

Civil Society Round Table Review on Social Inclusion

12 March 2019, Brussels



The Diaconia Center of the ELCL



- The analysis of challenges in relevant policy areas - poverty, inequalities, healthcare, social inclusion - are accurate.
- The Progress assessment with country specific recommendations issued in 2018 is justified - «some progress», «have not advanced much».
- Country Report - needed and important!
- There are still some social challenges and target groups with little attention - procurement law and its impact on the costs of social services;
 - sustainability of civil society (NGO) - lack of resources for administrative burden;
 - homeless people - men in the age group 30-50.

Association “Latvian Movement for independent living”. Persons with disabilities: challenges



- Social exclusion and economic passiveness both of persons with disability and their family members.
- Transition from institutions to community based care is not effective process. Segregation in big institutions for persons with severe disabilities is reality.
- No transition programs for youth with disabilities from education system to employment and no supported employment system for successful enter in labor market.

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Areas of concern



- Not adequate minimum income and poor social protection
- High inequality and need for more progressive and fair taxation
- Limited access to affordable quality health and other care
- Shrinking labour force and concerns over quality work
- Lack civil dialogue in Latvia, particularly in the European Semester
- Discrimination of number of vulnerable groups

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Country report vs stakeholder info



- Wages are growing rapidly 9% in 2017, BUT expenditures of every household have also grown, - communal services has grown in 2017 for 9% and are growing
- Consumer optimism remains high thanks to strong wage increases, BUT private persons that are late with payments for banks and non-bank lenders are 97 000, and for utilities - 154 000 (Data from Kredītinformācijas birojs)

Case: 2018 progressive tax reform partly successful

- Implemented with a significant flaw - families with children in most cases cannot qualify to claim non-taxable minimum.
- The reform was implemented unsupported by wide information campaign at is at danger of being revoked.

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Suggested strategies for country reviews (1)



- 1) Assessment of the national implementation of EU policies that affect every household (such as Energy Union, Single Digital Market) and individual (indicators, modelling)

Case 1: Significantly increased costs for energy (mandatory procurement, transmission and distribution on top of energy price)

Case: Sustainable water management - in rural areas monthly payment of 5-7 EUR prevents households to access to newly built water supply infrastructure

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Suggested strategies for country reviews (2)



2) More analysis on impact of regional policies (more indicators and policy proposals)

Case: Transportation, access to work

3) More indicators for labour market analysis

Case: Quadrupled number of people with disability in labour force from 2012, currently at 9, 3% of inhabitants, 13% of unemployed

4) Promoting benchmarking with the best practises across EU

Example: Social housing policies in Sweden vs. social housing in Latvia

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Suggested strategies for country reviews (3)



5) More actions to specific vulnerable groups (victims of abuse, young people leaving institutions, Roma, children, etc.) and integrated strategies at national and local levels

6) More investment in parties representing other groups than that of social dialogue (representing minority of the society), but working with human capital - people with disability, youth, women, elderly, minority, refugee support etc. organisations, representing unleashed potential of significant groups of Latvian (European) society engaging and empowering them

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Some of actions required on EU scale



- Fighting age and gender discrimination across EU (with a special target - companies and HR personnel)

Case: young, often international HR personnel vs ageing population

- More investment in uptaking new skills and careers in cooperation with businesses and civil society organisations representing vulnerable groups and large dissemination of the best practises
- Dealing with discriminatory services such as delivery of goods to the New member states

Case: a postage of purchase from Germany to Germany 5,99, from Germany to France, Belgium, UK - 9,99, from Germany to Poland, Latvia, Slovakia - 29,99