

Consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights

I. QUESTIONS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENT

Are you replying as an individual or as an organisation?

Organisation

What is the type of your organisation?

EU level organisation

Your EU level organisation is a(n)

Other

Please specify:

Enasp is the alliance of the autonomous social protection systems of six EU member states: Austria (SVB), Finland (MELA), France (MSA), Germany (SVLFG), Greece (OGA) and Poland (KRUS). They cover the whole spectrum of social security for rural populations (health, pensions, workplace accidents and occupational illnesses, family and/or services)

Name of your organisation or institution:

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Your Reply:

Can be published with your personal information (I consent to publication of all information in my contribution and I declare that none of it is under copyright restrictions that prevent publication)

II. INTRODUCTION

Enasp is the European platform of agricultural social protection systems. It represents six Member States of the EU – Austria (SVB), Finland (MELA), France (MSA), Germany (SVLFG), Greece (OGA) and Poland (KRUS) – i.e. more than 12.3million beneficiaries and 46,8 billion euros financial benefits per year. Its members cover the whole spectrum of social protection for rural population and are deeply involved into sanitarian and social action. They launch regularly local or national projects in favour of social and/or rural development.

Our systems are highly integrated into their corresponding national security landscapes. For this reason, reference should be made at this point to the consultation articles in which they occasionally participated¹. The aim of the present consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights is to draw attention to the specific challenges and needs of those insured under the agricultural social security systems with respect to changed social realities and working environments. For this reason, the scope of the present consultation is limited to questions relating to the social situation and the social acquis of the EU, as well as the future of work and the welfare systems.

¹ e.g. AIM, esip, GKV-Spitzenverband (National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds)

III. QUESTIONS FOR THE CONSULTATION

A. ON THE SOCIAL SITUATION AND EU SOCIAL “ACQUIS”

- 1) **WHAT DO YOU SEE AS MOST PRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PRIORITIES** (2000 characters maximum)

The reduction or prevention of negative health consequences due to economic stress situations

Our insured populations are exposed to strong constraints and pressure situations. Health impairments are largely associated with the specific challenges of environment and adverse working conditions. The lifestyle of farmers is associated with hard physical work, long working hours, work beyond retirement, burden of care for family members and isolation in their day to day work. Moreover, farmers are exposed to many environmental and working hazards, including toxins, , weather conditions, environmental disasters. In turn, depression and use of medication has also been associated with an increased risk of occupational accidents.

The agricultural population is also faced with an array of stress factors related to social and rural environment, including the multi-generational structure of farming families, social isolation and economic pressures (falling prices of agricultural products ; increasing demand of cheap but high quality products ...). All these elements have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Therefore, we consider the reduction or prevention of these negative health consequences as a priority.

Conciliation between working life and nursing care of the Elderly

Farms are often family businesses transmitted from one generation to another. After the business transmission, older generations usually continue to live on the farm and may require nursing care, all the more taking into account their low pensions level. Even if our insured populations are willing to carry this out, they are then confronted not only to the caring of their elderly relatives, but also to the work on the farm and to the work in the household. This situation often proves to be physically and psychologically overwhelming. We therefore consider the conciliation of family and working life with regards to nursing care as a further priority.

Avoiding social exclusion in rural areas

Demographic changes and rural exodus – mainly of young people – increase the isolation of populations living in villages and create difficulties, generating in the middle term a qualitative and quantitative reduction of social services. To avoid a lack of social security and to avoid exclusion, it is necessary to set up an active rural development policy. This is where our expertise may prove useful and play a key role in terms of employment and social matters.

- 2) **HOW CAN WE ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS ACROSS EUROPE?** (2000 characters maximum)

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3) IS THE EU “ACQUIS” UP TO DATE AND DO YOU SEE SCOPE FOR FURTHER EU ACTION?
(2000 characters maximum)

Thanks to international treaties being negotiated by the EU, the Union must take into consideration social and health perspectives in all political spheres. This is also the case as far as trade and competition are concerned. It is important for European bodies to conduct an assessment of the impact their initiatives have on health and social systems.

B. ON THE FUTURE OF WORK AND WELFARE SYSTEMS

4) WHAT TRENDS WOULD YOU SEE AS MOST TRANSFORMATIVE?

- Demographic trends
- Increasing global competition
- Changes in family structures

5) WHAT WOULD BE THE MAIN RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES LINKED TO SUCH TRENDS? (2000 characters maximum)

Demographic trends

The demographic changes in the European population, particularly the ageing of society have an impact on the labour market and social policy of the EU. In addition, the agricultural social protection systems are affected by these demographic trends: beyond increasing life expectancy and declining birth rate, rural areas are affected by emigration, hence increasing the risk for older generations to be isolated. A further consequence is that social services tend to be progressively more limited in rural areas and established family businesses cannot always be secured for transmission. For this reason, agricultural social protection systems must find solutions to limit the consequences associated to the demographic changes in terms of health, social participation and material security. Our expertise with respect to living and working in rural areas can play an important role in this process.

Increasing global competition

The worldwide competition for the least expensive production costs is exerting great pressure on individuals. State and European subsidies on agricultural products are often needed to ensure a sufficient and stable income to producers. Our systems offer diversified health and social actions adapted to local needs of farming populations to support the economic pressure they are faced with.

Changes in family structures

The structure of the family has strongly changed during the last decades so that different forms of family life can be met today. These changes are characterized by the decline of marriages, a decrease in the number of children, the growth of single households and the increased women's employment rate. The new family structures meet the demographic trends with the result that one typical function of family - old-age's care - can hardly be carried out. Our insured persons are also affected by this situation. Therefore, we must ensure the support of the persons concerned by providing professional care services in rural areas.