OSE Lunchtime Session

Is the Social Dimension of EMU the 'next big thing' or a 'Trojan horse' for Social Europe?

Hosted by the Workers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee
Organised in cooperation with AK Europa, Brussels Office

Tuesday 17 December 2013, 12.00-14.30

Introduction: Laurence Weerts, Cabinet of European Commissioner László Andor

Panellists:
Georges Dassis, President of the Workers' Group, EESC
Sofia Fernandes, Research fellow, Notre Europe-Jacques Delors Institute
Josef Wöss, Head of Social Policy Department, Chamber of Labour, Vienna
Barbara Helfferich, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network

Chair: Bart Vanhercke, Director, European Social Observatory

Venue: EESC, Room VM3, Rue Van Maerlant, 2, 1040 Brussels

The interventions will be in French and in English (without interpretation). Sandwiches and drinks will be offered. The OSE Lunchtime Sessions bring together the OSE team and their guests. A limited number of places are available, enrolment is therefore essential:

Online registration form

For background documents and details, check out the OSE website

The European Commission published its long-awaited and hard-fought Communication on “Strengthening the Social Dimension of the EMU” October last, and thereby tried to revamp the debate about a new central budget and an EU unemployment benefit scheme. And yet, a range of critical voices have questioned not only the level of ambition of the initiative, but also to the real agenda it proposes. Thus, some believe the Communication may end up being a ‘Trojan horse’, in that its social language would hide a further strengthening of the dominant economic paradigm at the heart of the European semester. At the eve of the 19-20 December European Council meeting which will take the Social EMU discussion further, this OSE Lunchtime session provides the opportunity to discuss the key components of the debate.

Questions on the table will include: is it a good idea to "socialize” the European Semester?
Which key social indicators should be included in the proposed (or rather separate?) “Scoreboard”, and who should decide on it? Does the Communication show the way to a European unemployment insurance scheme, or a European Reinsurance Fund? How do we fund ‘sufficient fiscal capacity’ for such a scheme, how do we get there (Treaty change?), and with whom (with the EU 28, or rather the EU 17)? What will be the fate of the earlier proposed “Ex ante coordination” and the “Converge and Competitiveness instrument” (including new “contractual arrangements”). How can the role of the social partners be strengthened in the European Semester? And how do we achieve genuine labour mobility, including of the unemployed? Last but not least: what is missing in the Social EMU debate: minimum social standards, activating the (dormant) TFEU horizontal clause?