European Social Observatory

Activity Report 2016
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**INTRODUCTION**

The year 2016 has called into question the future of the European Union: the UK vote in favour of leaving the EU, ongoing migrant and refugee’s flows, terrorism threat and the rise of populist political parties showed the EU the limits of its decision-making capacity. And yet, there were a few concrete reasons that warrant a prudently optimistic reading of the current situation. Taken together, Commission President Juncker’s preliminary Proposal on a European Pillar of Social Rights and the gradual ‘socialization’ of the European Semester may open a window of opportunity for a stronger social dimension.

This challenging European context is being reflected in the European Social Observatory (OSE) activity during 2016, which addressed the issues that are at the heart of the current research and policymaking agenda. As a result of this vibrant activity, the OSE was ranked among the **top 100 social policy think tanks** worldwide by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania, together with renowned institutions such as Brueghel and the Max Planck Institute: we are thrilled with this external recognition of the quality and independence of our research activity.

We are happy to have kick-started several exciting **new research** projects in the course of 2016, examining the Commission’s preliminary European Pillar of Social Rights, the role of social partners in the EU’s economic governance, policies for an aged workforce, sickness benefits in the EU, pensions for workers in hazardous jobs and finally the issue of work-life balance for carers of dependent persons, which has become increasingly important in several member states and at the EU level.

Other projects that we **continued** developing from last year were the follow-up of EU level developments with an impact on health care systems, the OSE’s annual state of play of ‘Social Policy in the EU’ (the 2016 edition presented the 17th annual report), the International Digest for the *Revue Belge de Sécurité Sociale* (RBSS) and the analysis of the social situation in Belgium.

We continued to cultivate the ties to European research **networks**, including through the Commission-funded European Social Policy Network (ESPN) and research on social investment in human rights and capabilities (RE-InVest, Horizon 2020). We successfully finalized the project on ‘a new pension mix’ for the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), as well as the Commission-funded PROWELFARE project, which examined the role of social partners in welfare protection through occupational schemes.

As a result, the OSE’s **publication record** in the past year is again rather impressive. All in all, the nine OSE researchers have been engaged in **15 projects** in 2016, which resulted in more than **46 publications**. The OSE Working Papers published in 2016 - including the 10 PROWELFARE country studies - have been downloaded more than **5,700** times. All OSE Working Papers taken together (including previously published papers) have been downloaded more than **12,000** times during 2016.
A number of in-house tools further enhanced the **dissemination** of OSE expertise and knowledge to a large audience of researchers, think-tanks, EU and national social partner representatives (both trade unions and employers’ organisations) and other social stakeholders such as European non-governmental organisations (NGOs):

- The organisation of conferences and seminars: **8 events** throughout 2016;
- The OSE website, which received on average **4,900** unique visitors every month throughout 2016;
- The OSE Flash News (over **1,400** subscribers in 2016) and the European Health Care News (over **1,100** subscribers) further enlarged our readership in Europe and beyond;
- The use of social media is a new feature in the OSE’s disseminations strategy: the OSE Twitter account has more than **1,400** followers, more than **900** persons follow us through LinkedIn;
- Finally, the OSE produces audio podcasts and short videos for selected events.

This 2016 Activity report is organised as follows: Section 1 provides a short presentation of the OSE’s goals, resources and organisational structure. Section 2 presents the OSE team in 2016 and describes each of the staff’s main tasks and activities. Section 3 describes the projects carried out by the OSE during the past year. Section 4 presents a list of events (co)organised by the OSE. Section 5 provides a taste of the team member’s participation in various activities. Section 6 provides key output data (i.e. the OSE’s ‘reach’). Finally, Section 7 shows the full list of publications to which OSE researchers contributed in 2016.

The various new projects in the pipeline for 2017 open the perspective of hiring new academic staff in 2017, which will allow to enhance the OSE’s labour market and social protection expertise. New research will include (social protection challenges of) new forms of labour, the issue of digitalisation, social impact assessment of new EU initiatives and making the European Pillar of Social Rights happen. At the same time, we will continue to enhance our institutional capacity: 2017 will see both the extension of the geographical scope and institutional embedding of both the Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

The European Social Observatory team underwent several changes in 2016: Slavina Spasova joined the research team in January, Hugues Devos started working as a secretary since mid-August 2016: this new energy bolstered our ability to scrutinize the new debates on the European social agenda.

On behalf of the OSE team, I thank you for your interest in our activity.

Bart Vanhercke,
Director.
1. THE OSE IN A NUTSHELL: GOALS, RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION

The European Social Observatory (OSE) was founded in 1984 and is nowadays a leading centre for research, information and training, specialised in the social dimension of the European Union. It has a forward-looking approach and operates as a think-tank, identifying issues as they emerge. The OSE was ranked among the top 100 social policy think tanks worldwide by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania in 2016, together with renowned institutions such as Brueghel (Brussels) and the Max Planck Institute (Cologne). The think tanks in this category provide ‘superior innovative research and strategic analyses’ on topics pertaining to social issues and challenges.

The OSE is a partner organisation in several European Research Programmes and is actively involved in some major networks of academic excellence in Europe and North America. The OSE works closely with the Belgian and European public authorities, as well as with trade unions (including in the context of TURI, a network of research institutes close to the trade union movement) and civil society organisations (including the Platform of European Social NGO’s). As a result, it has acquired specialist, in-depth knowledge on the social dimension of European integration and a profound understanding of the European context.

1.1 GOALS

The OSE’s main goals are to produce independent and state-of-the-art critical analysis of the social dimension of European integration. This implies, more concretely, that we:

- Analyse the impact of European integration on social and employment policies both at EU level and within the Member States, as well as neighbouring countries;
- Conduct research, formulate policy proposals and produce training toolkits;
- Provide an ongoing platform for discussion for a wide range of stakeholders, especially trade union organisations;
- Widely disseminate the results of our reflections through the website, Newsletters, publications (incl. the OSE Working Papers), social media, short videos and events.

1.2 RESOURCES

The OSE consists of a pluralist, multidisciplinary and multilingual team of nine researchers and analysts, bolstered by a highly efficient administrative back office, six research associates and by interns from all over Europe and North America. Together they:

- Have a variety of expertise in cross-cutting areas such as economic and monetary union and its impact on the social dimension of European integration, institutional issues and the EU’s social policy-making mechanisms (including policy coordination, EU legislation, social dialogue and EU funding);
- Are able to draw upon a broad-based network of public authorities, (academic and other) researchers, think tanks, European and national social partner representatives and other social stakeholders (especially members of the Social Platform);

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1 McGann (2017) 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. [http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=think_tanks](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=think_tanks)
• Have more than 20 years of expertise in organising both major conferences and smaller events - amongst other things, within the framework of European Framework Programmes (FP6 and 7) and EU-funded research.

• Can draw on in-house resources, which include:
  o the website (in English and French): a valuable source of up-to-date information on OSE projects, publications, events and staff, which is also reflected in the regular OSE Flash News;
  o the Health Care Newsletter (in English, French and Dutch) provides regular summaries of current EU developments that might affect national health care systems;
  o the Working Paper Series encompasses three different publications – ‘Research', 'Briefing' and 'Opinion' papers – written by the OSE researchers as well as our Research Associates and prominent outside scholars;
  o the Lunchtime Sessions, at which leading academics, policymakers and stakeholders regularly shed light on issues topping the EU agenda before an audience of OSE researchers and their guests;
  o the LinkedIn page (OSE Group, more than 900 members) and Twitter account (@OSE_be, around 1,400 followers).

1.3 Organisational Structure

The day-to-day management of the OSE lies in the hands of Bart Vanhercke and Françoise Verri. Bart Vanhercke has been Director since 2010: he takes care of the management of the team as well as the broad research strategy (including call for tenders). Françoise Verri, the Director's Assistant, manages the administrative team as well as organisational and budgetary issues. The Director is supported in his tasks by Denis Bouget, who is Senior Scientific Advisor at the OSE.

Altogether the nine OSE researchers cover the following policy areas: employment and labour markets, restructuring and industrial change; education and training; gender and diversity; institutional matters; health care; poverty and social exclusion; social dialogue; welfare systems and pensions; and finally governance (European Semester, European Pillar of Social Rights etc.). Each staff member’s golden paragraph can be found in Section 2, while more detailed profiles of all team members (scientific and administrative) can be found on the Team page of the website.

The elected Board of Directors jointly oversees the activities of the OSE, while the General Assembly brings together the broader group of stakeholders around the OSE. The Scientific Advisory Board provides independent scientific advice from renowned scholars, for example in the context of the peer review of the OSE Working Paper Series and the selection of new researchers.
1.4 Funding

The diversity of the projects described in Section 3 demonstrates that the OSE continues to be funded through a variety of sources, which include, in order of importance: (1) research contracts with and subsidies from Belgian federal and regional authorities, including wage subsidies from the Brussels regional employment office (ACTIRIS): altogether these national resources represented around 55% of our funding in 2016; (2) contracts with European and international institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and European Economic and Social Committee): nearly 33% of our funding; (3) contracts with and subsidies from European and Belgian trade union organisations, notably the Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC/ACV): around 11% of the OSE budget in 2016; (4) other resources, including various academic collaborations and consultancy (less than 1% of the budget).

2. THE OSE STAFF: GOLDEN PARAGRAPHS

The OSE was made up of 13 staff members during 2016: nine researchers and four administrative staff. Seven interns (including one ‘professional immersion’) provided important additional human resources in terms of research assistance and to help develop the OSE social media strategy.

2.1 The Scientific Team

Rita Baeten – Senior Policy Analyst – Health Care and European Integration
Rita Baeten, Master in Social Sciences, is a Senior policy analyst at the OSE. Her research activities focus on the impact of European integration on national healthcare systems and on their social character. Her research topics include themes such as EU economic governance and health systems; patient mobility in the EU; healthcare services in the internal market; and EU-level co-operation in the field of healthcare. Rita Baeten advises the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI) on EU policy developments with a potential impact on healthcare in Belgium and coordinated the scientific preparation and follow-up of several international and ministerial conferences on EU integration and health systems. During 2016 she worked, amongst others, on the EU’s economic surveillance of national healthcare systems, varieties of healthcare reform, soins médicaux programmés à l’étranger: autorisations délivrées par les mutuelles belges (NIHDI contract) and the Re-Invest project. She has been work leader for the OSE contribution to several projects financed by the European Commission under its Framework Programmes for Research. These include Re-Invest (2015-2018), ECAB (2010-2013) and “Europe for patients” (2004-2007).

Cécile Barbier – Senior Researcher – Institutional Developments, Citizenship, Immigration
Cécile Barbier, Master in Political Science, is a senior researcher at the OSE. Her research activities include institutional developments, citizenship and immigration. Since 1992, she has followed the institutional debates and the consequences of European integration from the federal point of view, including the revision of the European treaties, and immigration policies. She is a keen observer of the EU’s economic governance and the associated issues of democratic legitimacy of the newly established framework, which includes a new yet contested role played by the European Central Bank in containing the euro crisis. She has taught initiation to politics (European issues) at the Trade Union School, Centrale nationale des employés (CNE), since 2008. She has also done some work at UCL’s Open Faculty for Economic and Social Sciences (FOPES) and at the Institut des hautes études en communication sociale (IHECS). During 2016, she worked, amongst others on the ‘European Digest - International Digest’ for the quarterly Belgian Review for Social Security (RBSS) and published in Econosphères.

Dr. Denis Bouget – Senior Scientific Advisor – Social Protection Systems, Social Exclusion, Long-Term Care
Denis Bouget, PhD in Economics at the University of Rennes (France), is senior scientific advisor at the OSE and associate researcher at the European Trade Union Institute (Brussels). Between 1981 and 2010 he has been lecturer and then professor at the University of Nantes (France), where he is now Emeritus. His main research topics are the long-term care for frail elderly (80s), social exclusion and minimum income (90s) and international comparison of social protection systems. He has been a Member of the Observatory on the national policies to combat social exclusion, (1990-1994), is co-editor of the Work and Welfare in Europe Series at Palgrave Macmillan. He was the Director of the *Maison des Sciences de l’Homme* (MSH) at the University of Nantes (1999-2005), Coordinator of a COST Action on reforms of social protection in a period of globalisation and Europeanisation (1999-2004) and was the General coordinator of a Network of Excellence on Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe (RECWOWE) between 2006 and 2011. During 2016, he worked on a variety of issues – including sick pay and sickness benefit schemes; tackling long-term unemployment; and work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). He was co-editor (with Bart Vanhercke and David Natali) of the OSE’s flagship book on ‘Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2016’.

**Dalila Ghailani – Senior Researcher – European Law, Employment and Work, Gender Equality**

Dalila Ghailani, Master in Law and Advanced Master in European Business Law, is a senior researcher at the (OSE). She has 15 years of experience in monitoring a range of issues related to the social dimension of the EU, including employment policies, social protection, fundamental rights, gender issues, and the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU. She has conducted several studies for EU institutions, including the European Commission (assessment of the capacity of welfare systems and private enterprises to encourage older workers to stay in the labour market; assessment of the EU legal framework for the coordination of social security schemes and the portability of supplementary pension rights); the European Parliament (assessment of French and Belgian political parties’ policies and strategies for gender balance in the European Parliament, 2015; assessment of the impact of the crisis on Fundamental Rights in Belgium, 2015) and the European Economic and Social Committee (assessing the feasibility of introducing a European instrument relating to non-contributory minimum income schemes for able-bodied persons of working age, 2013). During 2016, she worked amongst others on violations of fundamental rights, policies for an aged workforce in Europe (PAWESU project) and *soins médicaux programmés à l’étranger* authorisations délivrées par les mutuelles belges (NIHDI contract).

**Dr. David Natali - Senior Researcher – The Politics of Pension Reforms**

David Natali, PhD in Political Science from the European University Institute of Florence (EUI, 2002), was an Associate Professor at the University of Bologna, Faculty of Political Science in Forlì and senior researcher at the OSE until December 2016. The specific focus of his research is the coordination of social protection and social inclusion policy through the Open Method of Coordination, the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy. He is also working on social concertation and social dialogue in broader terms. David Natali has been involved in several European integrated projects and networks of excellence financed through the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes. He has coordinated several research projects on pensions and the EU social dimension and the comparative analysis of pension reforms. He is co-chair of the Italian section of ESPAnet (European Network of Social Policy Analysis) and member of the Editorial Board of European Policy Analysis (EPA). In the past, he has worked on research projects for the Commission (on the portability of pension rights) and the Belgian government (on pension reforms in Europe and active ageing). During 2016, David worked on the project Commission-funded project ‘Providing welfare through social dialogue, PROWELFARE’ (of which he was Scientific Director), differentiation within the EU, the OSE’s flagship book on ‘Social Policy in the EU’ (as a co-editor with Bart Vanhercke and Denis Bouget), structural reforms in Europe, and retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs (ESPN project).

**Ramón Peña-Casas - Senior Researcher – Poverty, Social Inclusion, Employment and work**
Ramón Peña-Casas, Master in Sociology, is a senior researcher at the OSE. With a background in sociology and extensive expertise in the field of socio-economic analysis, he joined the OSE team in 2000. Since then, he has coordinated or worked on many European and national projects on a range of different subjects. The full list of these is available on his personal page on the OSE website. His various areas of expertise cover, in particular, the diagnosis and comparative analysis of cross-cutting socio-economic issues affecting the various aspects of the European Union’s social dimension: poverty and social exclusion, social assistance and minimum income, quality of employment and work, in-work poverty, insecure employment, working conditions, active labour market policies and activation, flexicurity, restructuring, active ageing and corporate social responsibility. Ramón Peña-Casas is also versed into the development, quality and political use of statistical indicators in OMCs (including employment, social inclusion and pensions). During 2016, he worked amongst others on ‘Policies for an aged workforce in Europe’ (Commission-funded PAWEU project) and updating and improving the indicators used in the NSR and the NRP (FPS Social Security).

**Dr. Sebastiano Sabato – Researcher – European Integration, Policy Learning, Governance**

Sebastiano Sabato holds a PhD in Political Science at the *Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane* (SUM) in Florence with a doctoral thesis (2013) on "The Impact of the Open Method of Coordination on National Policies: an Analysis of the Peer Review meetings in the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion". He holds a Master's Degree in Economics and Politics of European Integration from the University of Bologna, Faculty of Political Sciences (*Forlì*). In 2013, he worked as a part-time post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Social and Political Science of the University of Milan and, in 2014-2015, he worked at the Department of Sociology of the Antwerp University. Since February 2014 he has been working as researcher on European Integration at the OSE. Currently, his research interests include EU socio-economic governance, social inclusion policies (both at the European and national levels), occupational welfare, social innovation and industrial relations. During 2016 he worked, amongst others, on structural reforms in Europe, the uncertain fate of the EU social investment strategy and the usage of EU resources in local social innovation.

**Dr. Slavina Spasova – Researcher – Social Protection, Social dialogue, Trade Unions, Pension reforms**

Slavina Spasova, PhD in Political Science (September 2015), is a researcher in the area of social protection at the OSE and a Research Associate at the *Centre d'étude de la vie politique* (CEVIPOL - Université Libre de Bruxelles). Her work has explored the transformation process of the Bulgarian trade unions since 1989, and their involvement in building social institutions through the mechanisms of international socialisation and ‘usages of Europe’. Her research agenda focuses on various social protection and employment related subjects, including systemic pension reforms in Central and Eastern European countries, labour market reforms and social dialogue. Additionally, Slavina has been involved in projects carried out for the Norwegian government and the International Labor Organisation, and has followed Belgian social developments for the social monitoring website « Planet Labor » since August 2015. Hired in January 2016, she worked on a variety of issues – including Sick pay and sickness benefit schemes; work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives; and retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). She equally contributed to the PAWEU project (case study research).

**Dr. Bart Vanhercke – Director and Senior Researcher - European Integration, Social Protection and Social Inclusion, Governance**

Bart Vanhercke, PhD in Social Science, has been Director at the European Social Observatory since 2010. He is therefore in charge of the broad research strategy, the internal organisation of the team, managing the budget with Françoise Verri, and overseeing the OSE communication strategy. His current research focuses on the social dimension of European economic governance (including the EU's economic surveillance of national healthcare systems), a topic on which he also works as associate academic staff at the Centre for Sociological Research (CESO), the University of Leuven. Earlier research experience dealt with the Europeanization of domestic social inclusion, health care and pensions policies through different EU policy instruments and the social challenges of EMU and EU enlargement.
Bart Vanhercke was appointed, for the academic year 2013-2014, Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of the Saint-Louis University (FUSL). In March 2016, he obtained his PhD (cum laude) at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam. He was appointed as Policy Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA Berlin) in November 2015. He was appointed associate academic staff at the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, KULeuven) in June 2016. During 2016, he worked on a variety of issues – including tackling long-term unemployment; sick pay and sickness benefit schemes; work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives; and retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN), of which he is Social Protection leader. He was the lead editor of the OSE’s flagship book on ‘Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2016’, together with David Natali and Denis Bouget.

2.2  THE OSE BACK OFFICE: THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Hugues Devos - Secretary
Hugues Devos started working as a secretary since mid-August 2016. He manages the OSE database together with Renaud Smoes. He also checks the bibliographical references of the various OSE publications, under the supervision of Françoise Verri, and makes sure that they are consistent. For events organised by the OSE, he manages registrations, sends out invitations and confirmations, and welcomes participants. He is responsible, with the help of Renaud Smoes, for sending out information to everyone in our database.

Benoît Malice - Web Assistant
Benoît Malice provides logistics support for conferences (preparing files of documents, reception – publication displays). He performs various secretarial tasks: document-binding, photocopies, transcribing texts, etc. He is in charge of the layout of the ‘OSE Paper Series’. He performs a number of support tasks for the website: input to the various sections of the site, html layout of the newsletter ‘European Health Care News’ (French, Dutch and English); corrections and addition of various sections (French and English); checking all web pages, uploading new content, updating bibliographical references in the publications pages.

Renaud Smoes – Webmaster
Renaud Smoes manages the IT equipment and security, manages and updates the OSE site, project webpages and contact database, analyses and implements online working solutions such as Basecamp and Google Drive, which have proved to be an essential tool for managing the constant flow of documents in the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). He manages the OSE Flash News and the ‘European Health Care News’ newsletter (html layout, sending out the letter, mailing list). His other tasks include events organisation (invitations, management of the subscriptions, welcoming, technical support) and generating graphic material for researchers, slides and visual aids for OSE events.

Françoise Verri - Director’s Assistant
Françoise Verri works with the OSE Director on calls for tender, manages the administrative team and the finances of the institution, produces financial reports for all projects (both European and national), draws up the budgets and is responsible for the administrative management of the OSE (staff, relations with outside bodies, supplies, etc.). She draws up the accounts, makes payments, is responsible for invoicing and VAT, as well as for the organisation and practical coordination of books, papers, programmes, invitations, etc., the revision of notes and reports, and managing translations for the various publications. Finally, she draws up the minutes of the key meetings: the Board of directors, General Assembly, and monthly meetings of the research team.
2.3 OSE Internships

The OSE concluded internship agreements with the University of Milan as well as with Brigham Young University (Utah, United States). Roskilde University, the University of Amsterdam and the Universities of Florence and Bologna have been sending students on a regular basis, while we regularly receive direct applications from individuals. As a result, Bachelor and Master students in political science, sociology, economy and law continuously contribute to the OSE research activities. For most OSE interns their stay at the OSE is a mandatory part of their curriculum, for which they receive a scholarship. In 2016, the OSE received seven interns from University of Bologna (IT), Brigham University (US), Università degli Studi di Milano (IT), Roskilde University (DK), University of Amsterdam (NL) and Bologna University (see table 1). Valentina Lisi (Bologna) joined us with a ‘vocational immersion’ agreement with ACTIRIS: such a vocational immersion contract is an internship contract enabling the intern to acquire practical knowledge and learn professional skills by carrying out a job; the focus is on training and learning an intern.

The OSE provides these students with opportunities to network with top researchers and politicians in various fields, as well as (in case of an outstanding internship) with letters of recommendation that they can take to future job interviews. For many interns at the OSE, it is the first time that they get to experience work in research, which often proves to be invaluable in their future career decisions. Interns are involved at different levels in a variety of research projects covering all employment and social fields. They contribute in the form of interview work, drafting minutes of events, desk research, editing work, interview transcriptions and translation. Intern’s written pieces regularly appear in the final form of some of the OSE’s publications, and are acknowledged as such (in several cases, interns have been recognized as co-authors).

Table 1. OSE interns in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Sending Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Eleonora Erittu</strong></td>
<td>1 November – 1 February 2016</td>
<td>University of Bologna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Valentina Lisi</strong></td>
<td>4 January – 29 February 2016</td>
<td>University of Bologna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Joseph A. Heath</strong></td>
<td>27 April – 17 June 2016</td>
<td>Brigham Young University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Jeffery Williams</strong></td>
<td>9 May – 30 July 2016</td>
<td>Brigham Young University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Luca Mapelli</strong></td>
<td>6 April – 4 August 2016</td>
<td>University of Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Christos Louvaris</strong></td>
<td>3 October – 20 December 2016</td>
<td>University of Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. NUTS AND BOLTS: RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2016

This section provides a snapshot overview of the 15 research projects the OSE team managed in 2016. More details on each of them can be found on the Project page of the OSE website (in EN and FR).

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was established in July 2014 on the initiative of the European Commission to provide high quality and timely independent information, advice, analysis and expertise on social policy issues in the European Union and neighbouring countries. In particular, the ESPN is supporting the Commission in monitoring progress towards the EU's social protection and social inclusion objectives. It provides the Commission with a comprehensive overview of policies on social protection and social inclusion in the countries covered, including their strengths and weaknesses. At the heart of the ESPN are country teams of more than a hundred independent experts on social protection and social inclusion policies. The Network covers 35 countries - the 28 EU Member States plus seven other countries. The ESPN is managed jointly by the LISER Research Institute (lead partner, based in Luxembourg), the independent research company APPLICA (Belgium) and the OSE. The OSE team members working on this project in 2016: Denis Bouget, Dalila Ghailani, David Natali, Slavina Spasova and Bart Vanhercke (ESPN Social Protection leader).

3.2 **Policies for an Aged Workforce in the EU (PAWEU), European Commission (2015 – 2017)**

In spite of the current strong emphasis in all EU countries on means to tackle youth unemployment, the participation of older individuals in the labour market remains a significant policy challenge. This is due to the interplay of the current recession, the ageing of the population and the need to control public welfare spending (pensions, unemployment benefits and social assistance). In this context, the OSE collaborated in a European Commission-funded project, called Policies for an Aged Workforce in the EU (PAWEU). The project is coordinated by the Fondazione G. Brodolini. Other partners are the Italian Social Security Institute and the Romanian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly. This project aims at comparing and assessing the capacity of welfare systems and private enterprises to encourage older workers (50-69 years old) to stay in work as long as possible, while protecting them against unemployment and social exclusion risks. OSE researchers involved in this project: Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas (lead researcher) and Slavina Spasova.


The OSE was contracted by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) to conduct research, which resulted in the 17th edition of this annual edited volume. The 2016 edition of this publication featured authors such as Sergio Fabbrini (beyond disintegration: political and institutional prospects of the European Union), Sotiria Theodoropoulou (what solidarity in the Eurozone after the Greek crisis of 2015?), as well as Anke Hassel and Bettina Wagner (the EU’s ‘migration crisis’: challenge, threat or opportunity?). In the concluding chapter, David Natali advocates the need for a new approach in Europe in which Member States and EU institutions need to tackle difficult issues in a determined way (‘take the bull by the horns’). Through the assessment of varying fields such as long-term unemployment (Denis Bouget and Bart Vanhercke), occupational safety and health (Aïda Ponce Del Castillo) and fundamental rights (Dalila Ghailani), the contributors to this research project present a thorough analysis of the main social developments that took place in Europe during the year 2015. The book is concluded with a chronology of the key events in European social policy (Cécile Barbier). The entire volume (which exists in English and French) can be downloaded for free. Editors: Bart Vanhercke, David Natali and Denis Bouget.

The OSE and the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, University of Leuven) continued conducting research for the Belgian Federal Social Security administration (FPS), with a view to updating and improving the indicators used in the Belgian National Social Report (NSR) and the National Reform Programme (NRP). As part of this research, Ramón Peña-Casas provided a detailed picture of (very) low work intensity households in Belgium. He drew on register data available in the ‘Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection’ (Datawarehouse marché du travail et protection sociale), which is managed by Crossroads Bank of Social Security. The research work should be continued in 2017.

3.5 REBUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, VALUE-BASED EUROPE OF SOLIDARITY AND TRUST THROUGH SOCIAL INVESTMENTS (RE-INVEST), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015 - 2019)

In 2013, as a response to rising inequalities, poverty and distrust in the EU, the European Commission launched a major endeavour to rebalance economic and social policies with the Social Investment Package (SIP). Funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme, the RE-InVEST project aims to strengthen the philosophical, institutional and empirical underpinnings of the SIP, based on social investment in human rights and capabilities. The project actively involves European citizens severely affected by the crisis in the co-construction of a more powerful and effective social investment agenda. The OSE contributes to this project by applying the model of social investment to public intervention in the health care sector and in the formulation of policy recommendations. The OSE team member working on this project: Rita Baeten.

3.6 THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS: POTENTIAL BENCHMARKING INDICATORS, EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (2016)

The aim of this report for the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) was to shed light on potential indicators to be used in the framework of the consultation process launched by the European Commission on a new instrument of social benchmarking, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR). It aims to contribute to the enhancing and the monitoring of an upward convergence among countries of the Eurozone and the European Union (EU). The focus in this report is on three particular domains: minimum wage, industrial relations and guaranteed minimum income. OSE researchers involved in this project: Ramón Peña-Casas.

3.7 SICK PAY AND SICKNESS BENEFIT SCHEMES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2016)

The report on sick leave and sick pay/sickness benefit schemes in the EU - drawn up by the OSE at the request of the European Commission in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) - sheds light on the huge variations in the way Member States address absence from work in case of temporary professional incapacity due to sickness. This report, which was published as a Social Protection Committee (SPC) background report, also identifies an increasingly important challenge faced by social protection which can at first sight be seen as the opposite of absence from work due to illness, namely presenteeism, i.e. the phenomenon of going to work while being in poor health. Much more difficult to quantify in terms of costs than the absence from work, presenteeism seems to have become a key issue for policymakers to tackle for several reasons. Presenteeism, and the example in some countries of the use of holiday days for sick leave, would seem to call into question the notion of
‘decent work’ in European societies. OSE researchers involved in this project: Slavina Spasova (lead researcher), Denis Bouget and Bart Vanhercke.

3.8 FOLLOW UP OF EU LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS WITH AN IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS, RIZIV/INAMI (2015-2017)

Since 2002, the OSE collaborates closely with the Belgian National Institute for Health and Invalidity Insurance (NIHDI/INAMI/RIZIV), providing the latter with expertise on EU policies with a potential impact on national health care systems. The 2016 activities included:

- Expert advice on EU policies with a potential impact on health care systems in general and the Belgian health care system in particular;
- The publication of a quarterly electronic newsletter on recent EU development with potential impact on national health care systems;
- The organisation of an international conference in early 2016 on EU Law and Policy and Health Systems;
- The organisation of a workshop with international experts in preparation of Handbook on EU Health Law and Policy, in cooperation with Sheffield School of Law;
- Research on: (a) EU economic governance and health systems, (b) prior authorisation practices for treatment abroad in Belgium and (c) scope for EU level cooperation in the field of price fixing and reimbursement of highly innovative medicines and medical devices.

OSE team members working on this project: Rita Baeten (lead researcher) and Dalila Ghailani.

3.9 UNEMPLOYMENT AND PENSIONS PROTECTION IN EUROPE: THE CHANGING ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS (PROWELFARE), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2014-2016)

The PROWELFARE project started in December 2014. It was a two-year project coordinated by the European Social Observatory (OSE) which involved ten partners covering nine EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK). PROWELFARE examined the role of social partners - particularly of trade unions - in the provision of welfare protection through occupational schemes. Specific objectives of the project were:

- To provide clarification, to systematically collect information through case studies, and to define a new classification/typology for the comparative analysis of occupational welfare in Europe;
- To demonstrate the interplay between social and occupational welfare on one hand, and between social dialogue and occupational welfare on the other hand, while also looking at the complex governance of occupational welfare schemes;
- To disseminate knowledge and improve social dialogue.

The PROWELFARE project - financed by the European Commission - was organised around six main activities: the first two concern data gathering and national case studies, the following three involve a cross-country analysis, the sixth and last concerns the dissemination of results (including through national workshops, roundtable discussions and a final conference). OSE researchers involved in this project in 2016: David Natali (scientific director), Bart Vanhercke (general coordinator), Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas and Sebastiano Sabato.

The OSE continued working for the Belgian Federal Public Service (FPS) Social Security with a view to writing the ‘International Digest’ for the quarterly Belgian Review for Social Security (Revue Belge de Sécurité sociale, RBSS). The digest will continue to provide a regular overview of international developments (EU, OECD, ILO etc.) that have a direct or indirect impact on social protection and social inclusion policies and debates. The RBSS/BTSZ is available online, in French and Dutch. OSE researchers involved in this project: Cécile Barbier.

3.11 Social Partners’ Multilevel Involvement in the European Semester, European Trade Union Institute (2016)

This project with the European trade Union Institute (ETUI) explored the involvement of national and EU social partners (employers and trade union organisations) in the procedures of the European Semester. It examined (a) the mechanisms for social partner involvement; (b) the outcomes of this involvement; (c) its quality, including during the most recent developments in the Semester process; and (d) the remaining challenges for effective social partner involvement. Research on social partner involvement in the European Semester is still at an early stage. This project therefore proposes a future research agenda. A better understanding is needed of the opportunities and challenges deriving from interaction between the social partners and civil society organisations at both the European and national levels. OSE researchers involved in this project: Sebastiano Sabato (lead researcher), Bart Vanhercke and Slavina Spasova.


With inequality increasing across Europe and the EU not on track to achieve the Europe 2020 social objectives, the UK-based European Social Network (ESN) again asked the OSE to provide scientific underpinning of its work on the European Semester. The focus is on the impact of austerity policies on public social services management and provision, territorial disparities and evidence-based policy-making. Policy areas covered include children's services, homelessness and housing exclusion, community care and de-institutionalization as well as services to immigrants and refugees. The report provides the substance for ESN’s proposals regarding the 2017 Country-specific Recommendations. OSE researchers involved in this project: Sebastiano Sabato (lead researcher) and Bart Vanhercke.


This book – based on a research project carried out by the OSE with the financial support of the ETUI – looks at the most recent developments in pension policy and politics in Europe and advances our understanding of the field in three respects: firstly, it contributes to improve our knowledge of the most recent reform wave passed in the wake of the recent economic and financial crisis; secondly, it assesses the long-term financial and social sustainability of pensions; thirdly, it analyses the politics of pensions and the way policymakers and stakeholders interact in order to address the major challenges to pensions. The edited volume is expected to be published in summer 2017. OSE researchers involved in this project: David Natali.
3.14 FISCAL AUSTERITY AND THE WELFARE STATE, EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (2015-2016)

The OSE finalized the research for the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) aimed at developing a critical assessment of the welfare reforms adopted by the Member States in the wake of the economic and fiscal crisis. The research project embraced a larger set of policies: labour market policies, social policies (pensions), education, R&D, and public-sector reforms. Some of these areas are typical examples of the so-called ‘structural reforms’ supported by international organisations and the EU. The project culminated in a book on ‘Balancing protection and investment: structural reforms in five countries’.
OSE researchers involved in this project: David Natali (project leader), Chiara Agostini, Valentina Lisi and Sebastiano Sabato.

3.15 POVERTY REDUCTION IN EUROPE: SOCIAL POLICY AND INNOVATION (IMPROVE), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015-2016)

The Centre for Social Policy (CSB) and the Centre on Inequality, Poverty, Social Exclusion and the City (OASES) at the University of Antwerp finalised a research project funded under the 7th Framework Programme that addressed key questions such as: how can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro level policies, and vice versa? How can the conditions be improved to move towards the Europe 2020 objectives?

The project resulted in Working Papers (co-authored with Gert Verschraegen) on ‘The usage of EU resources in local social innovation’ and ‘The EU framework for social innovation – Between entrepreneurship and policy experimentation’. OSE researchers involved in this project: Sebastiano Sabato (lead researcher) and Bart Vanhercke.

4. THE PLACES TO BE: OSE EVENTS IN SHORT

This section describes the eight events that have been (co-)organised by the OSE throughout 2016. More details can be found on the Past Events page of the OSE website. An overview of the participation of OSE researchers in events organised by other institutions is provided in Section 5 (‘Up close and Personal’).

28/01/2016 - Conference-debate - Health systems and EU law and policy: The state of the art and direction of travel – Brussels – OSE, the Sheffield School of Law and the National Institute of Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI/INAMI)

Chairs: Willy Palm (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies), Bart Vanhercke (OSE); Martin Myant (ETUI). Speakers: Johan De Cock (NIHDI); Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen (University of Copenhagen); Matthias Wismar (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies); Rita Baeten (OSE); Christoph Schwierz (European Commission, DG ECFIN); Tamara Hervey (University of Sheffield School of Law); Meri Koivusalo (National Institute for Health and Welfare); Hans Kluge (WHO Regional Office for Europe).

The EU’s involvement in health systems has been steadily expanding for over 20 years. Key events include the Patients’ Rights Directive and increased interest in the cost-effectiveness of European health systems, in the context of the austerity measures attendant upon the Eurozone crisis. The potential impact of international trade agreements on health systems is also subject to intense debate. This conference sought to understand these developments and discuss their policy implications.
06/05/2016 - Welfare State and Industrial Relations Trends in Poland and the European Union – Warsaw - PROWELFARE Roundtable Discussion

**Moderator:** Marianna Zieleńska (Institute of Public Affairs). **Speakers:** David Natali (OSE); Jan Czarzasty (Institute of Public Affairs); Marcin Zieleniecki (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy); Katarzyna Zimmer-Drabczyk (NSZZ Solidarność); Grzegorz Baczewski (Lewiatan Confederation); Józef Niemiec (ETUC); Isabella Biletta (EUROFOUND); Maarten Keune (AIAS); Dorota Szelewa (ICRA Foundation and University of Warsaw).

This public roundtable discussion represented a key opportunity for scholars as well as national and European stakeholders and policymakers to discuss the contribution of social dialogue to welfare state developments in Poland and the rest of Europe. Leading scholars more particularly shed light on recent developments associated with the expansion of so-called ‘contract welfare’ in nine European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Specific attention was paid to the challenges and opportunities of contract welfare in the reform of unemployment and pensions.

20/06/2016 - Combating Poverty in Europe: Active inclusion and the European Pillar of Social Rights - Brussel - OSE Lunchtime Session

**Keynote Speaker:** Bjørn Hvinden (Norwegian Social Research). **Discussant:** Freek Spinnewijn (Director, FEANTSA). **Chair:** Bart Vanhercke (OSE)

Discovering methods to effectively combat poverty and social exclusion has become a major political challenge in Europe, especially in the context of the future European Pillar of Social Rights. Bjørn Hvinden presented recent analysis of how this challenge is met by actors at European, national and subnational levels. Building on a European study comparing five Member States, a newly published book provides new insights into the processes and mechanisms that promote or hinder interaction between the increasingly multi-layered European system for responding to poverty and social exclusion in EU Member States.

22/06/2016 - Constructing social policy indicators – Brussels - OSE and ETUI Joint Workshop

**Keynote speakers:** Tom Bevers (EMCO Chair), Rudi Van Dam (Indicators Subgroup/SPC Chair) and Olivier Bontout (DG EMPL).

The OSE and ETUI organised a ‘by invitation only’ workshop, which aimed at equipping the two research institutes close to the labour movement with both the theoretical and practical aspects of constructing social policy indicators. Both the ETUI and OSE have been working on constructing indicators in the past, but as policy oriented indicators are becoming ever more important in European policy making - notably in in the light of the consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights - the research teams exchanged views with experts on the matter while acquiring a better knowledge of what data sources are available for the purpose.

31/08/2016 Occupational Welfare Trends in Austria and Germany: Focus on Pensions – Vienna - PROWELFARE Roundtable Discussion

**Speakers:** David Natali (OSE); Josef Wöss (AK Wien) and Florian Blank (Institute of Economic and Social Research, WSI in the Hans-Böckler-Foundation). **Panel Discussants:** Andreas Mörk (Federal Industry Section, Austrian Economic Chamber WKO); René Schindler (Austrian Trade Union for Production Workers PRO-GE); Maarten Keune (AIAS); Isabella Biletta (EUROFOUND). **Chair:** Bart Vanhercke (OSE)
This roundtable addressed the divergent trajectories of occupational pensions in Austria and Germany. Researchers as well as national and European stakeholders and policymakers discussed the contribution of social dialogue to welfare state developments in Austria and other EU Member States. Leading scholars shed light on the recent developments, challenges and opportunities associated with the development of contract welfare.


Keynote speakers: Jochen Clasen (University of Edinburgh), Bernhard Ebbinghaus (University of Mannheim), Bent Greve (Roskilde University), Maarten Keune (AIAS), Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (Oxford University) and Michel Servoz (European Commission). Chairs: David natali and Bart Vanhercke (OSE)

The Final Conference of the PROWELFARE research project brought together researchers, policymakers and stakeholders to discuss the role of social partners in the provision of ‘contractual welfare’. The project aimed at analysing the emergence of ‘occupational welfare’ in nine EU Member States. The research teams presented the core findings and policy implications of the project, which aims to ascertain whether and how supplementary welfare benefits in the areas of unemployment and pensions are made available through collective bargaining, or unilaterally by employers. Lead academics (EU and national), stakeholders and policymakers provided feedback and actively participate in the discussions.

06/12/2016 - How to build the European pillar of social rights? – Brussels – After work Panel Discussion

Keynote speakers: Allan Larsson (Special Advisor, European Commission), Maria João Rodrigues (Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats, EP), Esther Lynch (European Trade Union Confederation), Josef Wöss (Austrian Chamber of Labour) and Ruth Paserman (Cabinet of the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility). Chair: Bart Vanhercke (OSE)

This discussion addressed aspects such as the feasibility and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The panellists discussed how the proposed Pillar will be transposed into concrete actions at the EU level and how Member States can be convinced into accepting more guidance on achieving convergence towards higher social standards. This event was co-organised with the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (AK EUROPE), Diaconia Germany, SOLIDAR, the Representation of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the OSE.

08/12/2016 - Labour Market Reform and the Future of Europe after Brexit – Brussels – OSE Lunchtime Session

Keynote Speaker: Daniel Clegg (University of Edinburgh). Discussants: Amandine Crespy (Université libre de Bruxelles), Steven Van Hecke (KU Leuven). Chair: Bart Vanhercke (OSE)

During this Lunchtime Session Daniel Clegg argued that – perhaps – the departure from the Union of the UK, which has been an enthusiastic advocate for a ‘neoliberal’ approach to labour markets, opens a window of opportunity for a wider policy and paradigm reassessment in Europe. Amandine Crespy and Steven Van Hecke respectively provided feedback on the ‘social causes’ and ‘political consequences’ of Brexit, also in the light of the recent US elections.
5. UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL: TEAM MEMBER ACTIVITIES

28/01/2016 – Health systems and EU law and policy, The state of the art and direction of travel – Brussels
During this conference, jointly organised by the OSE, the NIHDI and the University of Sheffield, Rita Baeten presented on Explaining the EU's economic surveillance of healthcare systems.

11/02/2016 – Séminaire international de l'IRES sur le syndicalisme et les relations professionnelles – Paris
Slavina Spasova acted as Discussant on a paper discussing ‘La concertation tripartite en Bulgarie et Roumanie' by Violaine Delteil (université Paris III)

16/02/2016 – The European Semester - Towards a stronger involvement of social partners? – EUROFOUND Brussels
Bart Vanhercke presented his views on 'The involvement of the social partners in the European Semester: State of play and the way forward' during this Eurofound Lunch Debate with EU Social Partners.

Bart Vanhercke presented his views on 'Promoting Better Conditions for Integration and Social Investment' during this event organised by Public Policy Exchange.

23/02/2016 – CHES policy dialogue – Brussels
At the Coalition for Health, Ethics and Society (CHES) policy dialogue on ‘Economic governance and health', organised by the European Policy Centre (EPC), Rita Baeten presented on the Impact of EU’s economic surveillance of healthcare systems.

9/03/2016 – Audition relative à la dimension sociale du Semestre européen – Belgian Federal Parliament – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke gave his views on recent developments in the European Semester during this audition in the ‘Commission des Affaires sociales de la Chambre des représentants' of the Belgian Federal Parliament.


21/03/2016 – Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth (ACIG) – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke gave his views on the 'Social dimension of the European semester' during the ACIG (European Commission) annual conference.

21/04/2016 – Socialisation of the European semester – Louvain-la-Neuve
Bart Vanhercke gave a guest lecture on this topic in the course of Pierre Reman, Director of the FOPES (Université Catholique de Louvain, UCL).

26/04/2016 – Enabling a trade union influential presence in the EU semester - Madrid
Bart Vanhercke discussed the social dimension of the economic governance of the EMU at this European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) European Seminar.

28/04/2016 – Against the odds. The OMC as a selective amplifier for reforming Belgian pension policies – Louvain-la-Neuve
Bart Vanhercke gave a guest lecture on the topic in the course of Phillipe Poche, UCL/FOPES

04/05/2016 – Conference cycle on policy transformations in social security – Louvain-la Neuve
Within this conference cycle, organised by the UCL, Rita Baeten gave a guest college on « Soins de santé sur le plan européen. Enjeux et impact sur la politique de santé en Belgique ».

20/05/2016 – European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Local and Regional Governments – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke presented on ‘Economic and Monetary Union: what social dimension’ at this Working Group Meeting.

3/06/2016 – Seminar Finnish Pension Alliance (TELA) – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke participated in a Roundtable on Old-age poverty and pensions organised by TELA, in association with AEIP - The European Association of Paritarian Institutions.

10/06/2016 – Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke participated in this plenary meeting on EU Semester's implications for central government administrations.

21/06/2016 – Training of trainers, Formation Education and Culture (FEC), CSC – Bouge, Belgium
Training by Bart Vanhercke and Slavina Spasova on "La Protection Sociale en Europe. Tendances nationales et influences européennes".

Bart Vanhercke shared his views on The EU as a vehicle for social action during this conference on 'New routes to social justice: Empowering individuals and innovative forms of collective action'.

13/07/2016 – Audition of Belgian academic experts on European Pillar of Social rights, Representation of the European Commission in Belgium – Brussels
Ramón Peña-Casas was invited to express its vision of the Commission proposal for a European Pillar of Social rights.
Dalila Ghailani, David Natali, Ramón Peña-Casas, Sebastiano Sabato and Bart Vanhercke presented their views on occupational welfare at this PROWELFARE workshop.

05/09/2016 – High level expert consultation on Sustainable Health Systems – Vilnius
During this ministerial expert consultation, organised by the Lithuanian Health Forum, Rita Baeten intervened on the topic Sustainable health systems, a guarantee for public well-being.

8/09/2016 – Seminar PAWEU project – Policies for an Aged Workforce in the EU – Bucharest
Ramón Peña-Casas presented the OSE study on 'EU comparative report on situation, policies and practices for an aged workforce in the EU'.

09/09/2016 – The European Social Network (ESN)’s Reference Group on the European Semester
Bart Vanhercke and Sebastiano Sabato presented their draft analysis of the 2016 CSRs at this ESN meeting gathering representatives from 20 countries and 10 European Commission officials who discussed recent domestic developments and EU challenges.

14/09/2016 – RE-InVEST meeting – Liverpool
During the Reinvest project meeting in Liverpool, Rita Baeten presented on the EU economic governance of health systems. The public event of the meeting was attended by both the focus group participants of Liverpool and Maynooth.

21/09/2016 – Informal Meeting of the Social Protection Committee – Bratislava
Bart Vanhercke presented the ESPN Synthesis Report on 'Work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives' during an SPC Thematic Review on ‘Reconciliation between Private and Professional Lives’.

21/09/2016 – Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU conference on work-life Balance in a Changing Society – Bratislava
Bart Vanhercke presented the ESPN Synthesis Report on 'Work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives' at the Presidency event.

22/09/2016 – GRADUATE ENLIGHTEN - GEM SUMMER SCHOOL – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke chaired a Roundtable on The Welfare Union in Question: Healthcare & Social Housing of this Summer school for (PhD, MA & Young Leaders) at the ETUI.

27/09/2016 – Making the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality for Europe’s families: mind the gap – COFACE, Brussels
Bart Vanhercke intervened in the panel on ‘How to take the EU social rights pillar to the local level’, on behalf of the European Social Policy Network at COFACE Families Europe.

28/09/2016 – Debate - Sciences Po - Paris
Slavina Spasova acted as discussant of the edited volume by Violaine Delteil and Vassil Kirov (eds.) (2016) on 'Labour and Social Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. Europeanization and beyond'.
15/10/2016 – MCHP 2016 Seminar: Mutualité chrétienne, mouvements sociaux et économie sociale - Blankenberge
Presentation by Slavina Spasova (prepared jointly with Bart Vanhercke) on «Perspectives de l'Europe sociale. Tendances nationales et influences européennes ».

17/10/2016 – “In-depth Review on Sickness Benefits” - Social Protection Committee (SPC) of the European Union - Brussels
Participation in the SPC meeting and drafting of the Minutes by Slavina Spasova and Bart Vanhercke.

19/10/2016 – Seminar “European Social Model revisited: Changes and challenges in the debate on the European Social Rights Pillar” - Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) - Brussels
Presentation by Slavina Spasova on ‘The European Pillar of Social Rights: Overarching issues and social protection principles’.

28/10/2016 – NIHDI/RIZIV/INAMI – Brussels
Rita Baeten and Dalila Ghailani presented for the NIHDI/RIZIV/INAMI the research findings on the OSE activities in the field of EU and healthcare. This included the results of a study on practices in Belgium on prior authorisation for care abroad.

10-11/11/2016 – EU’s Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) Network Meeting - Slovak Presidency of the EU - Bratislava
Presentation by Slavina Spasova of the ESPN Synthesis Report on ‘Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs. A study of national policies’.

15/11/2016 – University seminar “The EU as a multi-level governance system” – Vienna
In the framework of the course ‘The challenge of Multilevel governance in social policy analysis: processes, actors and territories’ by Prof. Yuri Kazepov, Sebastiano Sabato gave a lesson on the EU as a multi-level governance system.

15/11/2016 – ACV - Algemene Raad, Brussels
Bart Vanhercke presented his views on ‘Perspectives de l'Europe sociale’ at the General Council of the Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens (CSC-ACV)

22/11/2016 – PROWELFARE Final Conference – Brussels
Sebastiano Sabato presented his co-authored paper on ‘Governing occupational pensions and unemployment benefits: the state, the market and the social partners in-between?’. Dalila Ghailani presented the Belgian case study, underlining the core findings and policy implications for Belgium, of the PROWELFARE project. Bart Vanhercke and David Natali co-hosted the event.

25/11/2016 – Debate - European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) – Brussels
Slavina Spasova acted as discussant of the edited volume by Delteil and Kirov (eds.) (2016) on “Labour and Social Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. Europeanization and beyond”.

01-02/12/2016 – Closed experts shop on the “European Working Conditions Survey Ageing workforce” - Eurofound - Dublin
Presentation by Slavina Spasova of the ESPN Synthesis Report on ‘Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs. A study of national policies’ at the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

6/12/2017 – How to build the European pillar of social rights – Brussels
Bart Vanhercke moderated this panel debate with Allan Larsson, Maria João Rodrigues, Esther Lynch, Josef Wöss and Ruth Paserman, organised by the (DGB), the ÖGB, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), AK Europa, Diakonie Deutschland, SOLIDAR, and the OSE.
6. OUTPUT DATA: THE OSE’S REACH

6.1 PUBLICATIONS

As illustrated in Table 2, the OSE team has produced 46 publications in 2016. This number includes five articles, twelve book chapters and eighteen papers, as well as three books/edited volumes. In addition, various digests, book reviews and opinions have been written (5). The details of these OSE publications are given in Section 7 below.

Table 2. Type and number of OSE publications in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of publication</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book chapters</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digest, book review, opinion</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Edited Volumes/books</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
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</table>

Since 2012, OSE researcher’s publications have been cited nearly 3,000 times in the scholarly literature, across an array of publishing formats and disciplines (Source: Google Scholar). Google Scholar harvests publications from all across the internet, giving students and researchers easy access to the OSE’s work through the familiar format of Google. However, it should be noted that Google Scholar is almost completely limited to English publications, while the OSE continues to publish in French and (occasionally) Dutch. Google Scholar also fails to include the most updated version of OSE publications, as there is a two-month lag between publication and appearance on Google Scholar. Most importantly, such a citation tool obviously obscures the fact that some OSE publications may not be quoted, but are actively used as background material (e.g. for stakeholders and policymakers) and food for thought for internal discussions (e.g. in European institutions) while other publications (e.g. some of the deliverables written for the European institutions) are published without the author’s name.

6.2 THE OSE WEBSITE: STRUCTURE AND VISITORS

The OSE website, available in English and French, and it is structured as follows:

- The welcome page highlights the latest news, events, publications, activities, and appearances in the media of the OSE;
- The ‘Contact’ page explains how to reach the OSE, both electronically and physically, while the ‘Team’ page provides information (incl. publications) on most team members;
- The ‘Agenda’ section displays upcoming events hosted by the OSE (and affiliates) detailing the event’s content, date, location, and contact information, as well as various network activities.
- Information about past events is available through a link on this page;
- Many OSE publications can be accessed through the ‘Publications’ page, which provides a chronological list of published works by present and past OSE researchers, including the OSE Working Paper Series. Sorted by year, the prolific ‘Publications’ section displays the...
commitment shown by the OSE researchers to their subjects. Additionally, slides from team members' past presentations can be found on the page under a dedicated 'teaching tools' page;

- On the 'project' page, interested readers can find current and past projects the OSE team participated in with links to key documents and partners in OSE research;

- Finally, the 'Links' page is a tool for additional research, as it compiles an extensive list of various NGOs, institutions, organisations, research fields, etc.

As illustrated in Graph 1 and Table 3, the total number of hits on the OSE website varied between 5,600 and 11,200 hits per month in 2016. The number of unique visitors – which are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site – ranges between 2,800 and 6,300 visitors per month: on average, more than **4,900 unique visitors** came to visit **every month**. Put differently: the OSE website attracted on average **160 unique visitors per day** (including weekends) throughout 2016, ranging between 95 and 210 visitors.

**Graph 1: Visitors and unique visitors per month to the OSE website**

![OSE Website Visits vs. Unique Visitors](source: AWAT Service linked to web hosting)

The OSE website is given a 'light update' on a weekly basis, and is fully updated on the occasion of every OSE Flash News publication or new event. We started to work on the new OSE website (using Drupal Open Source content management system), for a better integration of multimedia contents and sharing functions, an easier management of the content, and finally to have an attractive layout on different supports (PC, tablet, smartphone). The new website will be launched in the course of 2017: Renaud Smoes and Benoit Malice followed a series of Drupal training courses by way of preparation.
Table 3: Traffic on the OSE website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Unique Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>9,393</td>
<td>5,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>11,244</td>
<td>4,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>9,084</td>
<td>5,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>6,663</td>
<td>4,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>6,390</td>
<td>3,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>6,234</td>
<td>3,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>5,656</td>
<td>2,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>8,506</td>
<td>6,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>7,578</td>
<td>4,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>9,420</td>
<td>5,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>6,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>9,658</td>
<td>5,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8,319</td>
<td>4,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 OSE Paper Series: Topics and Downloads

Table 5 provides an overview of the number of downloads of the five most downloaded Working Papers during 2016: this number varies greatly, between 800 (paper published in April 2016) and 1,900 (published in April 2016) per paper. Note that some of the most downloaded papers in 2016 were published in 2015 or even earlier.

Table 4. OSE Working Papers: Top 2016 downloads from Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of Downloads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further Socializing the European Semester: Moving Forward for a ‘Social Triple A’?</td>
<td>1,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic crisis and austerity in Southern Europe: threat or opportunity for a sustainable welfare state?</td>
<td>1,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Salary Split</td>
<td>1,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe: the Changing Role of Social Partners - POLAND</td>
<td>1,406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most papers are downloaded around 440 times from the dedicated OSE web page. Taken together, the OSE Paper Series published in 2016, including ten PROWELFARE country studies (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK), have been downloaded more than 5,700 times (see Table 5). As can be seen in Table 5, the Working papers resulting from the PROWELFARE project on ‘Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe’ were downloaded nearly 4,000 times.

Table 5. OSE Working Papers issued in 2016: downloads from Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Paper</th>
<th>Number of downloads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue social européen : une relance « de la dernière chance » ?</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pochet P. and Degryse C. (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les atteintes aux droits fondamentaux: dommages collatéraux de la crise</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de la zone euro ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghailani D. (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violations of fundamental rights: collateral damage of the Eurozone crisis?</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghailani D. (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soins médicaux programmés à l’étranger</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autorisations délivrées par les mutuelles belges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geplande geneeskundige zorg in het buitenland</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toestemmingen verleend door de Belgische ziekenfondsen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing Occupational Welfare in Europe: The Case of Occupational Pensions</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe: the Changing Role of Social Partners</td>
<td>3,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Reports: AT - BE - DE - IT - NL - PL - SP - SE - UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prowelfare National Experts (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If considering all the Working papers of the Series, the number of downloads during 2016 exceeds 12,000. This figure includes downloads of previously published papers in 2016 (the Series started at...
the end of 2009). This data indicates that older OSE Papers continue to be downloaded in significant numbers in the years after they have been published.

Another indication of the OSE’s reach is dissemination of the ESPN Synthesis Reports to which the OSE team actively contributes – mostly as (lead) authors – for all issues concerning the broad area of ‘Social Protection’. Synthesis reports have been brought to the attention of the Social Protection Committee (In-Depth Reviews), the Working Group on Ageing of the SPC, the Indicators Subgroup of the SPC, MISSOC, several EU Presidency conferences, the ETUC, European NGO’s etc. Synthesis Reports are also featured in the ‘Social Europe e-newsletter’ (DG EMPL website), as ‘Social Developments’ News (DG EMPL website), on the OSE and ESPN Web pages, through social media (incl. the ESPN ResearchGate page) etc. This has resulted in rather impressive download figures of these reports (data are from March 2017):

- ‘Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs in Europe’: 737 downloads (Natali D., Spasova S. and Vanhercke B., 2016)
- Work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives: 2,007 downloads (Bouget D., Spasova S. and Vanhercke B., 2016)
- Integrated support for the long-term unemployed in Europe: 2,695 downloads (Bouget, D. Frazer H., Marlier E., Peña-Casas R. and Vanhercke B., 2015)

6.4 OSE Flash News and Podcasts

The OSE Newsletter was launched in September 2009 and the ‘European Health Care News’ in 2006. Both have continuously increased their readership, which has now reached over 1,100 for the Health Newsletter (published in three languages) and more than 1,400 for the OSE Newsletter, which was renamed in 2016: ‘OSE Flash News’ (see Table 5). Crucially, we have chosen to work with an ‘opt-in registration system’ for both. This means that the newsletter and Flash News are only sent to persons who decide to subscribe after they received an invitation to do so by e-mail.

The OSE Flash News readership is fairly gender balanced and is located in more than 35 different countries around the world. A majority of readers are from the EU: about half work in and around Brussels, others are from a wide variety of EU Member States. There are a considerable number of readers from national administrations and social partner organisations. Other Flash News readers are from civil society organisations and European institutions, political parties, professional associations and the media. Such an elaborate and diverse network of readers confirms the embeddedness of the OSE in relevant EU and domestic networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. OSE Newsletters: 2016 readership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of subscribers (opt-in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSE Flash News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Health Care News</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the OSE produces audio podcasts and short videos for selected events, or in the framework of interviews by established media.
7. **FOOD FOR THOUGHT: OSE PUBLICATIONS IN 2016**


Sabato S. and Verschraegen G. (2016) The usage of EU resources in local social innovation, ImPRovE, Working Paper No. 16/03.


