FOREWORD

This first edition of the OSE Newsletter for 2012 gives us an opportunity to embed the European Social Observatory’s activities in the state of ‘Social Europe’. The past few months have confirmed that the EU is still on the rollercoaster ride which began in January 2010. An increasing number of commentators forecast the end of the euro, while the progressive transformation of Europe’s institutions and the austerity plans introduced by the Member States are testimony to the complexity of the issues at stake. And of the inability so far to find a way out of the crisis.

The current situation is reflected in the OSE Working Paper Series which contains a number of contributions that enrich the ongoing debate about the crisis and the need to revamp the European project while addressing the issue of democratic control. Thus, the most recent paper by OSE researcher Cécile Barbier describes how the European institutions are setting out their reactions to the crisis in the form of new, non-Treaty legal instruments, requiring changes to the Treaty itself in order to legitimise them: the question then is how legitimate would it be to revise the Union’s ‘composite constitution’ for the sake of the markets? The paper by Alejandro Godino and Oscar Molina (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) is the first in a cycle of contributions dedicated to the worst-affected Eurozone countries: it sheds light on the Spanish crisis and the questions still pending (including the risk of a severe political crisis), which might result from the austerity measures introduced in Spain in recent years.

How should Member States update their health systems in a context of increased budgetary constraints? This question was explored at an international conference, organised by OSE together with the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. The EU’s new governance architecture has been addressed by OSE researchers on several occasions, while the place left for ‘Social Europe’ beyond the crisis has been addressed at various OSE Lunchtime Sessions. It will likewise be the key question at our 26 January 2012 Lunchtime Session with Jerôme Vignon and Bea Cantillon. In this way, we continue to join forces with, and bring together, those people who believe that there is a future for (social) Europe. As we ourselves do.

The OSE team wishes you a Happy New Year!

David Natali and Bart Vanhercke, Co-Directors

Publications update

Au nom des marchés : quelle légitimité pour la révision de la « constitution composée » de l'Union ?
Two years after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the European institutions are
casting their reactions to the crisis in the form of new, non-Treaty legal instruments, requiring changes to the Treaty itself in order to legitimise them. Similar logic is being applied to the rules of the recently revised Stability and Growth Pact: all holes are now unbarred. But that is not enough; its key principles too should be cast into the marble of the Treaties.

More info... EN | FR

Failed Remedies and Implications of the Economic Crisis in Spain

This paper critically re-examines the current debate about the economic crisis in Spain and the policies put in place there in an attempt to overcome the crisis. It starts from the need to re-focus on the structural problems facing the Spanish economy (incl. the reasons for low productivity levels). The paper highlights the fact that the economic downturn is accompanied by a political crisis which goes beyond ideological debate and constitutes a crisis of representation and legitimacy.

More info... EN | FR

Europese integratie en Europeanisering: sociologische perspectieven

Some 30 authors contributed to the 12 articles - in Dutch, with English abstracts - contained in this Special Issue of the Flemish Journal of Sociology on “European integration and Europeanisation: Sociological Perspectives”. It reveals the diversity of subjects, theoretical perspectives and methods used, as well as the important place Europe has gained in contemporary sociological research in Flanders and the Netherlands.

More info... Publisher  Flyer (PDF)

Le politiche pensionistiche (Pension policies)

David Natali wrote the first chapter of the book “The Welfare State in Italy” edited by Ugo Ascoli (one of the founding fathers of Italian social policy analysis). The book is a new edition of arguably the most famous contribution to Italian sociological literature on welfare, the first edition of which appeared almost 30 years ago. David Natali’s chapter summarises the key pension reforms introduced in the country over the last three decades and offers a first assessment of their main socio-economic and political outcomes.

More info... Publisher

Social Services and Deviation from the Bismarckian Model in Italy: the Absence of a Nationwide Trend of Change

This article by OSE visiting fellow Chiara Agostini analyses the process of deviation from the Bismarckian welfare model in Italy, with a focus on social assistance. An analysis of social expenditure data and a review of the process of implementing the 2000 reform demonstrate that many local governments have been unable to enact the desired innovation and that there is no homogeneous nationwide trend of deviation from the Bismarckian tradition.

More info

Making Democratic Citizens: the Effects of Migration Experience on Political Attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe
Romana Careja and Patrick Emmenegger (2011), Comparative Political Studies (Published online before print)

This article examines the effects of migration experience on political attitudes in
Central and Eastern European countries. Its authors are interested to find out whether migrants returning from Western countries display different political attitudes from their fellow non-migrant citizens. The authors argue that migration experience has a significant effect only when these attitudes are related to objects associated with improvements in the migrants’ material and cognitive status.

More info...  Publisher

**European Health Care News**
No.20 (January 2011) in French is out now, other languages will soon be available. European Health Care News (available in English, Dutch and French) provides an overview of EU-level developments relevant to national healthcare systems, with links to a variety of official documents. It includes policy developments and European Court of Justice case law. Subscription is free.

More info...  English | French | Dutch

**Research activities**

Practices of Belgian Public Centres for Social Action related to the social integration of migrants
The OSE, along with the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, KULeuven), has just started up a new research project aimed at exploring the practices of Belgian Public Centres for Social Action (PCSA), whose work is related to the social integration of first and second generation migrants. The research will investigate the practices of PCSAs, the partnerships that are mobilised and the interaction with other (social) policy strands. Results are expected by mid-2012.

More info... EN | FR

Reforming Pensions in the EU: National policy changes and EU coordination
As part of a research project on public pensions carried out by the Fundacion Francisco Largo Caballero in Spain, David Natali has written a paper on the most recent national-level pension policy developments and the current role of the EU in coordinating national reforms.

More info... David Natali webpage

**Forthcoming events**

26 January 2012  OSE Lunchtime Session
**The Crisis and Beyond. Is there a Future for Social Europe?**
With Jerôme Vignon and Bea Cantillon. The OSE Lunchtime Sessions bring together the OSE team and their guests. A short and well-structured presentation is followed by an informal debate. A limited number of additional places is available: enrolment is therefore essential.

More info... EN | FR

23 April 2012  OSE Lunchtime Session
**Adjudicating by the European Court of Justice in the shadow of EU Soft Law: fact or (political) science fiction?**
With Koen Lenaerts, Judge of the Court of Justice of the European Communities and Professor of European Law, University of Leuven.

More info... EN | FR
'Social Europe' versus the 'Internal Market': A False Dichotomy?
OSE Lunchtime Session -15 December 2011)
Starting from the example of machinery safety, Ian Fraser (European Commission)
argued that the consolidation of the internal market, far from hampering the
development of improved social protection, has in fact led to the development of an
unprecedented body of protective regulations and standards. Stefano Boy (ETUI)
provided critical feedback, including on the limits of applying the (indeed successful)
standardisation of goods to working conditions.
OSE Past Events... EN | FR

Cross-Border Healthcare Simulation (24 November 2011)
The OSE, together with the EHMA and AIM, held the first ever European simulation
on the impact of the Directive on the Application of Patients' Rights in Cross-border
Healthcare. Using case studies, different stakeholder groups from the six invited
countries worked together on key issues raised by the Directive, discussing how they
would respond in practice to these situations.
More info... Conference website  Press release

Improving Health Systems Performance in a Fragile Economic
Climate (25 November 2011)
The above 'Simulation' was part of a two day event (hosted by the Belgian
INAMI/NIHDI) looking at key issues for the future of European health systems. On the
second day, in a policy seminar organised by the OSE together with the European
Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, countries’ experience in updating their
health systems in a context of increased budgetary constraints was explored.
More info... Conference website

Mécanismes de crise financière, réforme de la gouvernance
economique et contrôle démocratique (OSE Lunchtime Session - 18
November 2011)
While the control of elected Parliaments over national governments is one of the
central features of representative democracies, this prerogative has been challenged
to a certain extent by the current financial crisis, explained Bruno De Witte
(Maastricht University and European University Institute). Cécile Barbier (OSE)
provided critical feedback.
More info... EN | FR (Background documents)

The OSE in European Networks

Macro-Drivers of Health Equity: Expert Forum (19-20 January 2012)
In the context of the PROGRESS-funded project 'Working for Equity in Health'
(coordinated by Health Action Partnership International, HAPI), Régine Kiasuwa and
Bart Vanhercke, along with Linden Farrer and Stecy Yghemonos from
EuroHealthNet, co-authored a Discussion Paper. The latter will be used as the
background document for an Expert Forum to discuss the key issues on the horizon
at the macro-level that impact on work, worklessness and social protection in Europe,
and consequently on health inequalities.
More info: Contact Bryony Lloyd  OSE projects page EN | FR  The Equity Channel

NEUJOBS Webcast and Blog
The Conference Board organised a Webcast on 'European Labour Market
Perspectives Between Gloomy Economic Outlook and Major Transitions in Society'
on 15 December 2011. The webcast recording can be viewed here. The NEUJOBS
Project is funded by the European Commission (Seventh Framework Programme). In the meanwhile, new events, publications and information are posted each week on the NEUJOBS Blog - a tool for communicating both across the consortium and with external actors and for exchanging information on the labour markets in EU countries. More info... EN | FR Blog

## Activities

### The European Union’s economic and social model – still viable in a global crisis? (8-9 December 2011)
The Centre for European Law and Legal Studies (CELLS, University of Leeds) held an international Conference aimed at critically assessing the tensions between economic and social integration within the EU. Bart Vanhercke gave a presentation in the panel on modes of governance.
Conference website Bart Vanhercke’s presentation (PDF)

### Liberal Professions and Pensions in Europe. Facing a reinforced single market (5 December 2011)
EURELPRO (European Association of Pension Schemes for Professionals) organised a workshop designed to shed light on the main challenges of pension schemes for the liberal professions. David Natali gave a presentation drawing on the recent research project carried out by the OSE team in the field of social security coordination and the portability of supplementary pensions in the EU. He gave a similar presentation at the ESIP (European Social Insurance Platform) general assembly on 24 November 2011.
David Natali’s presentation (PDF) Programme (PDF)

### Seminar on EU governance at FOPES (12 November 2011)
Cécile Barbier took the floor during a seminar on EU governance organised by the Open Faculty of Social and Economic Policy (Faculté ouverte de politique économique et sociale, FOPES) of the Catholic University of Louvain. She also explained the latest developments in the EU’s economic governance in a training session of the Namur/Dinant section of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC/ACV) on 25 October 2011.
Cécile Barbier’s presentation (in French)

### EPSU European Health Conference (18 - 19 October 2011)
The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) organised a Conference on the “Europeanisation of health policies and health care systems and common challenges for the health care workforce”. Rita Baeten was keynote speaker and presented a paper on the national impact and EU codification of the patient mobility case law.
Conference website (including Rita Baeten’s presentation in several languages)

### Policy Responses to Prostitution (Prague, 21 September 2011)
OSE intern Tereza Wennenholm Caslavská presented her evaluation of the Swedish model of Regulating Prostitution at a conference which was part of the project Increasing Competence in the Creation of Policy Responses to Prostitution in the Czech Republic. The output of the conference and project will result in a book on "How to Deal with Prostitution? Public Policies and the Human Rights Approach" (forthcoming January 2012, Eds. Blanka Hancilova and Barbara Havelkova).
Presentation (PDF)

### Interview with Ramón Peña-Casas
The Conseil bruxellois de coordination sociopolitique (CBCS) published a dossier on
the merits and drawbacks of involving people experiencing poverty in political decision-making. In an interview (in French), Ramón Peña-Casas gives his views on participation of the poor both in EU social inclusion policies and in the Belgian context. 
Dossier and interview FR (PDF)

Reviews for You

Check out the review section of our website to learn about books we have recently received from Die Keure and other publishers. 
More info... EN | FR

Publication in the spotlight

Europese integratie en Europeanisering: sociologische perspectieven
More info... Editor Website Flyer (PDF)

Renaud Smoes, Newsletter Graphics - Bart Vanhercke, Author & Editor-in-chief

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