

# ESF TRANSNATIONALITY NEWS

NEWSLETTER  
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## Programming for the future

As we work towards our annual seminar on 18-19 June 2018, the Newsletter reports on the virtues of social investment, the future shape of the ESF, new policy documents from the Platform, and transnational projects on the ground.

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This issue is strong on the policy issues that are arising from transnational work in the ESF. We lead with a report of the keynote speech at the *Investing in People – The Way Forward* conference in Sofia in February, in which Professors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson point out the value of social investment not only for social justice but for economic growth.

We then summarise the messages regarding ESF programming that came out of this event. Michel Servoz, at the time Director General of the Employment DG, defined the priorities as being synergies and complementarities, flexibility, simplification and support for transitions. On the same topic, we look back at a historical precedent for supporting innovation and transnationality – the 2002-08 EQUAL Community Initiative.

We describe three new policy documents from our transnational networks, dealing respectively with digital skills, partnership and indicators of inclusion. We also examine the economic and social benefit of community care, a social hotel in Gdańsk, and the EMIN bus, which is currently touring Europe to campaign for effective minimum income schemes

Finally we cover three aspects of transnational co-operation on the ground. We give brief



Valentina Caimi reports back to the *Investing in People Conference in Sofia in February 2018*. L-R: Maria Iglesias, Patrizia Brandellero, Armelle Ledan, Luca Santin, Valentina Caimi and Luk Zelderloo.

details of the transnational ESF projects currently under way in Flanders and Finland, describe the very successful Partner Search Forum held in Warsaw in March, and review the new partner-finding Facebook page.

#### Further information

Remember, these articles and more can also be read online at:  
<http://www.transnationality.eu>

LEAD

# Fighting inequalities – it’s for the economy, stupid

**Fighting social inequalities should be the priority of all Member States not just because it is the core issue of social justice but also because inequalities get in the way of economic growth. This was the main message of Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson as they gave their keynote speech at *the Investing in people – the way forward* conference in Sofia on 15-16 February 2018.<sup>1</sup>**

Professors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, who both teach epidemiology at the University of York (UK), have become celebrities since they published *The Spirit Level*<sup>2</sup> in 2009. Their discovery: more equal societies almost always do better than others.

It’s a finding shared by no lesser body than the World Economic Forum: in 2017 the WEF identified inequality as the number one challenge in the way of economic growth and stability.

The *Spirit Level* research shows that the cost of not reducing inequalities is vast. Inequalities damage individuals and society as a whole. The bigger the income gaps in a country, the bigger the problems, including deteriorations

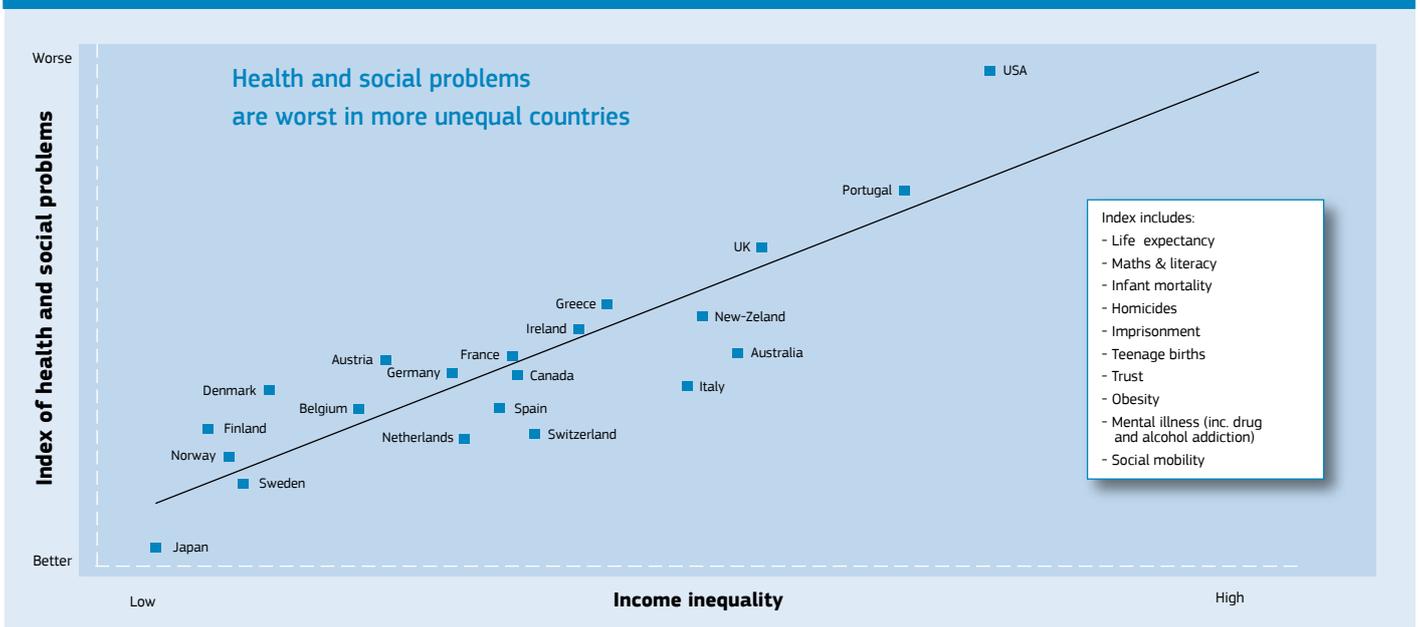
in health (mental illness, drug abuse, obesity, teenage pregnancy, life expectancy, child mortality), human capital (child wellbeing, school dropouts, social mobility, maths and literacy scores) and social relations (community life, trust, school bullying, imprisonment). In a nutshell, health and social problems are far worse in more unequal countries despite no difference in GDP. This, the speakers said, is yet another reason to back the growing call for moving beyond GDP as an indicator of quality of life.

Professors Pickett and Wilkinson insisted on the need to shift our attention to the problem of inequality. “This is grounded on strong evidence based on the damage inequality does. This is a core issue for social progress in Europe”.

They stated that while we all know that bigger material differences create bigger social distances and increase class differentiation, what might come as a

1 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=325&eventsId=1287&furtherEvents=yes>  
 2 <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/spirit-level>

Figure 1: Health and social problems



See: <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/resources/the-spirit-level>

surprise is that “inequality affects us all” including the middle class and the general education performance.

## Threats loom if inequality is not reduced

“There is a generalisation of the effect of social inequality on all of us,” said Professor Wilkinson. He pointed out that research on this topic has been going on since the 1970s and that we should therefore be confident inequality is key to what is going on in certain parts of the world and is looming in Europe if nothing is done. He referred to inter-generational income mobility, the lack of equal opportunities for children, the fall in civic participation, the lack of trust, the increase in guard labour and the rise in violence.

*“Social life atrophies in less equal societies yet the quality of social relations is crucial to health, happiness and the quality of life.”*

Richard Wilkinson

Pointing out that the USA, one of the most unequal societies in the western world, currently spends more on imprisonment than on tertiary education, Professor Wilkinson called on Europe to make sure it does not go down this path.

The two professors referred to a recent European Commission reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe which warns that in this changing world “a gap between alleged ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of economic and technological change may result in new patterns of inequality, with a persistent risk of poverty coinciding with new forms of exclusion”. Action is therefore needed now to ensure that in a modern and cohesive society “everyone has access to new ‘ladders of opportunity’ at different stages of their lifetime”. This is not just a matter of social justice and social cohesion; it is also an economic imperative because a “well functioning, confident and buoyant society that invests in its human capital and creates opportunities for individuals to move on throughout their life cycle is essential to sustain economic growth, labour market participation and living standards and to combat social risks”. The paper states that fighting inequality is a political requirement: “Building confidence and trust is essential for progress, modernisation and openness to change”.

## Solutions exist

Professor Pickett said the picture in Europe was not all gloom and doom, as potential solutions are within our reach. Some examples are the redistribution of wealth through taxation, pre-distribution (smaller income differences to start with) as in Japan or Scandinavia, and international cooperation to fight tax evasion and fraud so as to redirect that capital towards social investment.



Kate Pickett

“This is a call for change,” she said. “We need a new egalitarian ideal with actions around taxation, inheritance and minimum wages. We also need to strengthen how we monitor progress towards a convergence of equality.” According to her, if we manage that we will achieve a three-way win. By promoting the reduction of poverty we can improve people’s quality of life and shift towards a sustainable economy while ensuring that solidarity and social purpose increases. Achieving a modern and cohesive policy is not just an imperative in terms of social justice and social cohesion – it is also a moral imperative.

## Transnationality, key to a more equal society?

According to the European Commission paper and Professor Pickett, the key to achieving this win-win-win situation could be down to more transnationality. Many European countries have already started along these paths: reforming their labour market and welfare systems by shifting taxation away from labour to reduce the cost of hiring and facilitating job creation; modernised pensions systems and education and lifelong learning systems; and maintaining a link between wages and productivity to sustain competitiveness and job creation.

“In so doing, Member States can look at established models across Europe that have been proven to work. ... Without a doubt, Europe is well placed to provide examples of solutions to societal challenges” and these best practices need to be shared around, said Professor Pickett.

### Further information

EC reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en.pdf)

## POLICY

# We can't eat asphalt

With the EU hoping to seal the deal on the post-Brexit draft budget before the European Parliamentary elections expected to be held in June 2019, there has been a flurry of meetings to discuss the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in recent months. In terms of social policy, one of the main opportunities for stakeholders to share their views on how to shape things to come took place in Sofia, Bulgaria at a conference entitled “Investing in people, the way forward” on 15 and 16 February. Here is a recap of the main messages of the plenary session.

The tone of the two-day conference was set by the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Tomislav Donchev<sup>1</sup>, who insisted that while talk of deinstitutionalisation, cohesion policy, digital skills and financial resources were essential, first and foremost the EU had to agree to stop investing in “roads and treatment plants” and instead focus on investing in people – “because we cannot eat asphalt”.

As he pointed out, “in ten years anyone not tech-savvy will have little chance of finding a job and will not be a full member of society”. This, he said, is a reality we must face and the EU needs to fill the gap between those who know and those who do not – and do this urgently because the gap is widening.

This call for “people before roads” was reiterated by a number of speakers including Michel Servoz, Director General of the European Commission’s DG EMPL,<sup>2</sup> who said the future of the ESF is about skills and employment. In fact his “skills, skills, skills” mantra became one of the buzzwords of the event.

“56% of German companies – just to mention one example – find it hard to hire people with the skills they need,” he said. He called on the EU to harness the opportunities for older workers to continue working. “We also need to capitalise on a more diverse workforce. In both cases, investment in skills and lifelong learning are fundamental,” he pointed out.

## Active inclusion is about poverty as well as work

Not everyone agreed with him however. Fintan Farrell, expert for the ESF Thematic Network on Inclusion,<sup>3</sup> and



Tomislav Donchev, Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria

Kelig Puyet, Director of the Social Platform,<sup>4</sup> said giving people skills was not enough. A holistic approach is needed to teach them to be resilient. Both Mr Farrell and Ms Puyet called for more ESF money to be allocated to fighting social exclusion and poverty, and ring-fenced. “When we talk about active inclusion, we should not just be referring to inclusion in the labour market,” said Ms Puyet. She insisted that addressing the persistence of poverty was essential because of its impact not just on social cohesion but also on the economic and political systems.

The representative of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC),<sup>5</sup> Thiébaud Weber called for more efforts on cohesion policy. “A Romanian worker earns €900 a month less than the equivalent German worker,” he said calling for more of the European Structural

1 <http://www.government.bg/special/en/Cabinet/CABINET-MEMBERS/TOMISLAV-DONCHEV-Deputy-Prime-Minister>

2 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=656>

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/forums/inclusion>

4 <http://www.socialplatform.org/>

5 <https://www.etuc.org/>

and Investment Funds (ESIFs) to go to the ESF. Mr Weber welcomed the Commission's proposal to double the funding for ERASMUS+, but insisted that more effort was also needed on adult learning and easier access to learning.

## Funding for transitions

Mr Weber also called for a 'European Transition Fund' to tackle the effects of the structural changes in the economy such as digitalisation, automation, decarbonisation and globalisation and to support workers facing these transitions.

Like others during the conference, Maxime Cerruti from BusinessEurope<sup>6</sup> insisted on the need to scale up people's digital skills to meet the changing dynamics in the economy and on the labour market. "This has to do with infrastructure: it's about equipment in schools, universities and in-house training by companies. We need to make sure digital learning is more widespread and make sure that the training will meet the needs of the workforce in a better way than it does now."

Speaking about the added value of the EU, Mr Cerruti insisted on the added value of transnationality.<sup>7</sup> Some countries have good policy responses in place and the recommendations drawn from them can help others through the exchange of best practices.

In general the conference saw strong support for more social innovation and partnerships at all levels in the

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.buinesseurope.eu/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/>

future ESF with the idea of potentially reviving EQUAL, which was a successful programme in 2001-2008. Ringfencing for both transnational partnerships and social innovation at local level in the next programming period was a common message.

## Changing world means changing youth

Youth unemployment and the brain drain affecting Eastern Europe was another hot topic. Jean Arthuis<sup>8</sup>, a French MEP heading the European Parliament's Budget Committee, said the Parliament had identified skills development and youth access to labour as top priorities for EU action. Apprentices should be given the same opportunity to travel and work around Europe as students, because this would give them more chances on the labour market. Yet there are no funding instruments to support apprentices' mobility. The European Parliament has launched a pilot project on this to boost EU-wide convergence on traineeships and apprenticeships "because they represent the high road towards the world of work," said Mr Arthuis. He also said simplification in accessing EU funds was another priority of the Parliament.

For Mr Donchev, however, youth unemployment is a topic the EU has been discussing for ages but one that cannot be dealt with via training alone. "We need to accept that millennials have a different view of life than we do. Some of them have never had a job and don't even want one. This issue will not be addressed by vocational training alone. We need to seriously discuss this problem," he said.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.jean-arthuis.eu/en/erasmus-pro-mission.html>

## Four principles for the next programming period

Michel Servoz, who was Director General for Employment at the European Commission at the time of the conference, explained during the first day of the conference that the European Commission was working on four principles for the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) post 2020.

1. Enhancing **synergies and complementarities** by reducing and eliminating overlaps, inefficiencies and fragmentation, which lead to low impact and visibility. "We see in the future an enhanced European Social Fund, an ESF+, which could consolidate the synergies of the different programmes currently addressing specific target groups". Those funds that share the mission of investing in people need to "talk to each other at programming and monitoring level, so as to increase their collec-

tive added value". This means better synergies between ESF, FEAD and ERASMUS+ even if the funds remain separate.

2. Ensuring **flexibility**, by programming for a shorter period of time than the current seven years and by making it easier to amend operational programmes;
3. Pursuing the **simplification** of programming and management, a collective challenge for all structural funds under shared management rules. More space for innovation. Significantly lowering the administrative burden for beneficiaries. Under the current programming period there is already a commitment to having 50% of the ESF implemented via Simplified Cost Options (SCOs)<sup>1</sup>. "We hope to have a much bigger share in the future," Mr Servoz said.
4. Supporting **transitions** – from education

to employment, between different jobs and careers, and from work to retirement.

Mr Servoz stated that equally important for the next programming period was strengthening the link with the structural reforms in the European Semester via conditionality so as to make the programmes more result-oriented. He added that in future he could see many opportunities to move towards a policy dialogue with Member States on better aligning funding with their priorities, and towards a system of payments based on delivery of outputs and results

<sup>1</sup> *Short guidance document on the use of SCO:*  
[https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Open-Calls/Documents/Calls%20P1%20-%20202015/Call%20-%20November%202015/SCOs\\_Guidance%20Document.pdf](https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Open-Calls/Documents/Calls%20P1%20-%20202015/Call%20-%20November%202015/SCOs_Guidance%20Document.pdf)



Andriana Sukova

Plamen Dimitrov from the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria<sup>9</sup> said work needs to start in the classroom and the “teachers’ mindset” needs to evolve. Teachers must become facilitators, he said. Detelina Smilkova from the Bulgarian Association for People Management<sup>10</sup> argued that what young people need first and foremost is analytical skills, since in today’s world “we are a click away from information. We need to teach young people how to work with data. This should lead to a change across the board. We no longer need to place emphasis on content but rather on equipping young people with the skills they need.” Mr Dimitrov agreed and called for some disruptive thinking. “We are still focused on the old agenda. We have not finalised our homework in terms of investing in people. We need a new agenda for teachers and students centred on digital skills and we need to work on it fast.”

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.knsb-bg.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bapm.bg/index.php?&lang=en>

## Everyone is a first-class citizen

Andriana Sukova, Director at DG EMPL, closed the conference by calling on everyone to find new ideas to deal with the changing world of today. “We are ready to take on board all constructive ideas on all possible aspects of the programming and the implementation of the post-2020 ESF to make sure the next legislative framework will be as consensual and effective as possible for stakeholders, Managing Authorities, beneficiaries and end users of the ESF,” she said. She put forward a good motto for the ESF of the future in order to keep the spirit of solidarity and partnership: “There are no second class Member States, no second class European citizens, no second class workers and no second class people”.

## POLICY

# Learning & skills TN ready to contribute to the digital economy debate

In an increasingly digital world, the fact that 11% of the EU’s labour force has no digital skills at all is a challenge that urgently needs to be addressed. While the European Commission is tackling this issue with, among others, the New Skills Agenda for Europe<sup>1</sup> and the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition<sup>2</sup> and coming up with some interesting initiatives, the ESF’s Learning and Skills thematic network (TN) is keen to bring the added value of its transnational knowledge to this vast and ambitious policy.

In its recently published policy paper *Being digitally competent in 2020 and beyond*,<sup>3</sup> the network lists what it can bring to the debate. As its expert Armelle Ledan puts it, “it is about helping to build an inclusive, knowledge-based digital economy”.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-381-EN-F1-1.PDF>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-jobs-coalition>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/being-digitally-competent-2020-and-beyond-ls-tn-policy-paper>

At policy level, for example, the network’s objective is to collect information on national and regional digital skills strategies, to improve the connection between policy orientations and funding support. Beyond the policy level, the network will add to existing knowledge by collecting interesting and inspiring ESF-funded projects on digital skills. In particular, it will assess digital skills practices that are badly documented. This will complement the work carried out by Member State experts under the Digital Skills Coalition Initiative,<sup>4</sup> a coalition of non-profit organisations, companies, learning providers and social partners, which is building a set of good digital skills initiatives which are not necessarily linked to the ESF.

By gathering information on concrete ways to address the digital challenge and how the ESF can help the process, the Learning and Skills network will bring invaluable information to practitioners and policy-makers as they prepare for the next programming period beyond 2020.

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-initiatives>

## POLICY

# Social inclusion: an objective in its own right

**To continue to support the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the future ESF must recognise social inclusion as an objective in its own right. It must maintain the focus on procedures and indicators that guarantee and measure the quality of programmes in terms of their impact on poverty and exclusion. These are some of the key messages of Fintan Farrell and Patrizia Brandellero, the two experts for the ESF Transnational Thematic Network on Inclusion.**

Under the ESF regulation, Member States are asked to earmark at least 20% of their ESF spending to “promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination”. While this target is a great achievement in itself, Member States tend to allocate this funding to the active inclusion priority, which is often interpreted very broadly, thus leaving an open question as to the extent to which it clearly targets populations experiencing poverty and exclusion.

“The EC frequently refers to the fact that almost 25% of the ESF budget is earmarked for social inclusion which is why it is particularly important to show that this 20 percentage is measured and that it is effective in achieving greater social inclusion and reducing poverty and reaching out to the most vulnerable populations’ said Mr Farrell, explaining that the research he and Ms Brandellero have carried out shows that there is “a need to improve indicators but also a need to strengthen the overall approach to social inclusion and how it is defined in the ESF rules.”

In the document recently shared with the European Commission, Mr Farrell and Ms Brandellero recommend that in the next programming period the ESF should have social inclusion as an objective in its own right without it being linked always to employment, as it is too often now. “Increasing levels of in-work poverty demonstrate that, while employment remains an important vehicle of social inclusion, it is not a panacea for social problems, nor is it enough to protect people from poverty”, Mr Farrell reminds us. For this to happen, it is argued that the legal base of the ESF must be changed and “must be broadened to include social protection and social assistance aspects that have recently been made more visible through the European Pillar of Social Rights, in their own right.” Earmarking of spending to social inclusion and fighting poverty should also be increased to a level of at least 30%.

The second important point the two experts are recommending is that in the next programming period the focus

remain on poverty through a poverty reduction target. This would not only ensure that the focus and ambition remain on fighting poverty and social exclusion, but it would also help to ensure that the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is aimed at fighting poverty and increasing equality.

## Beneficiaries’ perceptions matter

A considerable number of social indicators are already being used. So adding more social indicators or adjusting existing ones must be carefully considered. Ms Brandellero and Mr Farrell would nonetheless like to see the list common indicators include new indicators that also measure the perception of the quality of project outcomes from the point of view of the end beneficiaries of the programmes. Currently there are none, yet – as they point out – it is essential to have an indicator that measures how beneficiaries perceive and value the quality of the interventions they have participated in. “What beneficiaries have to say should have an influence on how programmes are developed,” says Mr Farrell, who insisted that the overall indicators should be adjusted so the collection of this essential additional information can be added while the overall challenge be not too burdensome on Managing Authorities.

### Further information

ESF Transnational Thematic Network on Inclusion:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/forums/inclusion>

The report written by Fintan Farrell and Patrizia Brandellero, ESF Thematic Experts on Inclusion can be found here:

[https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot\\_download/2015/1679](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/2015/1679)

## POLICY

# Bringing partnership to life

The Partnership Thematic Network has reviewed the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, and concludes with a set of recommendations to bring partnership to life. Its expert, Leda Stott, reports.



The ESF Thematic Network on Partnership (PTN) has just completed a review of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP). The main aims of the review were to assess the usefulness of the ECCP, learn more about the challenges encountered in its implementation, and develop recommendations to embed the partnership principle into the next European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programming period. Data was gathered from relevant reports, feedback from members of other transnational Thematic Networks and the ESIF Structured Dialogue<sup>1</sup> process, and from a survey conducted amongst European Social Fund (ESF) Programme Monitoring Committees.

The information received confirms that the partnership principle is viewed as essential to the work of the ESF and other funds, because it strengthens both coordinated cross-sector action to address development challenges and broad participation in decision-making. However, findings also show that while a number of Managing Authorities have successfully promoted partnership, others have faced a range of problems in implementing it. First, there are challenges in linking policy with practice. Secondly, the process of partnering has its difficulties, particularly because partners underestimate the amount of time and resources they need to invest in order to collaborate effectively. As a result, the application of the ECCP has frequently resulted in box-ticking efforts that seek merely to comply with the regulations.

## Focus on quality of partnership

To implement the partnership principle more deeply, an improved balance between compliance with rules and flexibility to generate partnership solutions in specific contexts is needed. While there is ongoing debate about the extent to which implementation of the ECCP should be mandatory, our findings confirm the need for a heightened focus on the quality of implementation of the partnership principle, with better inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives throughout programme cycles. To do this, review participants suggest that the ECCP's partnership principles should be made more robust with emphasis on:

- Encouraging greater representativeness and diversity

in partner selection and clear procedures for including end users, 'non traditional' and local partners;

- Promoting **transparency and accessibility** in decision-making processes with stronger guidance around timeframes, expectations and opportunities for partner input;
- Ensuring ongoing involvement in all phases of the programme cycle and concerted efforts to better integrate local voices through approaches such as Community-led Local Development (CLLD);
- Using technical assistance and other relevant means to provide **partnership skills training** for all stakeholders and strengthen the institutional capacity of those unable to contribute effectively to ESIF programmes and projects due to lack of resources, skills, confidence or adequate time;
- Improving review and assessment processes through more proactive stakeholder involvement and European Commission representation in Monitoring Committees;
- Reinforcing the responsibility of all stakeholders to engage in exchange and learning about partnership through more dynamic **linkages** within, between and across multiple levels and funds, with a focus on using the knowledge obtained to inform future developments.

The Partnership network recommends that a reinvigorated ECCP with an emphasis on 'doing more partnership better' should be developed and made available in good time so that its guidance can be fully integrated in preparations for the next programming period. As well as reinforcing the added value of working in partnership, the revised ECCP should include meaningful examples of how partnership works in practice from both programme and project perspectives in different contexts.

### Further information

A report on initial findings and recommendations from the ECCP Review can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/materials-generated-network>

A detailed report will be available in June 2018.

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/communication/structured-dialogue-with-partners/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/communication/structured-dialogue-with-partners/)

## THEMES

# Family-based care: the only way forward

**Investing in people means a number of things, but investing in deinstitutionalisation is without question the best solution all round. Quite apart from bringing better outcomes for children it is also proving to be a solution that makes economic sense. We should unlock the money tied up in the institutional system and redirect it towards long-term sustainable approaches for children and young people.**

Alex Christopoulos of Lumos, a keynote speaker at the recent Investing in people – the way forward conference in Sofia<sup>1</sup> welcomed the “landmark decision” taken by the European Commission in 2013 to try and consign institutionalisation to history<sup>2</sup>. As he pointed out, “the evidence is clear that growing up in institutionalised care, torn from family and community, isolated and segregated, results in children that have severely damaged life chances and cannot live up to their potential.” In comparison, family-based care allows children to have a happier childhood and form strong bonds with their carers. While Mr Christopoulos welcomed the “tremendous achievements” that have been accomplished in a short period of time, he insisted that “a lot still needs to be done” and community-based services must be strengthened.

## Deinstitutionalisation makes economic as well as social sense

Research shows that family-based care not only yields better lives for children but also, through economies of scale, is also cheaper than institutional care.

The speaker insisted that we need to think how EU money can support children and the most vulnerable, and make better use of that money. He regretted the “perverse situation” where some EU funding goes to deinstitutionalisation while the rest goes to reinforcing institutional care and called on Member States to give priority to community-based services. “With sparse resources we cannot have funds fighting each other. We must have coherence across EU funds to prioritise family-based care.”

Mr Christopoulos said the push towards deinstitutionalisation should be a horizontal priority cutting across all EU policies. While he recognised that emerging trends have put pressure on childcare and protection systems across the EU, he insisted that all children have the same rights



Alex Christopoulos, Deputy Chief Executive, Lumos

“In the Czech Republic, for every single child who is kept in an institution we could be supporting 30 children to live in their family and community.”

Alex Christopoulos

“regardless of where they are from” – and that includes migrant children. “We cannot have parallel systems of care. We cannot have migrant children living in institutions when we have decided that that this type of care is not good for national children. We need to use the money channelled into parallel systems to be used in the national systems to provide better care for all children.”

### Further information

Lumos: <https://www.wearelumos.org/>

European Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care (EEG): <https://deinstitutionalisation.com/>

<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=325&eventId=1287&furtherEvents=yes>

<sup>2</sup> <http://deinstitutionalisationguide.eu>

## GRASSROOTS

## So Stay: a hotel with a (social) conscience

**Eddy Adams, Expert for the ESF Youth Employment Thematic Network, reports from the recent meeting in Gdańsk on the city's innovative approach to supporting young care-leavers.**

**A**cross Europe, many young people struggle to make the transition to independent adult life. Madga (26) is one of the lucky ones. A gastronomy manager in a busy Gdańsk hotel, she is about to get married and she and her husband-to-be are doing up an apartment where they will start their life together.

In most parts of Europe, prospects for young people like Magda are bleak. That is because she spent her childhood in the care of public services, looked after by the local authority, as her parents were unable to care for her. In many countries, the life chances of these young people are poor. Eurofound research<sup>1</sup> shows that they are a consistent sub-group within the overall NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures in Europe.

### From yoyo transition to deinstitutionalisation

Data is patchy across the EU but, for example in England, recent data from the Department for Education

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/labour-market-social-policies/neets-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-characteristics-costs-and-policy>

*Youth Employment Thematic Network at So Stay, Gdańsk*



show that 40% of care-leavers aged 19-21 are NEETs, compared to around 13% of those in the general population. EU-level research<sup>2</sup> shows that only 8% of care-leavers proceed to higher education (the average rate is five times higher) and that many young care-leavers opt for short-cycle occupational training in order to become economically independent as soon as they can. Danish researchers taking part in the study refer to the 'yoyo transition' process for many in this group, who repeatedly enrol and drop out of training courses.

In Poland, the Social Innovation Foundation estimates that 46% of care-leavers became unemployed on leaving education. Fortunately for Magda and others like her, recent developments have worked in their favour, in particular Poland's policy commitment to deinstitutionalisation. In cities like Gdańsk, this has encouraged a shift away from large orphanages and care homes to smaller, more manageable units. In Magda's case, this meant spending her early adulthood in a 'neighbourly house' with a small group of other children and a 'guide'. Instead of sleeping in a bunk-bed in a large dormitory, she had an upbringing more similar to children in family homes. It also meant that, instead of a constant churn of social support staff, she was able to form strong bonds with her carers, who were there to provide support on all the issues teenagers need help with.

One of those is trying to work out how you're going to earn a living and – more fundamentally – what you're interested in and good at. Magda was lucky again here. Not only because she had an engaged and supportive adult to speak to but also because the social innovation foundation that ran the neighbourly house had branched out into other sectors. One of these is a social enterprise, a charming café set within a well-known green space in the city. Magda started working there as a waitress and soon realised she enjoyed working with people – and that she had an interest in food.

<sup>2</sup> See the final report of the YIPPEE project : [http://www.kineo.nu/skolfam/moodle/pluginfile.php/35/mod\\_resource/content/1/Final%20Report%20of%20the%20YIPPEE%20Project%20-%20WP12%20Mar11.pdf](http://www.kineo.nu/skolfam/moodle/pluginfile.php/35/mod_resource/content/1/Final%20Report%20of%20the%20YIPPEE%20Project%20-%20WP12%20Mar11.pdf)

## Giving out of care youth a chance

Fast forward to 2018 and we already know about Magda's exciting life plans. She has graduated from college and now works at So Stay,<sup>3</sup> a socially responsible hotel which employs young people leaving care. If they are interested, they can dip their toe in the water by starting as volunteers. An expanding sector in the city, hospitality and its related branches offers the chance to learn and grow. Magda is a good example of this. Since joining she has taken her gastronomy qualifications and has recently been promoted to a management position.

Magda's is an impressive story. But so is that of So Stay and its parent foundation. The hotel is the result of a sophisticated partnership model between the public, private and social enterprise sectors. Gdańsk City authority, with its strong and visionary commitment to social innovation and to the social economy sector, enabled the whole project to happen, using a combina-

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sostayhotel.pl/en/>

tion of ERDF, ESF, city authority and third-party funds. Many cities could learn from what has been achieved here, and the organisation's recognition as an UR-BACT<sup>4</sup> Good Practice, has helped raise its visibility. That award is well-earned.

Young people who are in the care of the state deserve the best chance in life, given the poor hand they have been dealt. But this happens too rarely. The usual pattern is one where they struggle to avoid the disadvantages bequeathed them by their parents. Happily, Magda's story is not unique – in Gdańsk at least – thanks to the vision, commitment and effective partnership at work in her city. Why not drop by and admire their work sometime? So Stay offers the same warm welcome to guests as it does to its new staff.

<sup>4</sup> <http://urbact.eu/so-stay-hotel>

## GRASSROOTS

# The EMIN bus: a dream come true for inclusion expert

**The EMIN bus brainchild of the Inclusion Thematic Network expert Fintan Farrell, came to life last month and is already gaining support across Europe with its call for Guaranteed Minimum Income schemes and its message that “nobody deserves less, everybody benefits”. Marianne Geater rode on the first leg of the tour.**

**M**inimum income schemes provide a safety net for people, whether in or out of work, who have insufficient means and are not eligible for social insurance payments or whose entitlements to these have expired. They facilitate integration and cohesion, particularly when people are undergoing transitions in their working life. They are important because almost 119 million people, or 23.7% of the EU population, are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>1</sup>

The European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) is campaigning for Guaranteed Minimum Income schemes across Europe. They should be easily accessible for everybody who needs them, for as long as they need them, enough to live a life in dignity and

fully participate in society and adapted to the cost of living in every European country.

*Fintan Farrell, Marianne Thyssen and two experts by experience at the launch ceremony*



<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Income\\_distribution\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Income_distribution_statistics)  
(Most recent available data 2015)

EMIN has organised a road trip in which two buses will visit 32 countries during 64 days and take part in some 120 events programmes involving hundreds of volunteers. The idea of the bus is to meet “normal” Europeans outside the ‘Brussels bubble’ to explain and discuss the importance of introducing adequate, accessible and enabling minimum income schemes across the EU. The bus, however, is not just about convincing people, it is also about listening to them, magnifying their stories and making the link between people and the EU institutions.

“I’ve been dreaming about today for a long time,” said Mr Farrell at the launch event at the European Parliament in Brussels on 24 April. “The quality of minimum income schemes across Europe is very different from one country to the next. Every country needs improvement. This initiative is about showing people the Europe they want, giving people hope for a different Europe, where everyone can have access to a good life.”

Mr Farrell, who is the expert for the ESF Thematic Network on Inclusion, has organised the tour almost single-handedly. He got his inspiration for the EMIN bus from the Ekhta Parishad<sup>2</sup> movement in India and from Nuns on the Bus.<sup>3</sup>

### Everyone should benefit from Europe’s recovery

Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, who was present at the event, said her ambition was “for everyone in Europe to benefit from the economic recovery”. Mrs Thyssen insisted she “warmly supported this project which brings the message across Europe that fighting poverty and exclusion is the only way forward”.

The bus also has the backing of faith leaders and the European Parliament. Mairead McGuinness, Vice-President of the Parliament, said we should not see guaranteed minimum income schemes as charity. “The world will work better if we are all looked after.” Like Professors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, Mrs McGuinness pointed out that inequalities get in the way of economic growth and more equal societies almost always do better than others.

<sup>2</sup> The Ekhta Parishad organisation is a peaceful movement of landless peasants in India inspired by the example set by Mahatma Gandhi and his ideal of a nation of self-sufficient villages. Nuns on the Bus is a Catholic advocacy group in the US committed to social justice. Their name comes from the fact that they tour the country on a bus

<sup>3</sup> Nuns on the Bus is a Catholic advocacy group in the US committed to social justice. Their name comes from the fact that they tour the country on a bus

### Finding an equilibrium between ambition and implementation

One of the first places the buses stopped was at the Council of Europe (CoE) in Strasbourg, due to the importance the organisers attach to the European Social Charter.<sup>4</sup> Volunteers on the bus had inspiring exchanges with the Council of Europe’s Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini-Draconi, Régis Brillat, Head of the Department of the European Social Charter, and other representatives from the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General’s private office, who all welcomed the initiative.

“ *This initiative is a wonderful opportunity to give life to important instruments like the European Social Charter and the European Pillar of Social Rights.* ”

– Gabriella Battaini-Draconi,  
Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe

Mr Brillat welcomed the ambition of the EMIN proposals but pointed that some might be difficult to achieve. He went on to say that as usual the issue is finding a balance between ambition and implementation. “It has been difficult to place the charter at the heart of the Council of Europe. We have managed to some extent but not as much as we would have liked.” He did, however, express hope that collaboration with the European Commission’s DG EMPL would bring positive changes in terms of social justice and a more social Europe.

Mrs Battaini-Draconi and the EMIN bus representatives also discussed the link with the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the role the Council of Europe and the European Commission could play in making real progress in realising adequate accessible minimum income schemes. Both parties stressed the need for consensus on definitions of ‘adequacy, accessibility and enabling’ and the need for a stronger framework than only ‘soft law’, namely a European Framework Directive.

### Further information

EMIN bus tour daily updates: [www.eminbus.eu](http://www.eminbus.eu)

Petition accompanying the bus journey:  
<https://you.wemove.eu/campaigns/Guaranteed-Minimum-Income-Scheme>

The EMIN network: <https://emin-eu.net/>

## PROCESS

# ‘Speed-dating’ start of transnational projects

**The first ever Partner Search Forum organised by the ESF Transnational Platform was a great success. The idea behind the Forum was to help the five countries that have launched their 2018 calls for transnational projects find transnational partners. Aleksandra Kowalska, the ESF Transnational Platform’s Impact Task Force Co-ordinator tells us more.**

Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Poland and Sweden have launched their 2018 calls for transnational projects<sup>1</sup> within the Common Framework<sup>2</sup> and project promoters have until 11th May to apply for funding in their Member States.

The ESF Transnational Platform, together with the Polish Ministry of Investment and Development, decided to help project promoters from these countries to find transnational partners by organising a Partner Search Forum on 22-23rd March in Warsaw.

With over 100 participants from 64 organisations from the 5 countries mentioned above and Lithuania, representatives from the European Commission and the ESF Managing Authorities issuing calls for transnational projects, the meeting according to participants’ evaluations turned out to be very useful for triggering transnational cooperation. The meeting gave participants the opportunity to meet ‘unusual suspects’ and come up with interesting project ideas. *“It’s extremely useful to meet all these organisations from different countries in person. We have already found some potential matches with organisations we wouldn’t reach otherwise.”* – said a participant from Sweden. Some of the ideas discussed concerned virtual reality vocational training, enhancing IT skills of women, new system of entrepreneurial training, informal caregivers with migrant roots and many more, which are all available to be viewed on the ESF partner search database<sup>3</sup>. The participants first got to know each other during a ‘speed dating’ exercise and continued their discussions around thematic tables focusing on particular interests such as: migrants, entrepreneurs, youth, vulnerable groups (including people with disabilities, elderly people) and new care services,



Participants in thematic tables

unemployed and job-seekers, learning & skills, gender equality, diversity management and work-life balance.

The second day was devoted to one-to-one sessions, during which the pre-matched project promoters could discuss the detail of their common project ideas following the rationale of the Transnational Cooperation Agreement, which will be attached to their applications for funding.

## Further information

All presentations and minutes from the meeting can be found on our website: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/news-partner-search-forum-warsaw>

In order to enhance the capacity of Member States to launch transnational calls and mainstream the impact of transnational activities, the ESF Transnational Platform has established an Impact Task Force. To find out more go to: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/nutshell-impact-task-force>

1 [https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/partners-search/Glob-al%20call?f%5B0%5D=bundle%3Aesf\\_tnc\\_call\\_for\\_project](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/partners-search/Glob-al%20call?f%5B0%5D=bundle%3Aesf_tnc_call_for_project)

2 The Common Framework (CF) is one of the ways of implementing transnational cooperation within ESF 2014-2020 on the basis of common themes. As opposed to the Flexible Approach, under the CF Member States benefit from the help of the ESF Transnational Platform, with among others the online partner search database

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/partners-search>

## PROCESS

# For innovation, we need EQUAL+

Today, Europe faces new challenges like as digitisation, demography, migration and climate change. The EU's Member States need a mechanism through which their employment and social policy-makers and practitioners can learn from each other and pilot new approaches. A model for this exists in the form of EQUAL – and with new simplified rules could work again in the future.

Workshop 5 at the Sofia conference – *Learning and working beyond borders. The Equal experience: from experimentation to social innovation* – investigated the EQUAL<sup>1</sup> programme, which from 2002-2008 engaged 20,000 organisations in innovation through transnational cooperation. As participants heard from Toby Johnson,<sup>2</sup> who was EQUAL's social economy expert, the programme was cleverly designed to build partnerships within countries – e.g. between local authorities, research institutions and co-operatives – which then carried out projects with partners abroad, to test new solutions to employment and social problems. There was also an obligatory 'mainstreaming' phase to embed the results in policy and practice.

So EQUAL was not only about exchange between countries – It also built the capacity to innovate and think about innovation within Member States.

There is massive grassroots demand for transnational cooperation as well, as is shown by the over-subscription for the ESF-Transnational Platform's Partner Search Forum<sup>3</sup> on 22-23 March 2018.

1 [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal\\_consolidated/](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/)  
2 Presentation at: <https://www.slideshare.net/TobyJ/equal-from-experimentation-to-innovation-88806707>  
3 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/six-countries-launch-2018-co-ordinated-call>



### EQUAL - Factors of good design

- Critical mass
- Universal access
- Uniform systems - single database
- European Thematic Groups
- Expert support
- Build capacity of national systems
- Obligatory mainstreaming

## Simplification – the answer to everything?

Asked whether EQUAL was too complicated, Mr Johnson replied that the ESF is not about spending money, it is about spending money *intelligently*. It is precisely the methodological support, analysis and dissemination that EQUAL ensured that made the difference. And it did make a difference: The final evaluation<sup>4</sup>

4 [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal\\_consolidated/about/evaluation.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/about/evaluation.html)

## Three recommendations

The workshop participants made the following key recommendations to the Member States and Commission in designing transnationality in the next programming period:

1. In the next programming period, **ring-fence a percentage** for social innovation and transnationality, which should be obligatory for all Member States;
2. As the ESF is no longer just a labour market funding instrument but also a social policy one, do not limit measurement to inclusion in the labour market, but also **measure intermediate steps**, especially for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Some
3. Avoid administrative rules and financial requirements becoming a straitjacket that hinders social experimentation and innovation. Allow thinking and implementing outside the box, by also allowing the funding of **integrated policy approaches**. with only one fund (as was possible within EQUAL), as submission of projects with different funds is very complex.

suitable indicators might be people raised out of poverty, people engaged in job search, education or training, qualifications gained, improved awareness and higher institutional capacity;

found that many countries had been enabled to introduce new policies and programmes, and countless partnerships built during EQUAL are still alive and kicking today. One key EU-level outcome was the invention of a policy on inclusive entrepreneurship (see COPIE<sup>5</sup>), which simply did not exist before.

The simplified cost options that have been developed in the last decade could be used to recreate an 'EQUAL+' programme for the 2020-2026 period, Mr

<sup>5</sup> <http://cop-ie.eu/>

Johnson said. Using lump sums and standard costs cuts out much of the paperwork and allows managers to concentrate on quality and results. Flanders does this,<sup>6</sup> preserving the spirit of EQUAL.

<sup>6</sup> In the Flemish transnational calls, the preparatory phase is supported by a lump sum of €15,000, which is paid on production of a satisfactory report on desk research and partner search. The implementation and dissemination phases are paid on the basis of a single unit cost: staff payroll costs + 40% for overhead costs. Further detail at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/two-strange-things-about-flemish-transnational-call>

## PROCESS

# Finland and Flanders focus on youth, migrants, lifelong learning and SMEs in their transnational co-ordinated call for proposals

**43 transnational projects have been selected by the four Managing Authorities (Finland, Flanders, Poland and Sweden) that published calls for proposals under the Common Framework in 2016. We reported on the Polish and Swedish projects in the last ESF Transnationality News. We now present a summary of the 25 Finnish and Flemish projects.**



### Finland – rural youth and migrants

Finland selected 9 projects focused primarily on helping young people living in rural area and migrants to find a job.

The **Effective Monitoring**<sup>1</sup> project, carried out in with Polish and Swedish partners, aims to develop and implement a mentoring model to support disadvantaged students aged 15+ at risk of early school-leaving. Finland will focus on identifying effective methods for training teachers, guidance counsellors and specialists to encourage those youths to stay in school or, failing that, to help them shift successfully into work.

Research shows that the first six months after graduation are critical for young people looking for a job.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-318>

If they do not find a job within that period they run the risk of being unemployed for a long time. Currently the majority of vocational education providers do not offer employment services for graduates. With its Polish partner, the **Job Navigator for VET Graduates**<sup>2</sup> project will set up a service (including a digital one) to help these providers broaden their services to all young vocational graduates looking for a job. The project will also develop a common coaching framework for teachers and career counsellors to better advise young people still in education and just about to graduate.

In the **social innovations and employment** through public procurement<sup>3</sup> project, Finnish and Swedish partners work towards supporting employment through public procurement and boosting opportunities for work-shadowing and mentoring. In Finland, two pilot projects will be set up in Helsinki and Vantaa to test

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-248>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-211>

new ways to include employment criteria in public procurement. Work placements, apprenticeships and internship placements for people far from the labour market will also be created. The project will also bring existing service models to new areas close to youths living in rural areas and strengthen their relation to local needs as well as supporting entrepreneurship.

Youth unemployment is high all over Europe, but particular attention needs to be given to NEETs living in sparsely populated regions – not just in terms of jobs and education but also to help them reach public services and the support system geared towards them. The Finnish and Slovenian partners in the **digital applications in youth employment services** project<sup>4</sup> will test different digital and gaming methods to establish which ones are best to motivate and engage those youths to develop their life skills, recognise their strengths and build their futures. Both short-term and long-term individual and group support measures will be developed and tested. The project will also support entrepreneurship of young people living in remote areas by developing a method of online start-up centres.

The **MonteMigri**<sup>5</sup> project, working with partners from Belgium, Sweden and Germany, aims to develop two types of mentoring models to support migrant students in their studies and personal lives in their new host country. In Finland, the first model targets Finnish students looking to work in social services, nursing or youth and leisure services, and aims to provide them with multiculturalism and mentoring skills. The second model will guide and supports migrant students to prevent drop-outs.

The **AboaNova** (supporting the inclusion of immigrants and their transition to education and labour market)<sup>6</sup> project, a collaborative effort between Swedish and Belgian partners, is about the acculturation of migrants and their speedy transition into education, working life or entrepreneurship. The Finnish side of the project targets both recent immigrants and staff working in organisations serving them. The project will develop new models of language training to help migrants transfer more quickly from language training to other forms of education or working life.

The Belgo-Polish **Time2Grow project**<sup>7</sup> (**prevention of burnout among care workers employed by small-sized healthcare providers in Finland**), addresses the fact that with an ageing population and a rise in mental health issues, the pressure on healthcare providers to be ever more efficient and productive is

increasing. This can lead to burnout. In Finland, the project is called **Kymenlaakso**. It focuses on small-sized healthcare providers to improve work organisation taking into account both productivity and wellbeing, better management of workplace stress and better management of hierarchies and ways of interacting.

The objective of the Finnish-Belgian **SMErec (new generation recruitment skills for SMEs and workforce)**<sup>8</sup> project is to help SMEs with their human resources strategies. Providing SMEs with innovative science-based and practice-based indicators and tools for their recruitment process should ensure they recruit the right employees and thereby become more competitive. This unique new solution should not only speed up the integration of highly educated and skilled labour into the workforce but will also lead to cost savings. Currently the cost of unsuccessful recruitments, especially for SMEs, can make up 30% of an employee's annual salary.

Finland's detention system is increasingly looking at coaching prisoners towards education and working life. The system, however, finds it hard to reach the offenders at the right time to offer them a long enough integrated support by a multi-professional team. The **VIERTO (creating sustainable paths from detention to working life and social inclusion)**<sup>9</sup> project aims to develop an integrated model combining help on social welfare, housing and working life to ex-offenders with coaching and awareness-raising for potential employers. The project will also investigate alternative financing sources such as social impact bonds, cooperatives and different national employment initiatives.



**Flanders – lifelong learning, migrant integration and entrepreneurship**

The 16 projects selected for this call focus on lifelong learning, migrant integration and entrepreneurship. Other topics include fighting frailty among the elderly through better food, fighting LGBT discrimination in the workplace, and helping SMEs be more competitive.

The **All Inclusive@work**<sup>10</sup> project, which brings together partners from Bulgaria, Finland and the Netherlands, is about finding creative solutions to increase the employment rate for the over-50s and vulnerable groups such as refugees or unskilled job seekers, and then integrating them into the regular labour market

4 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-246>

5 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-52>

6 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-278>

7 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-183>

8 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-804>

9 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-343>

10 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-122>

rather than in the social economy sector. A complete, coherent and systematic toolbox will be developed to help achieve this. Particular attention is given to job carving/job crafting (i.e. the process of modifying or reshaping existing jobs or gathering a combination of tasks) and encouraging inclusive entrepreneurship.

Malnourishment among the elderly population is an important area of concern. Age-related changes in taste, smell, and food intake has been proven to contribute to changing eating patterns which increase the risk of malnutrition among older citizens across Europe. The Transnational Training Programs **Gastrologic Sciences and Primary Food Care** project<sup>11</sup> is about fighting frailty among the elderly through better food. With its Italian partner the project will endeavour to develop a training programme for chefs and kitchen staff while also increasing professional caregivers' awareness of this issue.

The **Lifelong learning through partnership** project<sup>12</sup> will examine how cooperation is organised between government and intermediate actors (sectors, clusters or other associations of employers or employees) in those EU countries that are at the vanguard of lifelong learning and how competence policy is combined with innovation. The partners, from Bulgaria, Sweden, the Netherlands, Greece and Italy, will also identify which foreign good practices of cooperation in lifelong learning and competence policy are transferable to their national policy context.

**Towards an innovative, pragmatic and science-based selection methodology for SMEs**<sup>13</sup> is a project aimed at helping SMEs become more efficient in their HR selection process. Employees are an important key to success, yet SMEs often have little expertise when it comes to selecting new employees. The project will develop an innovative and pragmatic application, called 'Selectionbuddy', and an accompanying service package for SMEs. International partners involved in this project come from the Netherlands, Finland and Germany.

The **Learning Business Parks in Flanders**<sup>14</sup> project focuses on lifelong learning. Along with its Polish partner the Flemings will develop a varied training offer, tailor-made for employees of SMEs in business parks. It will also map the competences, talents and knowledge of that specific workforce to get a better view of these employees' employability and motivation. The next step will be to develop an employability matrix as a starting point for the promotion of internal and external mobility of employees.

Companies are increasingly seeking new ways to gain a competitive advantage. An increasingly popular and effective strategy is intrapreneurship i.e. encouraging employees to take business initiatives within their organisations. The **Entrepreneurship (stimulating intrapreneurship – a transnational exploration)**<sup>15</sup> project will investigate how employees can be stimulated to be more intrapreneurial and how managers can help. A toolbox incorporating this information and made up of three components will be created: one for the (possible) intrapreneurs, one for managers and one for organisations / HR staff.

The **REWIND (Reintegration of inmates and ex-offenders through employment and housing in an inclusive and sustainable manner)** project,<sup>16</sup> which brings together Flemish and Finnish partners, aims to build a bridge between inmates and employers by challenging misconceptions about inmates and ex-offenders. On the Belgian side the focus will be on helping employers in the construction and agricultural sectors to recruit and train ex-offenders, while also helping the ex-offenders with housing and administrative tasks. The project will also investigate alternative financing sources.

The **MeMoRe (mentoring Refugees – towards integration on the European labour market)** project<sup>17</sup> addresses the challenge of integrating recently arrived migrants into the labour market. To help with this the partners from Flanders, Finland, Germany and Sweden will develop a sustainable transnational mentoring model that can be applied to the local or national setting.

## Factories of the Future

The **EPIC Network Project (SSIWFT)** project<sup>18</sup> seeks to strengthen employee participation in industrial innovation processes by bringing together partners with very different experiences from Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany and Poland. Industrial companies need to develop and integrate innovative working processes, digital technologies and new models of work organisation in order to survive. These changes in the so-called Factories of the Future (FOTF) have an impact on the role and position of employees. The project will investigate how the knowledge and experience of employees can influence the process, how the development of skills can be structurally embedded in the management of FOTFs and how the organisational structure of companies can be aligned with the changing needs and production methods.

11 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-842>

12 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-89>

13 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-904>

14 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-156>

15 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-83>

16 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-82>

17 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-52>

18 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-74>

The **transition to and integration at new workplace for LGBT** project<sup>19</sup> fights discrimination against gender non-conforming and LGBT individuals both in the workplace and on the labour market. The Belgian, Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch and German partners will investigate existing best practices and develop a methodology to improve competence management, which often does not function beyond gender stereotypes and general stereotypes towards LGBT people. They will also fight institutional barriers.

The Service user involvement in education and labour market<sup>20</sup> project is about challenging the imbalance of power structures that cause and perpetuate exclusion and discrimination on the labour market for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The partners from Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands will give special attention to developing service user involvement in bachelor courses (especially in social work education) to increase the competences of social professionals when dealing with an increasingly diverse group of clients with complex problems.

Across Europe there appear to be more NEETs in big cities than in rural areas. The **implementation of dual learning in big cities as a means against youth unemployment**<sup>21</sup> project will encourage Vocational Education & Training (VET) among these youths in Flanders, Germany and Poland. In these courses many of the vocational competences are learnt "on the job" (dual learning) which has advantages for both young people and employers.

Since 2015 Europe has seen a great influx of young asylum seekers (unaccompanied or separated minors – UASMs), who find it hard to integrate in their host country both socially and economically. The **UASM-coach** project<sup>22</sup> will tackle the lack of guidance for UASMs (with a specific focus on socio-economic integration of UASMs 16+) through coaching and mentoring to boost the youngsters' social and language skills and also their flexibility, ambition, creativity, enthusiasm and job-hunting skills. The partners in this project come from the Netherlands and Germany.

The **Suburb start up guide**<sup>23</sup> project is a Flemish-Spanish partnership to develop an innovative coaching programme for multicultural entrepreneurial candidates of all ages, who are living in old commercial suburbs and are in need of a springboard to start a business in the food, design, art, labs, stage or café disciplines. The objective is two-fold: to maximise the chances of success of these entrepreneurs and to

<sup>19</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-58>

<sup>20</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-1180>

<sup>21</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-55>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-174>

<sup>23</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-80>

improve the social cohesion and urban image of the suburb.

The **BSR (Integrate now knowledge platform on integration of newly arrived refugees)**<sup>24</sup> project aims to smooth the integration process of newly arrived refugees and other migrants and develop and test methods and systems that facilitate this process. One of the ways to achieve will be by setting up a platform to transfer the knowledge and best practices of seven countries.

The objective of the Belgo-Polish **LIFT (Leaning in facilitated teams)** project<sup>25</sup> is to develop, test and implement new collaborative learning solutions through increasing access to various forms of learning throughout the employee's working life. The approach used is one of collaborative learning to increase social interaction between employees. Particular attention will be paid to the diversity of these teams, especially those aged 50+.

In the **Professional activation through the worker's skills adaptation to employers needs using big data technology** project, Polish, Finnish and Belgian partners address the fact that training courses do not always successfully tackle the skills mismatches or the real-time needs of the labour market. The common interest of the project is to create a tool, based on the big data concept, that will collect information on the demand for particular skills and abilities from advertising websites in real time. The tool will analyse all ads on a weekly basis and produce descriptive statistics on the recent demands for skills and abilities.

<sup>24</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-190>

<sup>25</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/TPI-62>

## Further information

The 2016 calls can be found at:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/partners-search/?f%5B0%5D=bundle%3Aesf\\_tnc\\_call\\_for\\_project](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/partners-search/?f%5B0%5D=bundle%3Aesf_tnc_call_for_project)

The summary of the Polish and Swedish projects can be found at:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/sweden-and-poland-focus-youth-and-lifelong-learning-their-transnational-co-ordinated-call>

## TOOLS

# New Facebook page on transnational partner search

**A new Facebook page offers a platform for anyone interested in searching for international partners and discussing transnational issues.**

**T**uomi-Tuulia Ervasti, who works as Development Specialist for the Finnish town of Pudasjärvi near the arctic circle, has created a Facebook page to make it easier for project promoters to find transnational partners.

Entitled “ESF Transnationality”, the page is an informal effort to bring together all those interested in the transnational aspects of the European Social Fund (ESF). It boosts their chances of finding partners and offers the possibility to discuss all matters relating to transnationality.

Ms Ervasti, who is responsible for applying for ESF funding for her municipality, explained that the idea of creating the page came after an information session on how to apply for ESF transnational funding.

“It was organised as a video conference here in Finland in cooperation with a few of the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) and there were people from different parts of Finland present. At some stage, I thought that if we were to find partners even from Finland, we should somehow be able to find each other in an easy way”. This is how the idea came up of using social media, a communication channel little used until now in this field. With the backing of Mika Villa who had organised the session, Ms Ervasti set up the page there and then and most participants joined immediately. The idea is now to “spread the word about this group to people from other EU countries interested in participating in ESF transnational projects and who are trying to find partners too”.

“Social media give us a chance to easily reach people and gives us a sense of togetherness even though most of us have never met each other. We are all interested in ESF transnational funding,” said Ms Ervasti. She hopes the group will grow and help project promoters find partners as soon as possible. “I’m also hoping



that this group will stay alive after this funding application period ends and we’ll continue finding partners for other projects too”.

## Further information

For more information or to join the group, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/319839078521079/>

For more information on Finland’s national network on transnational cooperation: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/finlands-national-network-transnational-co-operation>

For more information on Finland’s open call for projects concerning transnational cooperation: [https://rakennerahastot.fi/web/en/home/-/asset\\_publisher/vf5NuuAgOaNS/blog/european-social-fund-call-for-projects-concerning-transnational-cooperation/maximized](https://rakennerahastot.fi/web/en/home/-/asset_publisher/vf5NuuAgOaNS/blog/european-social-fund-call-for-projects-concerning-transnational-cooperation/maximized)

## Database by video

Did you know there is a helpful online video guide that will help project promoters find their way round the Partner Search Database? Watch Where is my Project, TCA or Organisation? at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/tips-edit-where-my-project-tca-or-organisation>

## EVENT

# From ESF to ESF+: from employability to social rights

**Book the date: our 2018 seminar will be on 18 & 19 June.**

This year's annual ESF Transnational Platform event **From ESF to ESF+: from employability to social rights** will take place on 18 and 19 June in the Ateliers des Tanneurs in Brussels. For our community, this event is the key moment to take stock of what has been learned during our third year of activity, to work across the themes of our nine networks, and to explore new ways to strengthen transnational cooperation and to enhance the ESF's impact. The seminar will also look forward, by examining successful practices that can inspire

ESF support for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The seminar will bring together up to 150 participants – from ESF Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies, public authorities in charge of policy, social partners and NGOs working nationally or at European level, European Institution representatives and the AEIDL team in charge of the Platform.

We are putting together an enriching event, in which everyone has a chance to share their experience, to comment on ESF and policy developments and to learn from each other. You will have a choice of eight workshops where you can work interactively. Of course, topical issues related to the ESF and to transnational cooperation will be at the core of our discussions. This year in particular, we will discuss the novelties brought by ESF+ and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The focus of ESF+ will be extended from employability to social inclusion and enjoyment of social rights throughout the life cycle.

Participation is by invitation, with the aim of achieving a thematic, stakeholder and geographical balance. Travel and accommodation will be organised directly by us, so please do not book anything by yourself since we will not be able to reimburse you.

For more information, please contact us at [esf@aeidl.eu](mailto:esf@aeidl.eu).

We are looking forward to meeting you in Brussels on 18-19 June.

## Events diary

8-9 May 2018	Inclusion TN, Warsaw, Poland
14-15 May	Partnership TN, Berlin, Germany
17-18 May 2018	Governance TN, Heraklion, Crete, Greece
24 May 2018	Audit Working Group, Brussels, Belgium
30-31 May 2018	Youth TN, Glasgow, UK
4-5 June 2018	Migrants TN, Paris, France
14-15 June 2018	Learning and Skills TN, Madrid, Spain
18-19 June 2018	ESF TP annual conference, Brussels, Belgium
26-27 June 2018	Simplification TN, Prague, Czech Republic
3-4 July 2018	Social Economy TN, Brussels, Belgium
September 2018 (date tbc)	Employment TN, Madrid, Spain
20-21 September 2018	Inclusion TN, Madrid, Spain

## ESF TRANSNATIONALITY NEWS

### Your feedback is welcome

We welcome your feedback on the content of this newsletter and would encourage you to contribute and suggest content. Please contact us at:

[esf@aeidl.eu](mailto:esf@aeidl.eu)



#### Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality>

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