that in institutional design, Central Government, undertaking the commitment in the OMC, has limited ability to design and develop AI policies that must be shared with Autonomous Communities.

This Strategy was developed to a certain extent between 2008-2010, thanks to the resources of Plan E, the 2009 economic stimulus plan which increased coverage for the unemployed with financial benefits and fostered training and labour inclusion programmes of all types (such as the PRODI programme of 2009, now known as PREPARA). During the pre-launch stage of this programme in August 2009, the possibility of using this new AI development to establish income guarantee protection for the active population was explored, in harmony with the MIS of Autonomous Communities but did not become any more than a design attempt.

The crisis of May 2010 put an end to economic stimulus policies and opened the door to fiscal consolidation policies and austerity, which continue in place today. In this way, development of the AIS is largely conditioned by growing unemployment and contraction of economic growth. In many ways, the crisis of May 2010 prompted the change from a relatively favourable environment for active inclusion development to labour reform priority, which being largely understood as the creation of incentives for companies to increase contracting and greater internal flexibility of companies, as well as easing dismissal and reducing the cost thereof. Yet the political core of the labour reforms (of September 2011 and February 2012)² does not overshadow the development of active policies which were to be rolled out throughout 2011, above all via the Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014.

² Law 35/2010 and Royal Decree 3/2012 'On urgent measures for reforming the labour market' (BOE 18th-September-2010); Royal Decree 3/2012 'On urgent measures for reforming the labour market' (BOE 11th-February-2012).

Additionally, the importance of the 2011 NRP must be highlighted in relation to active inclusion. Effectively, the NRP 2011 clearly supports the active inclusion of vulnerable and excluded groups and the fight against poverty. The 2011 NRP highlights in particular detail the most vulnerable groups and also makes mention of employment and education challenges. In spite of this, no targets are set such as the reduction of in-work poverty or of high unemployment levels among the disabled, young people and members of the Ròma people. Lastly, the 2011 NRP makes no reference to the need, already identified in other works (**Rodríguez Cabrero, 2009**) of organizing current minimum income systems into an all-encompassing national system founded in subjective rights, and its connection to the employment and training system. Whilst the NRP highlights social inclusion policies and the central role of education and training support services, this is not the case for income guarantee policies which are diluted in the programme and fail to successfully establish a link with labour inclusion and access to quality services.

In turn, the 2012 NRP is actually a step back in terms of active inclusion of vulnerable groups. The only inclusion targets indicated are the Youth Employment Plan (related to "Youth Opportunities Initiative" of the European Commission in 2011), promotion of vocational training and the fight against school leaving. The disabled are only mentioned peripherally, in relation to employment.

In development of the NRP 2012 and the modification of the fiscal path planned in Spain in the Growth and Stability Programme 2012-2015 (ECOFIN, 10 July 2012), Royal Decree-Law 20/2012, of 13 July, on measures to ensure fiscal stability and promote competitiveness was passed, with the aim of reducing public deficit by 4.5% in 2013. It is a law that expands on fiscal austerity policy and translates into social expenditure cutbacks and stricter access requirements for unemployment benefits, specifically the Active Insertion Income, as we shall see in what follows.

The winding-up of the Prepara programme at the end of August 2012 and its renewal for a further 6 months (until February 2013) (Royal Decree-Law 23/2012, of 24th August that extends the retraining program for people having exhausted their unemployment benefits) has hardened access conditions to a programme that serves as the last social protection safety net for a certain group of the unemployed, which is subject to analysis in section 2.

The Annual Plan on Employment Policy of July 2012 ⁽³⁾ maintains fiscal employment subsidies to companies to create jobs for the disabled as well as young people, the over 45s, the long-term unemployed and women, by way of the so-called entrepreneurs' contract. Likewise, it includes the measures to foster employment of young people funded by the ESF (2012-2015). Incentives are given for Special Employment Centres for the disabled and employed for the socially excluded, including encouraging employment in insertion businesses and the Third Sector; incentives are also given for programmes fostering employment of women who have been victims of gender violence, immigrants and support for projects aimed at those suffering insertion problems.

The Spanish Strategy on Economic Policy launched on 27th September 2012 mentions the reform of the employment markets and active employment policies, but fails to make specific reference to vulnerable groups.

As a preliminary evaluation, it can be stated that the development of the 2008 Recommendation has translated into unquestionable development of active

³ Annual Plan on Employment Policy: (Resolution of 24 July, BOE Official State Gazette of 4 August 2012). The Spanish Strategy of Economic Policy launched on 27th September 2012 mentions the reform of the labour market and active employment policies, but fails to refer to vulnerable and excluded groups.

employment policies without altering the institutional fragmentation framework existing in the MIS. Despite this development of policies and actions between 2008 and 2011, no progress has been made in achieving national consensus on the necessary level of minimum income to avoid exclusion and poverty, i.e. the adequate income level in order to maintain fair living conditions beyond the convention of 60% of the median equivalized income. Likewise, no progress has been made in the organization and rationalizing of the MIS, which we indicated in 2009 as being necessary. Lastly, substantial progress has been made in vertical coordination for efficient management of the various MIS programmes associated with activation. Moreover, as the economic crisis has set in, control mechanisms to avoid disincentivising employment have been reinforced, as have the containment of social protection levels, the reduction of duration or the removal of the possibility of repeating a benefit (PREPARA), at the same time as demand for labour activation and labour market return have increased.

Also, between 2008 and 2012, activation measures have been consolidated, but with little synergy between the three strands. These measures have been predominantly aimed at reinforcing labour inclusion according to the situation of the various labour markets. Where employment demand has dramatically fallen, access to professional training has largely been blocked and reduced. The development of active inclusion programmes for the most vulnerable groups is managed by social economy organizations and NGOs and they tend to be all-encompassing, but the efficiency thereof is limited insofar as they often have to resort to protected employment as their sole option (social companies and special employment centres).

1.2 Integrated implementation

During the period of 2008 to 2010, development of the AIS was relatively outstanding as regards the dissemination of the active inclusion idea in the design of public policies, at least in institutional discourse. The economic and financial crisis, with its deep impact on the growth of unemployment, and negative economic growth, has meant that the problem of job creation and the development of active policies have been brought to the foreground. 2011 has been a pivotal year in the development of active policies and the extension of active inclusion for groups at greater risk of exclusion.

The “**Economic and Social Agreement**” of 1st February 2011 between the Government, trade unions and business organisations opens a development period of active policies as a response to the labour market crisis and, moreover, to compensate the conflictive labour market reform of September 2010. This agreement launches various active employment policies, whose reference framework is the Spanish 2012-2014 Strategy for Employment (October 2011). Within these policies, there is an express indication of those aimed towards “**persons with special difficulties integrating in the labour market, particularly young people, with particular attention to those lacking training, women, the long term unemployed, the over 45s, the disabled or socially exclude, and immigrants**”. These vulnerable groups are also considered in the Annual Plan on Employment Policy 2012.

The general employment strategy 2012-2014 is complemented by other specific strategies aimed at specific groups such as the disabled (“**Global action plan for employment of the disabled 2008-2012 and the National Disability Strategy 2012-2020**”), Roma People (**NRIS 2012-2020**) or young employed people (**Youth Action Plan 2012**).

At operative or instrumental level, a point of reference is the Multi-regional Operational Programme for Fighting Against Discrimination (OP) 2007-2013, one of the most important joint actions being that developed by Cáritas Spain, Spanish Red

Cross, the ONCE Foundation, the Luís Vives Foundation and the Roma Secretariat Foundation targeting the fight against discrimination and socio-labour insertion of the most excluded population groups (young single mothers, young people who experience school failure, the unemployed who are far removed from the world of work, the homeless, people undergoing rehabilitation for drug addictions and other vulnerable groups or those suffering from social exclusion and immigrants; people with disabilities; Roma community).

Development of active inclusion policies culminating in the Spanish 2012-2014 Strategy for Employment (October 2011) and which is set out succinctly in **Table 1**, can be roughly linked to the three active inclusion strands. The general conclusion of said development is the following:

- a) The NRP 2011 and the Annual Plan on Employment Policy 2012 clearly identifies the groups at risk of exclusion, and the excluded.
- b) Labour inclusion is the predominant characteristic of all reforms, and of the employment strategy, although conditionality for the most at-risk groups is weak and resources tend to be concentrated in protected employment and subsidised;
- c) Access to public services tends to boil down to the professional training system; only the disability strategy is there any mention of health;
- d) Coordination problem between the State and Autonomous Communities, above all between their employment services, continues to be a major problem to achieving effective active policies;
- e) Adequate income is hardly considered except in the PREPARA programme;
- f) Lastly, and most relevant, the relationship between the three strands tends to be limited to the relationship between labour insertion and professional training.

It is not certain that the express mention of at-risk groups in the various active inclusion programmes is translating into a real priority insofar as employment services tend to maximise their action and impact among the groups with greatest access to the labour market.

TABLE 1: Active inclusion strategies in Spain and the three strands (2011) and specific strategies (2011-2020)

a)General policies	Priority groups	Adequate income	Labour insertion	Access to services	Coordination
Active policy for the transition to employment and professional requalification (Royal Legislative Decree 1/2011) (1)	Unemployed who have exhausted unemployment benefits	75% IPREM (5)	Professional requalification and reinsertion		
Reform of active employment policies and improvement of employability (RDL 3/2011) (2)	Young people lacking training, women, the long-term unemployed, the disabled or the socially excluded, and immigrants.	No mention	Guidance, training, promotion of contracting, self-employment, requalification.	Catalogue of personalised services and individual development plans	State, autonomous and local public employment services
Employment for the unemployed youth, and professional requalification of the unemployed. RDL 10/2011 (3)	Young unemployed people who have exhausted unemployment benefits		Training and apprenticeship contract. Professional requalification and reinsertion	Education	
Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014 (RD 1542/2011, of 3 October)(4)	Opportunities for groups with special difficulties			Education and training	Coordination between State and Autonomous Communities employment services
Labour reform of February 2012 (RDL 3/2012, of 10 February and Act 3/2012, of 6 July)	Young people and women in general		Training and apprenticeship contract; internal flexibility; strengthening of private labour intermediation	Professional and occupational training	Coordination between State and Autonomous Communities employment services
Annual Plan on Employment Policy 2012	Women who are victims of gender violence, victims of terrorism, the disabled or the socially excluded		Employment subsidies, professional training, requalification and labour insertion	Annual Plan on Employment Policy 2012.	Coordination between State and Autonomous Communities employment services

b) Specific strategies and programmes	Priority groups	Adequate income	Labour insertion	Access to services	Coordination
Employment strategy for the disabled 2011-2013 Spanish Disability Strategy 2012-2020	The disabled		ESF against discrimination programme; Subsidies to companies for job creation	Education, training and health	Coordination between Disabled NGOs and Public Employment Services
NRIS Spain 2012-2020	Roma People		Acceder programme (ESF)	Education (Prepara) and social services	Coordination between Roma NGOs and Public Employment Services

Source: Own table

- (1) Royal Decree Law 1/2011, of 11 February, on urgent measure to promote the transition to stable employment and professional requalification of the unemployed.
- (2) Royal Decree Law 3/2011, of 18 February, on urgent measures to improve employability and the reform of active employment policies.
- (3) Royal Decree Law 10/2011, of 26 August, on urgent measures to promote the employment of young people, fostering job stability and maintaining the professional requalification programme for those who have exhausted unemployment benefits.
- (4) Royal Decree 1542/2011, of 31 October, approving the Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014.
- (5) IPREM: Public Indicator of Multiple Effect Incomes.

1.3 Vertical policy coordination

The Spanish AI model combines the centralisation and decentralisation of development of the various strands thereof. Thus, the following will be necessary:

- In terms of labour inclusion: The majority of financing and the management thereof comes from the Central State, but its implementation will be carried out by Autonomous Communities and at local level. NGOs and social economy companies collaborate in the management of programmes that affect specific at-risk groups.
- The MIS is structured at two levels: A general or State level, through Social Security (benefits level) and an Autonomous or Regional Minimum Income system, in addition to "emergency" assistance provided at municipal level.

- Lastly, healthcare and education services are governed at both central and autonomous level, but their implementation is decentralised to regional or autonomous level. The State maintains the guarantee of equality as regards the basic conditions of access to various services. Personal social services fall to the Autonomous Communities, but managed at regional and local level, are the gateway to the autonomous or regional minimum incomes system.

Consequently, this is a decentralised system in which the social right to income guarantee depends on position in the labour market; access to education and healthcare is universal; and the right to personal social services is at care level although most recent social services legislation has been a partial step towards recognising subjective rights in certain social benefits. Yet it must be remembered that AI commitments are undertaken by central Government and their execution, to regional governments.

There is extensive evidence of policy coordination problems between central and autonomous government in various welfare areas (such as health, education and LTC) that is also plain to see in the development of active policies launched in recent years in terms of the coordination between central and autonomous employment services, and between these and local level services.

1.4 Active participation of relevant actors

The multiplication of social and institutional actors in the development of the AIS is an undeniable fact. What was a relationship between the public employment service and the unemployed has now become numerous social protagonists that participate in the design and/or implementation of active inclusion, such as the various layers of government, trade unions, business organisations and NGOs. In this sense, IA governance has expanded.

The decentralisation of programmes and the combination of institutional and social actors is a trend that has also been seen in other European welfare systems. The target of bringing resources and programmes closer to the socially and labour excluded has advanced rapidly in public administrators and non-commercial private operators. This has entailed coordination between municipal social services, employment offices and education and health services that is by no means easy to apply, nor is it always effective. New governance and collaboration models are being rolled out between Central Government, Autonomous Communities and local authorities, although effective coordination and social and institutional forms is still a long way off. Without doubt, expansive institutional and social governance construction has certainly taken place in Spain, and requires greater development polishing.

Paradoxically, this multiplication of actors and stake-holders and governance forms does not translate to socialization of exclusion risks and to social investment to create favourable conditions for social inclusion. This is due to the specific inclusion actions that entail individual pathways in which accompaniment clashes with scarcity of employment opportunities and the overbearing, and sometimes excessive, individual responsibility of vulnerable persons. This is why the only option in many cases is either protected employment in social companies or special employment centres, or perpetual cycles of unemployment and precarious contracts, that make it impossible for poverty to be overcome.

Further to the above, the February 2012 labour reform has revealed the poor relation between income, employment and the real limitations of access to the ordinary labour market. This, in turn, has led to the gains in flexibility for companies via subsidies, lowering the cost of dismissal and functional mobility are not sufficiently offset by

progress in job security and labour inclusion. In many ways, expansive governance by stakeholders has not been effective in terms of the relation between flexibility and security, as the first has done nothing but grow in strength, and the latter has done nothing but shrink.

In the midst of all these social stakeholders, governments, trade unions and business associations, the role of the Social Action Third Sector must be highlighted, which has a “voice” in public policy consultation processes (such as the NAPin 2008-2010 or NRP 2011), as well as managing the majority of social and labour integration projects geared towards the most excluded or most at-risk groups, at local level. The current crisis is putting greater pressure on NGOs and social economy companies since demand for employment and training has risen along with demand for economic help. In the Spanish system of personal social services, this sector is the primary contact for excluded or at-risk groups. The economic and financial crisis has displaced some of the demand for the State towards civil society, whose response is always limited, and which has led to participation taking place in conjunction with NGOs in order to successfully respond to new social risks.

2. Description and assessment of the impact and cost effectiveness of measures introduced under the 3 strands

In general, there are four active inclusion programmes that are aimed at the most vulnerable and excluded groups and whose target is to strengthen social and labour inclusion. Three of these form part of the social security benefits system, and the fourth comprises the series of minimum income programmes of the Autonomous Communities. **Table 2** succinctly shows the basic features of said programmes: access conditions, income requirements, duration and complementarity with other active inclusion benefits and services. All the programmes have been rolled out following the beginning of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 and 2009, with the exception of the MIS of the Autonomous Communities which have been in place since 1988. Prior to evaluating the effectiveness of active inclusion programmes, their development and principal attributes must be outlined:

a) Prior to the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation, Spain had begun to develop certain programmes and actions at state level aimed at at-risk groups under the framework of the Lisbon Strategy 2000 such as the development of the Active Insertion Income (AII) (2000), Agrarian Income (2003), insertion companies (RD 1369/2006), employment for the disabled (RD 870/2007), extension of unemployment benefits to the over-45s with no family obligations, compatibility between employment and non-contributory invalidity pensions (Act 8/2005) and the Strategic Plan for Disability (2008-2012) and the development of the Multi-Regional Operational Programme for Fighting Against Discrimination co-financed by the ESF (2000-2007).

b) These policies and programmes expanded the scope of the various MIS without organising and harmonising their complexity, and increased active demands for activation without advancing efficiency measures. This was due to the accumulation of a number of factors such as the limited protection of AI programmes, the differing durations of benefits, the varying capacities of at-risk groups (which are not always taken into consideration) and, lastly, the precarious nature of labour markets which said groups could access. These factors continue to limit the effectiveness of active inclusion programmes.

c) Lastly, the decentralisation of social policies since 1979 caused the launch, in 1988, of regional minimum income as a "last safety net", beginning in the Basque Country. Their role is secondary compared with other national MIS (**Arriba and Pérez Eransus, 2007**), but they are of growing importance in the general system of guaranteed income (**Pérez Eransus, 2005; Arriba and Pérez Eransus, 2007; Ayala, 2008**). This system, comprising 19 programmes (17 regional programmes and 2 autonomous cities) increased income guarantees and strengthened the activation trend, although in a disparate fashion and with little connection to public employment services. In practice, activation is usually managed to a great extent by NGOs in the form of insertion projects and social enterprises with an unequal impact and limited success.

TABLE 2 Active Inclusion Programmes in Spain

Programme	Coverage	Income requirements	Job-related requirements	Duration of benefit	Compatibility with other benefits and incomes
Active Insertion income (AII)	Over 45s	Income below 75% MW	Registered for 12 months and actively seeking employment; not having rejected any suitable job offer in the last 12 months; unemployed with more than 33% disability; returned emigrant; victim of gender violence; recipient of assistance invalidity pension who request suspension of pension to access AII	Max. 11 months	Health care, occupational training grants; part-time work with reduction in benefit
Requalification Programme (PREPARA) RDL 23/2012, 24th August	Unemployed within active age limit	Income below 75% IPREM. Household income is included	Unemployed registered for a given six month period who have exhausted all unemployment benefits and obligations to participation in requalification	Max. 6 months	Health care; professional training; compatible with other minimum income but without surpassing 75% of the MW
Agrarian Income	Unemployed within active age limit	Income below 75 % MW modulated according to family size	Occasional agrarian workers in Andalusia and Extremadura who cannot benefit from the agrarian subsidy and are registered. Registered on the electoral roll for at least 10 years in said regions. Insertion via individual plan commitment is required	From 25 to 52 years 180 days; more than 52 years max. 300 days	Health care; professional training; compatible with professional income (50% work, 50% unemployment benefit)
Regional Minimum insertion income (RMI)	Between 25 and 64. In some cases less than 25	Income below 75% IPREM (in certain houses over 100%) modulated according to family size	Unemployed people and low paid workers (poverty in-work) Insertion contract	Between 6 and 12 months (extendable) Some programmes up to 24 months and more	Health care, personal social services and emergency assistance. Any kind of household income below the threshold.

Source: Own table

We will analyse below the three AI strands and their inter-relation in the case of Spain. We will also tentatively analyse the effectiveness of these, although empirical

evidence is scarce. Table 3 succinctly shows the most relevant features of the four MI programmes in relation to AI.

2.1 Adequate income support

The basic minimum income received by beneficiaries of these programmes, without considering the size of the household and number of children, never exceeds 65% of the income threshold that defines the poverty line. Changes between 2008 and 2011 have been minimal. This is why the income level, although avoiding severe poverty, does not help in exiting relative poverty. Although these benefits often increase according to the number of children, they are capped at around 150% of minimum salary. These benefit amounts are not suitable in terms of average living standards of Spanish society.

In previous studies (**Rodríguez Cabrero, 2009**) we have emphasised the limited capacity of the Spanish system to reduce poverty. Therefore, in 2006, social benefits reduced severe poverty markedly (87%) but moderate poverty much less so (47%). In 2008 Arriba and Guinea backed up the foregoing conclusions. The current economic and financial crisis once again confirms and aggravates the limited capacity of the MIS to reduce relative poverty by freezing social benefits.

During the 2008-2011 economic crisis, the amount of beneficiaries of minimum benefits grew sustainably, although we have no information regarding certain programmes in the first quarter of 2012. Active inclusion income (AII) has grown significantly, growing from 2008 to 2012 alone by 246.9%. The MIS of Autonomous Communities also grew intensely between 2008 and 2010 (68.8%).

The PREPARA programme, which began in August 2009 and which is renewed every six months (being an extraordinary programme in response to the crisis) multiplied by 2.5 times in a single year. This shows its importance as a high-impact programme to extend benefit coverage of the unemployed. However, the fact that it is not renewable, i.e., that it lasts only six months, which severely limits possibilities for unemployed people with no other basic income programme (once the six month period has expired, it cannot be requested again). It seems that neither this programme nor the AII is a programme in which the unemployed can find long-term support, since nearly 35% of beneficiaries of the PREPARA programme and 30% of those of the AII programme do not last for more than 4 months. This information is not available in the case of Agrarian Income.

In the case of the MIS of the Autonomous Communities, with the exception of the Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre whose coverage and protection level is high, complementing income with housing and social inclusion benefits, in the remaining Communities benefits fall below the poverty line and are of a highly discretionary nature in the case of the benefits of a higher amount in terms of income and active inclusion actions.

Fiscal consolidation policies in 2012 have entailed new reforms that have made access requirements to the Prepara programme and AII far stricter:

- a) RDL 20/2012, of 3 July, on measures to guarantee budget stability and foster competition, modifies, in Article 21, the RAI to the extent that in order to gain access, applicants must have exhausted their contributive benefits or unemployment subsidies for persons above the age of 45 in long-term unemployment, and must not have rejected a suitable job offer for the duration of their registration as a jobseeker (one year minimum), nor refused to participate in promotion, training or professional re-training, except for justified causes.

- b) The new regulation of the PREPARA programme (Royal Decree Law 23/2012, of 24 August, extending the professional re-training programme for those who have exhausted unemployment protection) has also imposed stricter rules on income requirements (taking into consideration family unit, although compensated with an extra 50 euros per month for persons with two children and a spouse with no income), the requirement of dependents, long term unemployment and training requirement, as well as acceptance of a suitable job offer where appropriate.

The economic and financial crisis has somewhat stigmatised beneficiaries of regional minimum income, such as non-EU immigrants, who tend to be accused of abusing the system (by way of example, these supposed approximately 14% of all beneficiaries of these programmes in 2009) when their average duration in the system is always far below the national average (**Moreno Fuentes, J. & Bruquetas Callejo, M., 2011**). The toughening of access requirements for regional MIS (for example, increased minimum residence in the region) and the freezing of benefits has been imposed since 2011.

Although the number of those benefitting from minimum income programmes has grown from 2008 to 2012, at the same time conditions for access to these programmes have become stricter insofar as income, unemployment situation and activation, which implies greater responsibility for the beneficiary household, proof of active jobseeking and mandatory activation in the labour market with limited possibilities of gainful employment.

Essentially, the Spanish MIS has wide but highly fragmented coverage (unequal universalisation); its protection level does not guarantee social benefits to the extent of guaranteeing fair living standards, but protects beneficiaries from severe poverty. Secondly, the trend of linking income receipt to workfare activation activities is being consolidated, and varies according to the programmes and at-risk groups; conditionality is increasing in MIS programmes. Lastly, active inclusion is a gradient in which job seeking is combined with professional training and skills improvement; in the case of groups at greatest risk of exclusion, training and skills improvement are key to active inclusion activities.

2.2 Inclusive labour markets

Given the characteristics of the Spanish labour market, this strand is the core of active inclusion. As a whole, during recent years a change has occurred in favour of active employment policies, with a special emphasis on the most excluded groups. All the programmes have various activation and participation demands in terms of activities to strengthen access to employment and professional training. Given the high unemployment rates and low requirements by companies, activation aimed at employment takes a back seat to professional training. In this respect, significant investment has been made in Spain via the National Training and Professional Insertion Plans, partially funded by the ESF via the Pluri-regional Operational Programme Adaptability and Employment 2007-2013.

Moreover, the methodology of personalised plans in active inclusion programmes has spread greatly, which improves adaptation to individual needs as well as greater tailoring of insertion processes, to the detriment of social support networks.

Another highlight the growing role of the social economy and NGOs in the management of AI programmes for groups at risk of exclusion in terms of adaptation to individual needs and their low cost, capacity to manage protected employment and speciality in labour intermediation (such as for the disabled and Roma people).

The segmentation of the labour market in Spain and the particular weight of the irregular economy continue to be factors that severely limit the AI's possibility of providing suitable conditions for those most excluded from the labour market. This segmentation affects non-EU foreign nationals, those with no qualifications and production sectors such as construction.

In the case of national minimum income programmes, the role of state and autonomous public employment services and their growing coordination are contributing to the achievement of certain successes in terms of professional training, and to a much lesser extent in labour insertion. On the contrary, in autonomous programmes the situation is more complex due to the accumulation of various factors: only 6 programmes of a total of 19 in 2010 had a connection to public employment services. Secondly, coordination between personal social services and employment services is little more than token and without this coordination, progress in labour inclusion is impossible. Lastly, public employment services are not designed to be adaptable to the profile of excluded groups, which often leaves NGOs to intermediate, carrying out social and labour inclusion activities with the support of the Administration and with ESF funding.

We have no in-depth information as to the real success of said programmes to ease access to the labour market for at-risk groups, although there are indirect indicators and ad hoc research studies carried out.

In the case of regional minimum income programmes, if we consider, for example, the minimum income programme of the Community of Madrid as an average programme within the regional system existing in Spain, **Ayala (2010)** (information not up-to-date) pinpoints some of the contributions made to activation of those receiving income who have signed an "insertion programme" (co-responsibility of the beneficiary to develop social participation and labour skills activities). According to said research among 39,200 households and taking into account the diversity of variables in an impact evaluation, the result is that among the beneficiaries of this last social protection network, normalised labour integration (general work-related schemes) does not automatically reduce poverty and exclusion. To the contrary, subsidised employment activities and work in social enterprises tend to be very effective. Therefore, for the groups most excluded from the labour market the success of access to the labour market is by no means secure, but the improvement of skills and even access to the protected employment market is.

The Prepara programme was evaluated prior to its extension at the end of August 2012. It was concluded that between February 2011 and July 2012, the personalised itineraries primarily consisted of labour orientation (93% of activities) but with very little professional re-training (8%) in a group where 60% have no more than primary education. Furthermore, 70% of beneficiaries found that the programme has not achieved employment for them. On the contrary, only 1% achieved a permanent contract whilst the rest have been temporary contracts, largely lasting less than two months. It is true that the extensive destruction of employment throughout the last four years has made effective employment via the Prepara programme extremely difficult, if not impossible. The necessary improvements in efficiency and effectiveness need not prevent the programme from maintaining a minimal incentive to usage and avoiding severe poverty for those who have exhausted all options. In any event, it is not a stable programme, the benefits it provides are below the relative poverty line and the unemployed person does not receive a social benefit payment as such, but a subsidy (and in order to receive it, the beneficiary must not have outstanding debts with Public Revenue or Social Security).

2.3 Access to quality services

Access to state welfare services is universal in the case of education and health, but conditioned in terms of social and employment services. Specifically, access to social services is limited to certain benefits and the nature and degree thereof varies according to Autonomous Community.

However, in practice said access has been conditioned between 2008 and 2010 by the varying services supplied by Autonomous Communities, above all in the social services network (which are most geared towards vulnerable groups). This is the result of limited coordination between public services, above all between employment services and social services, and due to the absence of coordination between state, regional and local employment services. It is precisely this last absence where 2011 reforms have tried to yield influence, particularly the Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014. Moreover, the current crisis has overwhelmed the response capacity of public social services and it has been NGOs that have been forced to increase the services they offer due to the drop in economic resources.

Furthermore, the disappearance in 2012 of the State's Educa-3 Plan to fund nursery care of children aged between 0 to 3 years, as well as the reduction in spending on books and school meals in 2012, has effectively worsened living conditions that above all affect child poverty and whose effects will exacerbate poverty among children living in poor households. The loss of housing due to failure to make mortgage payments has translated into urgent measures to protect mortgage holders out of resources, establishing moratoria and payment deferral that is left to the discretion of banks and savings banks. In reality, housing access and protection policies are extremely weak and their connection with AI actions is no more than token, with the exception of emergency assistance provided by social services. This last social benefit grew up steadily from 2008 (64,694 beneficiaries) to 2010 (406,603 beneficiaries), only to radically drop in 2011 to 124,505 beneficiaries).

Personal social services are the gateway for groups requesting regional minimum income. Moreover, these services manage urgent complementary benefits such as ad hoc hand-outs (for mortgage payments), housing and accommodation needs and help to impoverished families with children. The overload of demand for these services due to the effect of the crisis is fully confirmed by reports carried out by social workers' associations that stress the importance of diverse coverage and regional efforts, as well as the need to guarantee equal conditions across the whole country (**García Herrero & Ramírez Navarro, 2012**).

From an institutional point of view as indicated by **Casado (2008)**, the decentralisation of personal social services with no guarantee of basic benefits and suitable funding, their discretionary nature and scarce availability are all a cause of inequality and exclusion. These features limit the proactive capacity of social services, to the extent that management of monetary benefits (passive policies) is more important than the follow-up of excluded individuals on a case by case basis and coordination with other services (employment, health, and housing) that are fundamental to strengthen social inclusion pathways.

In this regard, social services which are key to the success of AI are limited at local or municipal scale due to lack of resources and coordination difficulties with other services. This means that the excluded are faced with a limited coverage network of services, unequal between Autonomous Communities and Municipalities and which is better adapted to the standard population than excluded groups. It is for this reason that NGOs social services (above all Caritas Española and the Spanish Red Cross) are decisive in responding to the needs of marginalised people or the more severely excluded.

Although public social services have been progressively geared towards at-risk groups, it is still the case that standardised groups are the predominant users. Information problems and stigmas surrounding them affect access by excluded groups to public social services, whilst non-profit private services tend to receive the majority of demand from the groups at greatest risk. This has only worsened with the economic and financial crisis. Certainly, public and private social services often collaborate, since some of the users with the greatest difficulties frequently pass through both, and this requires a certain degree of coordination between public services and those provided by NGOs.

The fundamental problem of social services is their limited operative capacity to develop social inclusion activities that require mobility of resources and coordination efforts. The multi-faceted nature of the shortcomings of at-risk groups continues to be a challenge in social work. In short, although more inclusive social services and a philosophy of coordination have made some progress in Spain, there is still a long way to go before sufficient services are offered, access is guaranteed by effective rights and intervention is proactive in nature.

The lack of adaption of education, housing and health services for excluded groups must be highlighted, as must the relative absence of mainstreaming. Progress made to date has not been sufficient in order to give a full AI response for excluded groups. As a result, personal social services and NGO mostly take responsibility for the demands and needs of at-risk groups and make coordination efforts with general public services.

Lastly in the spring of 2012 the economic and financial crisis brought cutbacks in health, education and LTC (estimated as 1.2% of GDP) which is sure to have a negative impact on the supply and quality of public services. Likewise, the impact of the crisis has affected social protection coverage for the unemployed, which has dropped from 79% in 2010 to 65.5% in April 2012. Spain's financial bailout in May 2012 could lead to new social spending cuts and a re-shuffle of the Welfare State that could affect the most vulnerable. In this scenario, no ex ante impact evaluations are being carried out of the repercussions that new social expenditure costs would have on social inclusion policies.

2.4 General assessment of AIS in Spain

A general evaluation of the Spanish AIS and of the development of the three strands allows us to reach the following tentative conclusions:

- a) In the last twelve years, above all since 2008, there has been a growing development of activation policies and programmes, particularly in the case of minimum income recipients who are obliged to participate in labour insertion activities (training and job seeking). Despite this, company subsidies for job creation continue to have the same or even more importance than professional training and guidance programmes.
- b) The relation between the three strands has mainly been made around minimum income and labour insertion, with a lesser degree of integration of public services. The weakness of personal social services – the gateway for many excluded people, and their limited coordination capacity with other basic services (health, employment and housing) partially explains this imbalance. In any event, AI programmes are still very far from what would be an integration of the strands into personalised social inclusion strategies.
- c) Activation programmes (labour guidance, training and insertion) for those at greatest risk of exclusion have been seen as relatively successful in improving skills, training and access to protected employment, but are less so in access to

the ordinary labour market. This market is found to be more accessible for MIS recipients who have suitable professional qualification and wide social networks. Various experts (**Laparra & Pérez Eransus, 2009**) have shown that the concept of activation must not be limited to labour insertion policies, but diversified to respond to the particular features of each sector affected by exclusion processes, such as skills improvement and social presence, the social participation of excluded groups and certain activities that are not directly related to employment.

TABLE 3 Active inclusion programmes and three strands (2008-2012)

Programme	Adequate Income (% poverty threshold)		Average duration in the programme less than 4 months (%)	Linked to activation	Number beneficiaries			Articulation of three strands
	2008	2011			2008	2010	2012	
Professional Requalification Programme (PREPARA)	-	65.3	34.9	X	91,888	249,902	500.859	Partial: Predominantly employment orientation; since August 2012 labour retraining target
Active insertion income (AII)	64%	65.3	29.4	X	67,567	125,680	232.618	Partial: Predominance of labour integration
Agrarian Income	64%	65.3	-	X	31,478	45,954	62.310	Partial: Predominance of labour integration
Minimum insertion income (MII)	61.7	64.2		X	114,257	192,858	223.946	Partial: Predominance of social integration
					(2)			
					(1)			
					(2)			
					(3)			

(1) 2009

(2) February 2011 to July 2012

(3) 2011

Source: Own table

3. Financial resources

3.1 National resources

It is not easy to quantify expenditure on active inclusion policies, since in many cases these blur with expenditure on the general active policies of which they often form part.

In any event, expenditure in the income guarantee programme in 2011 in the four analysed programmes is estimated at 2.581,5 million euros⁴. In turn, estimated expenditure in 2010 on labour inclusion and training for groups with particular difficulties is estimated at 350 million euros. Both items amount to 0.29% of GDP in 2010. Expenditure on active policies such as subsidy of Social Security contributions for companies that contract disabled employees and groups with special difficulties (young people, the long-term unemployed, and the over 45s) was not considered. Due to lack of information, public expenditure on health, education, housing and social services has not been included, since there is no such information available on an individual basis for at-risk groups, with the exception of certain specific actions in the Autonomous Communities.

The Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014 estimates employment policy expenditure at 8,156 million euros per annum across three years, making a total of 24,468 million euros, nearly half of which is dedicated to policies to boost contracting (subsidies of company Social Security payments). Of said total, the foreseeable cost of employment actions for those with particular difficulties amounts to nearly 5% (405.9 million euros per annum).

If we evaluate the development of the Annual Employment Policy Plan 2012, it can be seen that public employment services have had their resources cut by 8.5% (3.250 million euros). Specifically, among active employment policies, general cutbacks amount to 21% in 2012, although in certain areas this increases (such as the 26% cut in training the unemployed), which contrasts to the increase in expenditure on subsidising companies to contract workers.

Lastly, in terms of the Young Employment Plan for 2012 (based on Royal Decree Law 3/2012), the problem posed is that subsidies for the contracting of young people under the age of 30 is limited to those receiving unemployment benefits, which effectively reduces the possible field of recipients to 15% of young unemployed people. Moreover, support has been given to part-time contracting for this group, which may result in underemployment and insufficient wages. The direct contracting of young people via training and apprenticeship contracts have a fixed duration of three years, and do not allow for the possibility of obtaining a high school diploma for those who otherwise lack one.

One of the most important problems is that concerning coordination between public employment services of the State and Autonomous Communities. The latter managed nearly 38% of all employment fostering resources in 2011. Collaboration between the State, Autonomous Communities, NGO and Municipalities as promoters of employment was positively evaluated⁵ by social agents as contributing to local economic and social development.

⁴ An average receipt period is estimated at 7 months in Activa Insertion Income (AII), 12 months in Agrarian Income and 4 months in the Prepara Programme.

⁵ CCOO-UGT (2011)

Moreover, the usefulness of incentives and subsidies to the contracting of those with greatest employment difficulties (the disabled and the long-term unemployed) as a labour insertion tool is proven and recognised by social agents.

3.2 Use of EU Structural Funds

Structural funds, above all the ESF, are key to active inclusion policies. Specifically, the Multiregional Operational Programme Against Discrimination has been crucial to the active inclusion of the disabled, immigrants, the severely excluded and Roma People. The Acceder programme developed by the Roma Secretariat Foundation for the last group continues to be a benchmark due to its scope and effectiveness. In the same vein are programmes developed by the Fundación ONCE (the disabled), the Red Cross (immigrants) and Caritas (the severely excluded) (**Fresno & Solakis, 2010**). Currently, said entities that managed part of an operative programme is carrying out an impact evaluation from 2006 to 2011.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

The impact evaluation of active inclusion policies and programmes is still very limited. Lack of information, the non-existence of evaluation tools and administrative and institutional conditioning limit the practice of evaluations and their results.

In general, evaluation is limited to the publication of Activities Reports (Memorias) that do not reflect the results of actions such as labour insertion features (type of contract, working conditions wages, protection from poverty and access to social services, among others) and the development of active inclusion pathways. In addition to the absence of impact evaluations, the visibility of actions is still limited.

In general, the practice of evaluation research of active inclusion programmes is very limited due to administrative information problems, since these tend to be broken, limited in terms of data and often poor quality.

Lastly, the current MIS is still pending evaluation which, as we have already indicated, is carried out in a fragmented fashion. The increase in beneficiaries coverage of the AII programme and their importance in AI means that the possibility of this becoming a national programme can be contemplated, which would include all possible active inclusion pathways by having the entire State and Autonomous Community active inclusion network, as well as the management capacity of Social Security in social benefits.

There is still a long way to go to defining AIS evaluation indicators and the commitment to their elaboration and follow-up in the NRPs.

5. Recommendations

With the aim of progressing towards an all-encompassing and integrated strategy for the AI, the impact of the economic and financial crisis must be taken into account, which not only equates to double digit unemployment rates, but also an increased risk of poverty in Spanish society and a greater number of households lacking any type of income which, should unemployment continue to rise, could lead to poverty rates reaching their highest level for decades. This scenario, in the context of a rigorous fiscal consolidation policy that will surely be tightened further in 2012 by the demands resulting from the financial bailout of the Spanish private banking sector, supposes an uncertain future for the development of active inclusion policies, specifically on the public expenditure commitments necessary to make this possible.

In any event, there are certainly some recommendations to improve the AIS set-up, as well as to develop certain improvement and rationalisation actions of the current fragmented system of AI programmes.

a) Priority actions

- AI policies must form part of the NRP each year, with sufficient visibility in terms of targets, commitments and forecast results. They must not get lost amid the general active policy, but stand out. Likewise this is the case for the NSR published in December 2012. The advances made in visibility of poverty and the AI in 2011 must be recovered for 2013, and furthered even more. The mainstreaming of active inclusion and poverty in general policy has still yet to be achieved.
- Simplification and harmonisation of the present MIS into a single one adaptable to various social exclusion groups and situations. This is where the Central State must take the initiative, given its constitutional competence to do so and the means to carry it out. Certainly, social agents and NGOs representatives will participate in achieving this aim. The AII (Active Insertion Income) could be the source of a national MI scheme, as a social protection cushion for the vulnerable as well as a catalyst to active inclusion.
- Swift progress in AI policy evaluation protocols. This requires agreement on indicators, minimum and homogenous data collected by all programmes and evaluation and dissemination between the State, social agents and social action NGOs.
- Lastly, continuing the development of progress made in vertical and horizontal institutional coordination in active inclusion in recent years. These are currently insufficient due to the limited weight of active inclusion in public policies.

b) Measures

- Coverage levels must be increased and, above all, the level of protection of the MIS in order to avoid not only severe poverty but also relative poverty. Specifically, improving protection for poor families with children is crucial in order to reduce the very high levels of child poverty in Spain. In this same vein, progress must be made in the compatibility of income and benefits in terms of those experiencing poverty in-work.
- Public employment services must integrate employment guidance for groups at risk of exclusion via specific pathways that allow the coordination of income guarantee with training and labour inclusion programmes and access to health and housing services. Here, coordination between personal social services and local employment services could be an important step forward.
- In the current economic and financial crisis, measures should be taken that ease at-risk groups' access to health, housing and education in coordination with personal social services, above all of the immigrant population that suffer unemployment levels nearly two times above the national average.
- Progress made in governance through the growing presence of Social Action NGO in NAPin and in the various inclusion strategies (Roma, the disabled, immigrants) must be increased and consolidated due to these being organisations that represent the interests of at-risk groups. The current crisis cannot entail the transfer of responsibility from the Welfare State to NGO in the protection of excluded groups.

c) At EU level

Fiscal consolidation policies are weakening anti-poverty and pro-inclusion policies in countries with greater economic and financial difficulties (mainly Southern and Eastern Europe EU countries), which can be seen in rising poverty rates and greater labour exclusion. In this regard, Social Europe is an option to avoid negative repercussions for social cohesion. This means new institutional commitments with inclusion and social cohesion in the European social areas that balance the scales in favour of social policies rather than the almost overwhelming dominance of spending cuts and austerity policies.

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Summary tables

Table 1

To what extent has an integrated comprehensive active inclusion strategy been developed in your Member State?												
	Comprehensive policy design			Integrated implementation			Vertical policy coordination			Active participation of relevant actors		
	Yes	Somewhat	No	Yes	Somewhat	No	Yes	Somewhat	No	Yes	Somewhat	No
For those who can work		X				X		X		X		
For those who cannot work		X				X		X			X	

Table 2

To what extent have active inclusion policies/measures been strengthened, stayed much the same or weakened since 2008 in your Member State?									
	Adequate income support			Inclusive labour markets			Access to quality services		
	Strengthened	The same	Weakened	Strengthened	The same	Weakened	Strengthened	The same	Weakened
For those who can work		X		X				X	
For those who cannot work			X	X				X	

