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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee 2023

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Delegations will find attached the 2023 Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee and its permanent and temporary subgroups, as adopted in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 13 March 2023 (Any Other Business item).

## 2023 Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee

### 1. Introduction:

The Social Protection Committee (SPC) is an advisory policy Committee, established in accordance with art. 160 of the TFEU, providing a representative forum for multilateral social policy coordination, dialogue and cooperation at EU level. It brings together senior policy makers from all EU Member States and the Commission in an effort to discuss and identify the most appropriate policy measures necessary to respond to the social policy challenges across the EU. The Committee actively participates, on behalf of the Council of the European Union for employment, social affairs and health (EPSCO), in the European Semester process of policy coordination as per Article 2 (2b) of Council Decision (EU) 2015/773 establishing the SPC.

The Treaty-based mandate of the SPC stipulates that the Committee monitors the social situation in the EU and the development of social protection policies.<sup>1</sup> The SPC delivers on this mandate through the use of the social open method of coordination (OMC) as the main policy framework, covering all major social policy strands: social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care. The SPC further uses the OMC tools (peer reviews and mutual learning activities) to promote the transfer of experience and expertise among the Member States in the areas under Committee competence.

The SPC may, if necessary, prepare additional reports, formulate opinions or undertake other work within its fields of competence, at the request of the Council, the Commission or on its own initiative as per Article 2(1c) of the Council Decision 2015/773, establishing the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Art. 160 TFEU

## 2. Areas for SPC work in 2023

The SPC work programme takes into account the **EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024** adopted by the European Council<sup>2</sup>, **the policy priorities of the forthcoming Swedish and Spanish Presidencies**, as well as the **Commission’s Work Programme**, adopted on 18 October 2022<sup>3</sup>.

The Committee activities in 2023 will focus on three main interlinked areas of policy work, which also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan. The first area is related to the European Semester, the second is focused on thematic in-depth work, while the third is related to the Committee’s monitoring and reporting activities.

In delivering on these areas, the Committee will continue to make full use of the opportunities provided by the social open method of coordination, including peer reviews and other mutual learning activities.

The SPC will monitor the progress of its work and, if necessary, consider **possible adaptations to its work-programme in the course of 2023**.

### 2.1 The European Semester

As part of its mandate<sup>4</sup>, the Social Protection Committee contributes to all aspects of the European Semester within its field of competence and reports on them to the Council. To this end, the SPC will engage in the following activities in the course of 2023:

#### 2.1.1. Contribution to the EPSCO input for the Spring European Council

The SPC will contribute to the preparation of the EPSCO input to the Spring European Council with its assessment of the social protection issues raised in the **2023 Autumn Package**. It will also take part in any negotiations on possible changes of the **Employment Guidelines**, and the monitoring framework(s), in particular **the Social Scoreboard** and/or to the **Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)**.

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<sup>2</sup> At its meeting in Brussels on 20 June 2019, the European Council agreed on an agenda for the EU for the next five years: “[A new strategic agenda 2019-2024](#)” sets out the priority areas that will steer the work of the European Council and provide guidance for the work programmes of other EU institutions.

<sup>3</sup> [Communication \(COM\(2022\) 548\)](#). Commission Work Programme 2023: “A Union standing firm and united”.

<sup>4</sup> Council decision (EU) 2015/773, article 2b

The SPC, in cooperation with the Employment Committee (EMCO), will continue reflections on the proposal made by Belgium and Spain for the introduction of a **Social Imbalances Procedure (SIP)** in the European Semester. This work will be supported by the joint *ad-hoc* working group of both Committees, and will include a pilot project to test the practical implications of a possible future SIP. The two Committees will discuss a report, to be provided by the ad-hoc working group in May 2023, with a view to transmitting their reflections to the June 2023 EPSCO.

The Committee will also follow developments, related to the ongoing **Economic Governance Review**<sup>5</sup> and its impact on the employment and social dimension of the European Semester.

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables to the Council</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> half 2023	<b>Reaction to the 2023 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey (ASGS) and the Joint Employment Report (JER), offering an analysis of the relevant social protection and social inclusion issues</b>	The SPC, together with the Employment Committee (EMCO), will prepare the draft Council Conclusions on the 2023 ASGS and JER: political guidance on employment and social policies. For the March EPSCO
1 <sup>st</sup> half 2023	<b>Examination and input into the Joint Employment Report and its key messages on issues related to social protection and social inclusion, including the analysis of key employment and social indicators.</b>	For the March EPSCO
1 <sup>st</sup> half 2023	<b>Reflection on the report of the joint EMCO-SPC working group on the proposal made by Belgium and Spain to establish a Social Imbalances Procedure in the European Semester.</b>	For the June EPSCO

<sup>5</sup> On 9 November 2022, the Commission adopted a [Communication setting out orientations for a reformed EU economic governance framework](#). The communication is based on an online public consultation with stakeholders and Member States launched in February 2020 and on a further communication presented in October 2021. To follow up on the latest orientations, the Commission may table legislative proposals.

### 2.1.2. Multilateral implementation reviews (MIRs)

The SPC will continue its **multilateral surveillance on the implementation of structural reforms in the Member States in the context of the European Semester**.

To carry out this task, the Committee will engage in **country-specific reviews** of the relevant 2022 country-specific recommendations (CSRs), while also retaining **the strong horizontal element**, introduced in 2021.

In line with the successful practice from past years, the SPC will engage in **joint reviews with EMCO** on the CSRs of common interest and will continue seeking **cooperation with the Economic Policy Committee (EPC)** on these matters whenever relevant. The Committee will also make use, where appropriate, of the results of the peer review programme and relevant social policy innovation projects.

The SPC will also follow the developments related to the implementation of the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, given in the implementation of social policies in the Member States. To this end, in the context of the SPC reviews Member States without a CSR, but with relevant reforms, included in their National Reform and Resilience Plans (NRRP) will be invited to share the latest developments with the implementation of those reforms. Where appropriate, thematic discussions could be organized, based on the Commission's thematic analysis<sup>6</sup> and implementation reports<sup>7</sup>.

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables to the Council</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> half 2023</b>	<b>Multilateral examination, complemented by thematic discussion, of the implementation of structural reforms in the Member States in response to the 2022 Council country-specific recommendations in the areas under SPC competence.</b>	Horizontal opinion and country-specific conclusions for the June EPSCO

<sup>6</sup> [Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e3001197/1/192022032012366_en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [First annual report on the Recovery and Resilience Facility \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e3001197/1/192022032012366_en.pdf)

### 2.1.3 Review of the proposals for Council country-specific recommendations, revision of the Employment Guidelines and Euro area recommendation

The Committee will prepare the Council's adoption of the **2023 country-specific recommendations (CSR)** by discussing the Commission CSR proposals, falling under SPC competence. In its assessment, the Committee will use the conclusions of the multilateral implementation reviews, to be carried out in the first half of the year. The SPC will adopt joint opinions with other Committees on all recommendations falling under joint competence and will contribute to the preparation of the EPSCO view.

In the second half of the year, the SPC will examine any social protection issues, which may be included in the **Commission proposal for a Euro area recommendation**. It will also discuss the possible **revision of Employment Guideline 8**.

It will engage in these exercises in cooperation with the EMCO and the advisory committees of the ECOFIN Council.

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables to the Council</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> half 2023</b>	<b>Cooperation with other Committees on 2023 CSRs of common interest</b>	Horizontal opinion and country-specific conclusions for the June 2023 EPSCO.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2023</b>	<b>Examine the possible revision of Employment Guideline 8</b>	For the October 2023 EPSCO.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2023</b>	<b>Examine social protection and social inclusion issues included in the Commission proposal for a Euro area recommendation</b>	Contribution on social protection and social inclusion parts of the 2023 Euro area recommendation. For the December 2023 EPSCO.

#### **2.1.4 Monitoring of the social situation and developments in social protection policies**

Through its annual report, the SPC will continue its **monitoring of the social situation in the EU and of the development of social protection policies**, including the progress towards **European and national poverty and social exclusion targets** introduced with the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (EPSR AP).

Based on the report, the Committee will propose for endorsement in the October EPSCO **key messages on the main policy priorities in the area of social protection and social inclusion** in view of the Commission’s preparatory work for the **2024 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey**. An intermediate update of the SPPM dashboard will be produced by spring 2023, to take into account the availability of the full set of results from EU-SILC 2021.

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables to the Council</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2023</b>	<b>Preparation of an annual report on the social situation in the EU and overview of social protection reforms on the basis of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and reporting by Member States</b>	Report and Key messages on the social situation and the main social policy priorities as input to the preparation of the 2024 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy – October EPSCO

#### **2.2 Thematic Work**

The SPC will continue its **thematic work on priority issues in the areas under its competence**. The selection of topics will take into account existing Committee commitments, relevant socio-economic developments and/or EU policy initiatives, as well as the priorities of the Swedish (January-June) and the Spanish Presidencies (July-December). The outcomes of such thematic work could be reflected in the SPC Annual Report; it could be transmitted to the Council as Key Messages or background information in support of Ministerial discussions. It may also be used to support the preparation of Council conclusions or provide orientation to forthcoming Commission initiatives.

In the first half of 2023, the SPC will examine the outcome of the reflections of the **High Level Group on the Future of Social Protection and the welfare state in Europe (Q1 2023)**. It will also discuss the key findings of the **Commission report reviewing progress in the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed (Q1 2023)**, as well as the forthcoming **Commission report on access to essential services (Q1-Q2 2023)** and the forthcoming **Proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions (Q2 2023)**.

In the second half of 2023, the SPC will review (in cooperation with EMCO, as relevant) the implementation of the **Council Recommendations on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality (FT)**, taking into account the specific arrangement proposed by the European Commission<sup>8</sup>. The SPC may also engage in a discussion on the **implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights via the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**.

Throughout 2023, the SPC Working Group on Pension Adequacy will continue work on the **2024 edition of the Pension Adequacy Report (PAR)**.

The **SPC mutual learning activities** will include **peer reviews** and other mutual learning events, in particular in the areas of the **distributional impact assessment of policies** and **minimum income**.

### **2.2.1 Thematic social reporting**

Every year, the SPC Members engage in thematic social reporting on a topic chosen according to the current social policy priorities. The outcome of such reporting serves to promote mutual learning and exchange of best practices among the Member States, including in the form of support information for dedicated SPC discussions; it may be included in the SPC annual report, or used to inform Ministerial discussions and relevant Commission's initiatives.

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<sup>8</sup> At the joint EMCO-SPC meeting from 29 November, 2022. The proposal entails focusing on specific areas of the policy guidance, with the aim of making use of synergies with existing processes, such as the European Semester (e.g. Commission's assessment in the Country Reports) and the update of the National Energy and Climate Plans to be assessed by the Commission in Autumn 2023 (before their finalisation by Member States by 2024)



The 2023 SPC thematic social reporting would be dedicated to *policy measures to tackle energy poverty and rising energy prices across the Member States*. The underlying questionnaire would be presented for SPC discussion and possible approval by March, with a view to launching the review exercise and SPC collection in early April 2023. Delegates would be expected to provide their responses by May 2023, to allow for a discussion and inclusion in the 2023 SPC Annual Report.

In executing the exercise, synergies are to be ensured and overlaps with existing data collection exercises avoided.

### **2.3 Monitoring tools, benchmarking frameworks and development of indicators**

The SPC will continue, through its indicator Subgroup (SPC ISG), to work on the identification and development of indicators to monitor the social situation and the development of social protection policies in the Member States and the Union. The Committee will continue its involvement in the governance and monitoring activities of the implementation of relevant recent initiatives.

In 2023, and in cooperation with the EMCO, the SPC will continue to **review the current monitoring tools** (including the EPSR scoreboard, SPPM, JAF<sup>9</sup> and various monitoring frameworks), in view of simplifying and consolidating the existing tools in line with the findings of the 2019 joint EMCO-SPC report on the Europe 2020 Strategy, as well as the possible introduction of a SIP in the European Semester.

The Committee will continue its work on the development and review of **benchmarking frameworks** in the area of social protection and social inclusion, in line with the common approach agreed as concerns the use of benchmarking in the context of EPSCO work. In particular, further elaboration of the **minimum income** benchmarking framework is foreseen, following the conclusions of the 2022 joint SPC- EC Report on minimum income.

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<sup>9</sup> European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)

Beyond its work on monitoring tools and benchmarking, the SPC, through its ISG, will also seek to:

- Update and further develop the monitoring framework for the ***Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed***.
- Complete the monitoring framework for the ***European Child Guarantee Recommendation***.
- Finalise the list of key indicators in the area of ***Pensions*** and the list of Theoretical Replacement Rate cases to be used in the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report.
- Contribute to the development of a framework of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to high-quality affordable ***long-term care***, in the context of the recently adopted European Care Strategy and building on the joint work on common indicators on long-term care and other monitoring frameworks;
- Follow work on indicators relevant to monitor the social and labour aspects of the fair transition towards climate neutrality, and in particular examine the use of existing indicators and the need for additional indicators to assess the fairness of the transition. In this context the ISG will develop indicators on ***purchasing power across the income distribution***, as well as work further on development of indicators related to ***energy poverty*** and on new indicators on ***transport poverty***.
- Work on developing indicators and improving the data in the area of ***homelessness and housing exclusion***, including in the context of the ***European Platform on Combating Homelessness***
- Follow up on issues identified in the 2022 seminar to mark 20 years of the existence of the group, in particular regarding practical improvements to working methods and organisation, and the dissemination of ISG output.

In addition, the SPC ISG will continue improving its indicator frameworks in the areas of ***active inclusion, inequalities***, and the ***situation of persons with disabilities***. The Committee will also follow analytical work on ***access to healthcare, social resilience*** (including the resilience of Social Protection systems) and work on social indicators for monitoring of the ***UN Sustainable Development Goals***. It will also carry out a detailed review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators in view of its further updating and streamlining, and improving its user friendliness.

### 3. Input from the SPC working groups

To deliver on its mandate and strategic priorities, in 2023 the SPC will be supported by its working groups:

- The permanent SPC **Indicators' Sub-Group (ISG)** will continue to provide support to the SPC, especially in its monitoring activities (development of **indicators**, as well as **benchmarking and monitoring frameworks** as highlighted above). The 2023 ISG Work programme Annexed to this document.
- The **Minimum Income Network Group (MINET)** will continue its mutual learning activities as regards minimum income policies. It may provide inputs to support the further development of the benchmarking framework.
- The SPC ad-hoc **Working Group on Pension Adequacy (WGPA)** will continue work to prepare the 2024 edition of the SPC Pension Adequacy Report (PAR).
- The joint EMCO-SPC ad-hoc **working group on the Social Imbalances Procedure (WG SIP)** will continue reflections on the possible introduction of a SIP in the European Semester, with a view to enabling the two Committees to report to the June 2023 EPSCO Council.

### 4. Working methods and relations with other Committees and advisory bodies

In 2023, the SPC meeting arrangements would include a balanced mix between physical/in-person meetings, taking place in Brussels or the Member State holding the Presidency of the EU and virtual meetings, organized via a teleconferencing system. The organization of hybrid meetings is not foreseen. The format of the meeting will be determined close to the meeting dates, and will depend on the availability of meeting rooms and an assessment on the proposed agenda items.

In its cooperation with other policy Committees (**EMCO, EPC, the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) and the Education Committee (EDUC)**) and with the **Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level (WPPHSL)**, the SPC will be guided by the Council Decision (EU) 2015/773 establishing the SPC, the European Council Conclusions of 15 October 2013, calling for more work to strengthen cooperation between the various Council configurations in order to ensure consistency of the economic, employment and social policies in line with the common EU objectives, as well as by the EPSCO Council Conclusions on Economy of Well-being, which call on the SPC to continue fostering a close cooperation with other Council Committees and preparatory bodies. This may include joint meetings, preparation of joint papers, as well as coordination of the views on cross-cutting policy issues.

## **5. Cooperation with the EU social partners' organizations and social NGOs**

In delivering on its work programme, the SPC will continue its co-operation with EU-level social partners and social NGOs.

Annex 1: Tentative calendar for SPC meetings in 2023

Annex 2: Work Programme of the SPC Indicators Sub-group (SPC ISG)

## Tentative calendar for SPC meetings in 2023

Date:	Items:
26-27 January (*with EMCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalization of the 2023 Joint Employment Report (JER)*</li> <li>○ Finalization of the Draft Council Conclusions on the ASGS and JER*</li> <li>○ Election for Chairperson of the SPC</li> <li>○ Agreement on the outline of the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report</li> </ul>
14-15 February (Physical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multilateral Implementation Reviews in the area of <u>Pensions</u></li> <li>○ Election for a Vice-chairperson of the SPC</li> <li>○ Decision on the topic of the 2023 Thematic Social Reporting</li> <li>○ Finalization of the 2023 SPC Work Programme</li> </ul>
6-7 March (Physical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multilateral Implementation Reviews in the area of <u>Long-term Care</u></li> <li>○ Commission report to the Council on the implementation of the Council recommendation on Access to Social Protection for workers and self-employed</li> <li>○ ESPN Report on <i>Making access to social protection for workers and the self-employed more transparent through information and simplification</i></li> <li>○ Outcome of the High Level Group on the future of social protection and the welfare state in the EU</li> </ul>
27-28 March (Virtual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multilateral Implementation Reviews in the area of <u>Healthcare</u></li> </ul>
3-4 April (in Sweden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion on a priority topic of the Swedish Presidency</li> <li>○ European Child Guarantee- status update/discussion, following the submission of the national plans</li> </ul>
20-21 April (Format TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multilateral Implementation Reviews in the area of <u>Social Protection and Social Inclusion</u></li> </ul>
11-12 May (with EMCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multilateral Implementation Reviews of <u>CSRs of common interest</u> with EMCO</li> <li>○ Social Imbalances Procedure - reflection on the report of the joint EMCO-SPC working group for the June EPSCO</li> </ul>
May / June (with EMCO)	<p>Meeting on the European Semester Spring Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presentation of the package</li> <li>○ Exchange of views with Social Partners and CSOs</li> <li>○ Negotiations of the 2023 CSR package</li> </ul>
End June (Format TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updates on the Activities of the SPC Work Groups</li> <li>○ Progress evaluation and adjustment of the 2023 Work programme of the SPC</li> <li>○ Presentation of the priorities of the forthcoming Presidency (ES)</li> <li>○ (poss.) Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions</li> <li>○ (poss.) Commission report on access to essential services</li> <li>○ (poss.) Monitoring framework on the European Child Guarantee (outcome of work in ISG)</li> </ul>

September (in Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalization of the 2023 SPC Annual Report</li> <li>○ 2023 Employment and Social Developments in Europe Report- presentation</li> <li>○ Discussion on a priority topic of the Spanish Presidency</li> </ul>
End of October	<p>(poss.)Discussion on the implementation of the EPSR via the European Social Fund Plus</p> <p>Thematic review on the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality</p> <p>Preparatory work for 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion of the <u>2024 Work Programme</u></li> <li>○ Discussion of the <u>2024 Peer Review</u> programme</li> <li>○ Discussion on the organization of the <u>2024 Multilateral Implementation Reviews</u></li> </ul>
End of November / December (with EMCO)	<p>Meeting on the European Semester Autumn Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presentation of the package</li> <li>○ Exchange of views with Social Partners and CSOs</li> <li>○ Agreement on the social and employment aspects of the Euro area recommendation</li> <li>○ Presentation of the priorities of the forthcoming Presidency (BE)</li> </ul>

## Work Programme of the SPC Indicators Sub-group (SPC ISG)



### Social Protection Committee Indicators Sub-group

## 2023 ISG Work Programme

- FINAL -

### **1. Introduction**

The work programme of the Indicators Sub-Group (ISG) of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) for 2023 will focus on contributing to delivering on the 2023 SPC priorities, follow up of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its Action Plan for implementation, the European Semester, and relevant priorities arising from the Commission Work Programme 2023. In addition, the ISG will contribute as necessary to in-depth thematic work in the context of the open method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion (Social OMC). Furthermore, the ISG will provide evidence and analysis to monitor the social effects of the surge in the cost of living resulting from the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the global supply chain constraints still being experienced due to the COVID pandemic.

Given these priorities and on-going activities, the work of the ISG will focus on the main areas listed below. The impact of new activities that the SPC decides to undertake in the course of 2023 will be assessed on an ongoing basis and the ISG work programme will be adjusted as necessary. Annex 1 contains an overview of next year's provisional meeting dates and agendas, with an indication of the timing of the main activities over 2023.

### **2. Review of monitoring/reporting frameworks and follow up on the European Pillar of Social Rights and implementation of its Action Plan**

- **Follow up to the European Pillar of Social Rights and implementation of its Action Plan, including monitoring of the poverty and social exclusion target for 2030**

The ISG will contribute as necessary to relevant aspects related to the implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and in particular the monitoring of progress towards the EU and national poverty and social exclusion targets for 2030. It will review the analytical content of the draft Joint Employment Report, and in particular, the assessment based on the EPSR scoreboard.

➤ **Review of the current social monitoring framework**

The ISG will continue to review the current social monitoring framework (EPSR social scoreboard, SPPM, JAF, etc.)<sup>10</sup>. It will reflect, jointly with EMCO IG, on the scope to simplify and consolidate the existing tools in line with the findings from the assessment report of the EMCO and SPC on the Europe 2020 Strategy. It will also review improvements to the timeliness of indicators. Specific activities in this area will include:

○ **Reflection on the role of the EPSR scoreboard**

Jointly with EMCO IG, the ISG will reflect on the role of the EPSR scoreboard in relation to the action plan on the EPSR and other existing monitoring tools, including on the possible inclusion of secondary indicators in the scoreboard.

○ **Follow developments regarding the proposal for a Social Imbalances Procedure**

Jointly with the EMCO IG, the ISG will follow developments concerning the Belgian-Spanish proposal for a Social Imbalances Procedure, in particular with regard to the technical aspects, and reflect as necessary on the related possible implications for the existing monitoring tools and reports.

○ **Timeliness of social indicators and flash estimates**

Timely estimates of the social situation are essential as highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis and the evolving cost of living crisis. The ISG will follow Eurostat work on improving the timeliness of social indicators and on flash estimates of key income-based indicators (and the possibility to extend estimates to cover other indicators), as well as the recent steps regarding the conduct of an infra-annual data collection through Eurostat. It will further discuss the possibility to use flash estimates more systematically in the EU monitoring framework, as well as possible other data sources (such as “financial distress” indicators).

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<sup>10</sup> European Pillar of Social Rights Scoreboard, Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and Joint Assessment Framework (JAF).



- **Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)**

The ISG will review the Joint Assessment Framework together with the EMCO Indicators Group and the European Commission. The ISG will also review the JAF methodology, in view of its improvement and further development.

- **Benchmarking**

The ISG will continue the work on benchmarking as tasked by the SPC. The ISG will also, whenever called upon, review already existing frameworks, such as in particular the minimum income benchmarking framework, following the conclusions of the joint SPC-EC report on minimum income.

- **Assessing social impacts of EU policies**

The ISG will follow developments in the field of assessing the social impacts of EU policies, including distributional impact assessment and the Better Regulation (BR) Package, the governance of the assessment of the social impact of new initiatives, and the social impact of CSR linked reforms at the national level. The ISG will support the implementation of BR Guidelines and efforts to quantify the social impacts by reviewing possibilities to improve availability, accessibility and timeliness of evidence (including administrative data).

**Planned deliverables for 2023:**

- The ISG will, in collaboration with EMCO IG, review the current monitoring frameworks in view of updating them to the context of implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and its targets for 2030, also with the overall aim to simplify and consolidate them.
- The ISG will reflect, as necessary, on the possible implications for the existing monitoring tools and reports of the proposal for a Social Imbalances Procedure.
- It will make progress on the availability and use of timelier indicators of the social situation, especially to monitor the social effects of the surge in the cost of living.

### **3. Monitoring of the social situation and the development of social policies**

#### **➤ Preparation of the SPC Annual Report**

The ISG will contribute to the update on the social situation in the European Union, through preparing specific inputs based on its monitoring tools, on-going work as well as through providing analysis based on the EU social indicators. It will review the technical and analytical content of the annual report, and also reflect on the schedule for its production in view of earlier availability of EU-SILC data. The ISG will also continue collecting statistics derived from administrative data on benefit recipients and provide analysis and evidence on social aspects of the cost of living crisis. When following up this work the ISG will further consider ways to improve the comparability of benefit recipients data provided by Member states.

#### **➤ Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM)**

The ISG will continue the work on updating the SPPM, especially regarding the set of key social indicators, in view of recent statistical developments and ISG adoption of new indicators. It will produce an update of the SPPM dashboard based on the set of available EU-SILC 2022 data.

#### **➤ Thorough review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators**

Following on to the intermediate update conducted in 2022, the ISG will carry out a detailed review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators in view of its further updating and streamlining, and improving its user friendliness.

#### **Planned deliverables for 2023**

##### *Reports*

- The ISG will contribute to the SPC annual report through an update on the social situation in the European Union and analysis based on the EU social indicators.

##### *Indicators and tools*

- Update of the Social Protection Performance Monitor
- Review and streamline the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators

## **4. Thematic work**

### **➤ Social inclusion**

- **Inequality**

The ISG will further explore indicators on inequalities and in particular about the middle-income group. It will also explore the evolution of purchasing power, including in different parts of the income distribution.

- **Active inclusion indicators**

In line with the joint SPC-EC report on minimum income, the ISG will update the benchmarking framework on minimum income and will review potential areas for its further expansion in different dimensions (such as eligibility criteria, access to services and labour market transitions and incentives) and resume the exploration of indicators for measuring the quality of social services (encompassing inter alia such criteria as: accessibility, availability, affordability and coverage).

- **Child poverty**

The ISG will finalise the monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee Recommendation, building on the work carried out for the benchmarking framework on childcare and support to children. On the basis of the first version of the ECG monitoring framework, it will prepare a final version in the course of 2023 also on the basis of the national action plans. Furthermore, if requested, the ISG will discuss and work, as relevant, on the monitoring aspects of the Council Recommendation on the Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care in cooperation with EMCO IG and other groups as necessary.

### **➤ Situation of persons with disabilities**

Together with the Commission, the ISG will continue to develop new indicators for monitoring the situation of persons with disabilities. This includes further development of indicators in the area of education for persons with disabilities (for example early school leavers) and employment or others such as health when data from surveys will be available. It will also explore the possibility to include the new indicators for persons with disabilities in the joint assessment framework (JAF), and new indicators following the inclusion of a disability question in social surveys.

### ➤ **Homelessness and housing exclusion, Housing conditions**

The ISG will look into the area of homelessness and housing exclusion with the aim to further develop indicators and improve the availability of data in this area, including in the context of monitoring under the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness.

#### ➤ **Indicators on Social and Labour Aspects of the Fair Transition towards Climate Neutrality**

The ISG will follow work on indicators relevant to monitor the social and labour aspects of the fair transition towards climate neutrality, and in particular examine the use of existing indicators and the need for additional indicators to assess the fairness of the transition.

In this context the ISG will focus in particular on further developing a set of indicators related to energy poverty and contribute to the monitoring process in this area, which has been given heightened importance in the current circumstances of surging energy costs.

#### ➤ **Transport poverty**

The ISG will follow and support work on comprehensive and feasible definitions of transport poverty (focusing both on affordability and availability of transport). Pros and cons of the various definitions will be considered, as well as different data sources and methodologies. Results will be assessed also in comparison to standard social indicators.

#### ➤ **Health**

The ISG will support the further development of the OMC health work stream and follow closely the work of DG SANTE on measuring access to healthcare, including considering the feasibility of new indicators for future work on the JAF Health framework of indicators.

The ISG will maintain regular contact with Eurostat and international organisations such as OECD and WHO in terms of policy needs and priorities in the area, and follow-up the work of the Working Party on Public Health (WPPH) working group on Health System Performance Assessment.

### ➤ **Long term care**

The ISG will support the further development of the OMC long-term care work stream. In particular, it will contribute as necessary to the development of a framework of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to high-quality affordable long-term care, building on the joint work on common indicators on long-term care and other monitoring frameworks. In addition, the ISG will follow the work of the planned EUROSTAT Task Force on LTC in order to improve the availability and quality of indicators relating to LTC.

### ➤ **Pensions**

The ISG will support the preparation of the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report. The ISG will discuss and propose to the SPC the key indicators, in particular the list of Theoretical Replacement Rate (TRR) cases, to be used in the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report. The ISG will compute the TRR or validate the calculations carried out by the OECD.

### ➤ **Reconciliation of private and professional life**

On the basis of the guidance manual and indicator framework on comparative EU-level data on the reconciliation of private and professional lives, the ISG, in coordination with the EMCO IG, will follow-up as necessary on Member States' progress in preparing for and delivering the data required for the Directive on reconciliation of private and professional life.

### ➤ **Access to social protection**

The ISG will update and develop further the indicator framework for monitoring access to social protection for workers and the self-employed in the context of the 2019 Council Recommendation on access to social protection.

### ➤ **Social resilience, especially regarding social protection systems**

The ISG will follow analytical work on social resilience, including on the resilience of social protection systems.

➤ **Social indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The ISG will follow work on social indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and contribute as necessary to the further development of the indicators in this area.

**Planned deliverables for 2023**

*Thematic work*

- Completion of the monitoring framework for the Recommendation on access to high quality and affordable long term care.
- Update and further develop the monitoring framework for the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.
- Development of indicators on purchasing power across the income distribution as well as further development of indicators related to energy poverty.
- Finalisation of the monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee Recommendation.
- Proposal to the SPC on the key indicators to be used in the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report, including the list of Theoretical Replacement Rate cases.

**5. On-going activities on enhancing statistical capacity and methods**

The ISG will follow up on issues identified in the 2022 seminar to mark 20 years of the existence of the group. In particular, the ISG will:

- explore addressing some of the remaining priority gaps identified in coverage of indicators. The ISG will also explore how to include more contextual information in order to help users to better interpret the available indicators;

- further explore the use of alternative data sources that could complement the traditional ones, such as administrative data and Eurostat data on the joint distribution on income, consumption and wealth;
- further reflect on practical improvements to working methods and organisation (including the suggestion to invite delegates to give short presentations of relevant issues in their countries, and to invite a delegate to be a discussant following thematic presentations), and in the dissemination of ISG output, including on a communication strategy to make the ISG and its products better known and enhancing cooperation with other relevant groups.

The ISG will follow up on the implementation of the framework regulation for Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS). It will also review and enhance its indicators wherever necessary on the basis of new data or analysis. For example, the ISG will collaborate further with Eurostat on the possibility of inclusion of non-monetary income components in the definition of income. In this regard, it will follow closely and provide guidance on any follow up to the Eurostat project on “Social transfers in kind”. It will also follow up on the recommendations contained in the report on Net-SILC2 analysis on “Monitoring the evolution of income poverty and real incomes over time” and on related work carried out under Net-SILC3.

The ISG will follow and advise the work Eurostat is carrying out in compiling and analysing existing data to better describe the joint distributions of income (including a follow-up on the use of tax data to enhance the SILC data on the income distribution), consumption and wealth and the statistical links between micro and macro perspectives.

It will explore developing indicators which give a better view of the dynamic aspects of the social situation, such as indicators on poverty transitions, persistence and recurrence, making greater use of the longitudinal component of EU-SILC.

The ISG will support the EMCO IG as necessary in the further development of the LTU Recommendation monitoring framework.

The ISG will also work, in collaboration with the Commission, on ways to measure and analyse social spillovers, upward convergence, and explore strengthening the ability to analyse the link between social policy and economic policy. It will also follow the use of social indicators in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) scoreboard.

## **6. Cooperation with other relevant groups and organisations**

The ISG will cooperate with other relevant groups of other Committees, including the working group on Social Protection Statistics and the related ESSPROS Task Force on methodology, the Eurostat Working Group on Public Health Statistics and the EPC LIME group. It will continue its close collaboration with the EMCO Indicators Group including concerning interactions between the labour market and social inclusion, further development of the JAF, and the review of the current social monitoring framework.

The ISG will monitor research of potential interest for ISG work, especially through cooperation with services of the Commission including the JRC and will liaise where needed with the MISSOC network. It will also collaborate with academics and international organizations, such as OECD, developing research relevant for the group's activities.



## Provisional schedule of topics per ISG meeting in 2023<sup>11</sup>

ISG Meetings dates 2023	Provisional agenda items
<p><b>18-19 January (part joint with EMCO IG)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Physical)</i></p>	<p><b>Indicators to be used in the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report (TBC)</b></p> <p><b>Access to healthcare (ESTAT and DG SANTE)</b></p> <p><b>Administrative data on energy poverty (tbc)</b></p> <p><b>Joint meeting with EMCO IG</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Draft Joint Employment Report</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Presentation on Recommendation on a Fair Transition</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Presentation on Recommendation on Barcelona Targets (tbc)</p>
<p><b>16 February</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Virtual)</i></p>	<p><b>Purchasing power indicators and timeliness</b></p> <p><b>Review of SPC-ISG monitoring frameworks – initial discussion (tbc)</b></p> <p><b>Update of Minimum Income Benchmarking Framework (tbc)</b></p>
<p><b>22-23 March</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Physical)</i></p>	<p><b>LTC Monitoring Framework (TBC)</b></p> <p><b>Energy poverty indicators</b></p> <p><b>SPC annual report</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">- outline and data issues</p>
<p><b>27 April</b></p>	<p><b>Purchasing power indicators <u>and timeliness</u></b></p>

<sup>11</sup> As regards the planning of the revision of Portfolio of EU Social Indicators, this will require further internal Commission reflection before deciding on the appropriate timing of discussions on the various thematic areas.

<i>(Virtual)</i>	<b><u>Follow up of October 2020 seminar findings</u></b> <b>Child guarantee monitoring framework</b>
<b>5 May - afternoon (joint with EMCO IG)</b>	<b>Discussion on the final report of the Working Group on the Social Imbalances Procedure</b>
<b>24 May</b> <i>(Virtual)</i>	<b>Energy poverty indicators</b> <b>Review of SPC-ISG monitoring frameworks – further discussion (tbc)</b> <b>Presentation of findings from EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2021 survey on Roma in 10 European countries (tbc)</b>
<b>21-22 June</b> <i>(Physical)</i>	<b>SPC annual report preparation</b> (results from SPPM dashboard update, key social challenges exercise) <b>Eurostat update on flash estimates/nowcasting of social indicators</b>
<b>7 September</b> <i>(Virtual)</i>	<b>SPC annual report (finalisation)</b> <b>Child guarantee monitoring framework</b>
<b>18-19 October</b> <i>(Physical)</i>	<b>Review of indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b> <b>Indicators on transport affordability and availability (tbc)</b>

<p><b>16 November</b></p> <p><i>(Virtual)</i></p>	<p><b>2023 ISG Work programme – initial discussion</b></p> <p><b>Annual update by Eurostat on EU-SILC developments including</b> progress on timelier production of EU-SILC</p> <p><b>Eurostat update on work on joint distributions of income, consumption and wealth and the statistical links between micro and macro perspectives</b></p> <p><b>Middle class indicators</b></p>
<p><b>11-12 December (part joint with EMCO IG)</b></p> <p><i>(Physical)</i></p>	<p><b>Joint meeting with EMCO IG (Draft JER etc.)</b></p> <p><b>2024 ISG Work programme – finalisation</b></p>