



# Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth

21 March 2016, Brussels

## Workshop 4: Social Dimension of the European Semester

### *Description of the workshop*

The employment and social situation is slowly improving but signs of divergence among and within Member States persist. In line with the gradual economic recovery, employment rates are increasing, and unemployment rates are falling in almost all Member States. But social developments still point to further divergence across the EU.

Against this background, the Commission took steps to ensure that employment and social aspects would feature more strongly in the European Semester. As the Semester remains a vehicle for progressing with structural reforms in Member States, the enhanced focus on employment and social performance guarantees delivering on quality jobs, skills and poverty reduction.

At this workshop, stakeholders will exchange their views regarding the social dimensions of the European Semester. In particular, they will discuss how relevant, in their opinion, the European Semester is on the ground, what channels of influence the civil society has for Semester priorities on both the European and national level and what should be done to make the voice of a grassroots level heard, including in the context of the recent proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights

### *Expected outcomes*

At the end of the workshop, the participants will have:

- gained a better understanding and assessment of the relevance of the European Semester and of its strengthened social dimension;
- learnt from each other on the ways how they can influence the process, both in Brussels and in Member States;
- exchanged on how to make civil society efforts more effective in terms of agenda setting and policy design and implementation in the context of the European Semester and the Social Pillar.



## *Panellists*

- **Chair**

**Jeroen Jutte**, Head of Unit A1: Employment and social aspects of the European Semester, DG EMPL, European Commission

- **Speakers**

**Bart Vanhercke**, European Social Observatory

**Steven Engels**, European Semester Officer for Belgium, European Commission

**Paul Ginnell**, EAPN Ireland (Better Europe Alliance)

**Ulrika Hall**, Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

- **Rapporteur**

**Heather Roy**, Eurodiaconia

## *Questions*

**Question 1:** How can civil society influence the process, both in Brussels and in Member States? How can civil society's efforts be more effective in terms of agenda setting and policy design and implementation in the context of the European Semester? Share your experiences.

**Question2:** What are your recommendations with regards to the European Pillar of Social Rights?