

Common social values in the European Union: stocktaking, with a focus on social inclusion and social protection

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This report written for the Luxembourg Presidency aims to outline widely shared values, principles, recommendations and ways forward on social objectives for the EU. It begins by setting out key Treaty provisions and documents from the relevant institutions, including the Council and the Social Protection Committee, where consensual views have been expressed on overarching social objectives. It then highlights challenges and developments in taking forward common social values in recent years, in particular endeavours to bring economic and social objectives together in times of crisis and consolidation, and to ensure that improving the social situation is a widely shared priority, with synergy created by EU institutions and Member States acting together.

Key areas of action to pursue common social values are the social Open Method of Coordination and the Europe 2020 Strategy. The bulk of the report analyses specific areas of EU co-operation in the social field, identifying shared objectives, agreed indicators, monitoring and mutual learning (including peer reviews). In particular, it focuses on social inclusion (combating poverty and social exclusion; child poverty and wellbeing; homelessness and housing exclusion) and social protection (pensions, healthcare, long-term care).

The report concludes by summarising some of the important achievements in advancing the shared social objectives of the EU. It warns, however, that significant challenges remain and that it is essential to maintain and strengthen EU social objectives. To achieve this requires renewed commitment to strengthened governance mechanisms, mainstreaming of social objectives and systematic social impact assessments of all relevant policies, at both EU and Member State levels.

For the full paper see: <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/actualites/notes-fond/2015/07/info-epsco-documents/index.html>

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