FOREWORD: A TIME OF CHANGE

This 20th edition of the OSE Newsletter comes out in an eventful period, both for the EU and the European Social Observatory (OSE). After having held his position as Scientific Director with genuine dedication for more than three years, David Natali decided to resign from this position for personal and professional reasons. Bart Vanhercke agreed to take over his responsibilities in September 2013, and is now the OSE Director. While David will be greatly missed, we are really happy that he remains on board at the OSE as senior researcher and we look forward to continuing our collaboration in a different setup.

In the same period, the team has been further strengthened: Denis Bouget – who was previously general coordinator of the RECWOWE network of excellence (2006-2011) – joined the team as Scientific Advisor and will work closely together with Bart with a view to developing a forward-looking research strategy. And we recruited Furio Stamati (EUI/Florence) to work with us on pensions as well as health care policies. Institutionally, we have intensified our ties with the Austrian Chamber of Labour: we are thrilled to welcome Christof Cesnovar, as a new member of our General Assembly.

These internal changes allow us to continue scrutinising the new debates on the European social agenda, in particular those regarding the social dimension of EMU, and the EU’s search for compliance through contractual arrangements and macroeconomic conditionality. We follow these debates through our events and publications. New research projects have been started – including with ETUI and Friends of Europe – while we extended our dissemination activities in the NEUJOBS FP7 project. The work with ETUC on the role of social partners in developing ‘contract welfare’ has been concluded, as has our assessment of the possibility of introducing an EU Minimum income for the EESC.

On behalf of the OSE team, we hope you enjoy reading this 20th newsletter.

Bart Vanhercke, Director
Marc Sapir, President of the Board of Directors

OSE Team

General Assembly
We are pleased to announce that Christof Cesnovar of the Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK), Brussels Office has accepted our invitation to join the OSE General Assembly. With his expertise in employment, social policy and education, Christof is a great asset for the OSE.

OSE Team
Denis Bouget joined the OSE team as Scientific Advisor. Denis has been Director of the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (MSH) at Nantes and is an Associate
Researcher at the ETUI. Furio Stamati, currently finishing his PhD at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, also reinforced the OSE team: his work mostly deals with the politics and political economy of pension reforms, and more recently health care.

More info... EN | FR

Bart Vanhercke was appointed, for the academic year 2013-2014, Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of Saint-Louis University (FUSL), where he is teaching a course on "The European Social Model and Employment" in the (FR/EN) Master of European Studies.

More info...

**Forthcoming events**

8 April 2014 - OSE lunchtime Session
**The Role of Ideas in EU Policy Coordination: Social Policy and Education compared**
Keynote speakers: Chiara Agostini (University of Milan) and David Natali (University of Bologna and OSE). Panellist: Denis Crowley (Head of Unit, DG Education and Culture, European Commission)
More info... EN | FR

4 June 2014 - OSE lunchtime Session
**Comparing Canadian and EU Social Policymaking: towards EU unemployment insurance?**
More info... EN | FR

**Projects**

**Friends of Europe - Social Union**
The OSE has been awarded a contract with the leading think-tank Friends of Europe (FoE), with a view to writing a report - under the supervision of Frank Vandenbroucke on "A holistic approach to Europe's social problems". The aim is to take the debate about the EU's social dimension out of its 'specialist-only' corner.
More info... EN | FR

**Social Developments in the European Union 2013**
The OSE has been contracted by the ETUI to conduct research and produce an edited book on "Social developments in the European Union 2013". The 15th edition of this publication (scheduled July 2014) features authors such as Anton Hemerijck and Ferdinand Fichtner, as well as OSE and ETUI researchers.
More info... EN | FR (14th edition)

**Health care reforms and the crisis**
The OSE kick-started research on health care reforms and the crisis for the ETUI. The project aims to develop a critical assessment of the reforms undertaken over the last 5 years in a representative selection of health care systems across the European Union.
More info... EN

**International digest - Belgian Review for Social Security**
Cécile Barbier will continue to write – at the request of the Belgian Federal Public Service Social Security – a quarterly European/International Digest (FR/NL) about
international developments (EU, OECD, ILO etc.) that have a direct or indirect impact on social protection and social inclusion policies and debates.

**Publications update**

**Policy learning, Aid conditionality or Domestic Politics? The Europeanisation of Dutch and Spanish activation policies through the European Social Fund**

*Minna Van Gerven, Bart Vanhercke, and Susanna Güroçak (2014), Journal of European Public Policy, Published online 2 January 2014.*

This article examines how leverage, learning and aid conditionality determine how the ESF actually "hits home" in The Netherlands and Spain, while exploring the importance of countries' past experiences with the ESF, their problem load, availability of resources and uploading capacities.

More info... [EN](Full text)

**Post-crisis economic governance in Latvia: the European Semester, the Balance-of-Payments programme, and euro accession convergence**


Exploring Latvia’s recent economic governance, the paper finds that the government pursued a cherry-picking strategy, focusing on compliance with the euro accession criteria and fiscal consolidation, even beyond the Commission's requirements. In comparison, the Commission played the role of social advocate.

More info... [EN](Full text)

**Recognition of pharmaceutical prescriptions across the European Union: A comparison of five Member States’ policies and practices**

*Lorena San Miguel et al. (2013), Health Policy, published online 2 December 2013*

This article, co-authored by Rita Baeten, presents the result of a study that was carried out by the OSE as part of the ECAB (FP7) project. It concludes that there is a lack of EU-wide access to key information for validating prescriptions, recognising the equivalence of products or identifying authorised prescribers.

More info... [EN](Abstract)

**European Health Care News**

No.28 (December 2013) is now available in English, French and Dutch: it provides an overview of EU-level developments relevant to national health care systems, with links to official documents, policy developments and CJEU case law. Subscription is free.

More info... [English] | [French] | [Dutch]

**Strategic positioning and creative solutions: French patient flows to hospitals and polyclinics in the Belgian Ardennes**

*Régine Kiasuwa and Rita Baeten (2013), in Glinos, I. and Wismar, M. (eds), Hospitals and borders, Seven case studies on cross-border collaboration and health system interactions, EOHSP, pp. 51-73.*

Within the finalized ECAB project, the OSE carried out a case study on the drivers for hospital collaboration at the Belgian-French border. Health care providers and insurers on both sides of the border strive to position themselves strategically in a health care market they expect to become increasingly international.

More info... [EN] | [FR]
The European Union and the Crisis: Key Analytical Questions to Address
David Natali (2013), Rivista Italiana di Politiche Pubbliche, N°2, pp. 163-172.
This issue of the Italian Journal of Public Policy features contributions (EN) by G. Amato, Y. Méry, C. Barbier, Y and D. Natali; J. Kamkhaji and C. Radaelli; and F. Vandenbroucke. It sheds light on the present and future of the EU after the Great Recession from an institutional, economic governance and social point of view.
More info... EN

Is the European Social Model dead? Social policies and industrial relations between austerity and EU integration
David Natali (2013), Rassegna italiana di sociologia n°2, pp. 227-252.
Drawing on analysis of recent social and labour market reforms in the Member States, this article (IT) addresses the following question: Does the European Union protect or destabilise the European Social Model?
More info... IT

Reforming pensions in Europe: a comparative country analysis
This working paper assesses the impact of the economic crisis on European pension systems and provides a comparative overview of the measures undertaken in European pension systems in eight countries.
More info... EN | FR (EN Full text)

De januskop van de Europese armoedebestrijding: sociaal beleid in tijden van crisis
This chapter (in Dutch) provides an overview of the ambivalent evolution of the EU strategy in the fight against poverty which increasingly resembles a two-faced Janus Head providing contrasting policy guidance through different policy initiatives.
More info... NL

Rapport de l’atelier « Situation de bien-être des aînés »
The report on "Wellbeing of the Elderly" was part of the Belgian contribution to the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012). It was written at the request of the Belgian federal Social Security administration (FPS).
More info... FR | NL (PDF, Full text)

The OSE in European Networks

NEUJOBS (FP7) Policy Brief and Seminar: Whither Social Europe?
Iain Begg (London School of Economics) wrote a Policy Brief on the social dimension of EU governance reform and the difficult dilemmas policy-makers are facing. The paper draws on a NEUJOBS expert workshop (7 October 2013), where Bart Vanhercke presented his views on the recent 'under the radar' development of EU social policy. A NEUJOBS Stakeholder Roundtable was held on 11 December 2013 while the recent NEUJOBS activities can be found on the project’s website and blog.
More info... EN | Slides

Providing welfare through Social Dialogue: A renewed role for Social Partners?
For the past year the OSE and the ETUC have been leading the "ProWelfare"
project, that analysed the emergence of "contract welfare" in eight EU Member States. During the closing conference (5 December 2013) the research teams presented the core findings and policy implications to a large audience.

More info... EN (Presentations)

EESC - Towards a European Minimum Income
The EESC Workers’ Group organized an extraordinary meeting (21 October 2013) on the theme of "Social Cohesion and Minimum income". Ramón Peña-Casas and Dalila Ghailani presented the findings of the study carried out by the OSE for the EESC on this topic and which has now been finalised.

More info... EN | FR Slides

EU Cross-border health care collaboration: summary of ECAB (FP7) findings
A special issue of Eurohealth (a quarterly publication of the EOHSP) provides an overview of the core findings of the ECAB project, which is coming to a close and in which the OSE has been a partner. Rita Baeten co-authored several of the contributions.

More info... EN (PDF)

Past events
OSE Lunchtime session (30 January 2014)
The E(M)U in search of compliance: from Macroeconomic Conditionality to Contractual Arrangements
Keynote speaker José Leandro (Cabinet of the President of the European Council) and Stijn Verhelst (Egmont Institute) engaged in a lively discussion with the audience about the risks and opportunities of the new EU tools that aim to enhance Member State compliance in exchange for more European solidarity.

More info... EN | FR

OSE Lunchtime session hosted by the Workers’ Group of the EESC (17 December 2013)
Is the Social Dimension of EMU the ‘next big Thing’ or a ‘Trojan Horse’ for Social Europe ?
Laurence Weerts (Cabinet of Commissioner Andor), Georges Dassis (EESC), Sofia Fernandes (Notre Europe), Josef Wöss (Federal Chamber of Labour, Vienna) and Barbara Helfferich (EAPN) discussed the way forward with the Commission’s “Social EMU” initiative.

More info... EN | FR (Background documents)

OSE - ETUI Joint Event (27 September 2013)
The crisis, austerity and health in Europe
Keynote speakers Marina Karanikolos (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, EOHSP), Rita Baeten (OSE) and Mathias Maucher (EPSU) discussed the austerity-driven domestic reforms in health systems, which already have a dramatic effect on citizens’ health.

More info... EN (slides and background documents)

Activities
Gender equality in the European Union
Dalila Ghailani gave a presentation (FR) on "Gender equality in the European union" in the Master of European Studies programme at the Facultés Universitaires Saint-
Third Annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion


Lithuanian presidency - Sustainable Health Systems for Inclusive Growth

The Lithuanian presidency of the Council organised a conference on "Sustainable Health Systems for Inclusive Growth in Europe" (19-20 November 2013). Rita Baeten participated in the opening Ministerial "Health Forum Café" discussion, moderated by Josep Figueras.

Qualitative Growth - A focus on social partners

Sebastiano Sabato presented his views on "Defining Sustainable and Qualitative Growth" at a seminar (12 November 2013) organized by ACW, with the support of the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA).

Governing beyond governments: the strengthening of theordo-liberal framework to save the euro?

Cécile Barbier was invited to speak by the Cercle Condorcet (Liège) on 6th November 2013. On that occasion she delivered a speech on "The new European governmental reason".

6th ESPAnet Italia General Conference (Rende)

David Natali presented his work (IT) on "The European Social Model, European Integration and the Crisis: the perfect storm?" at the Plenary session of this ESPAnet event (16-21 September 2013).

11th European ESPAnet Conference (Poznan)

Chiara Agostini and David Natali presented their paper on the "Evolving EU Social Dimension: Trends in Social and Education Policy through the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020" at ESPAnet (5-7 September 2013).

7th ECPR General Conference (4-7 September 2013)

Sebastiano Sabato contributed as a discussant to the Bordeaux ECPR conference during a panel on "Welfare Federalism in the Making? Welfare Policies, Member States and the EU".

Brave New World (4-5 September 2013)

At the EPHA conference "Brave New World: Inclusive Growth and Well-Being or Vested Interests and Lost Generations?" Rita Baeten gave a presentation on 'A new economic European order and new future for health and health systems'.
Reviews for You

During the past few weeks we have received several books, including 'The European Commission of the Twenty-First Century' by Hussein Kassim et al. (Oxford University press).

More info... Reviews

In the spotlight

Podcast Paul De Grauwe - Social Developments in the European Union

"Austerity Europe" is socially and politically bankrupt: it’s time for real alternatives, was the key message of the presentation of last year’s Social Developments in the European Union book.

Listen to the keynote speech by Paul De Grauwe, who said that "the European Commission has become the ally of the creditor countries and not of the poorer member States".

More info... Podcast

Bart Vanhercke, Editor-in-chief / Renaud Smoes, Newsletter Graphics
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