

Eurofound and OECD debate on social mobility

EU citizens and policymakers are becoming increasingly concerned that – for the first time in decades – younger generations will have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility than preceding generations. Reflecting this concern, Eurofound has just published a report that is the first to examine patterns of social mobility across all 28 Member States.

The report, *Social mobility in the EU*, examines to what extent family background has determined people's prospects for social mobility, identifying key barriers to social mobility and reviewing policies aimed at facilitating upward social mobility and equal opportunities. In contrast to previous work, the report examines quantitative data on patterns of social mobility for men and women separately, underlining the increasingly important gender dimension. The report and its findings will be presented at a conference jointly organised by Eurofound and the OECD on 4 May in the OECD headquarters in Paris. The conference brings together an interdisciplinary group of international experts, policymakers and stakeholders from OECD and EU countries to discuss mobility between generations and to identify policies that can support upward mobility – particularly of disadvantaged groups. Read the report at <http://bit.ly/efmobility>; for more on the event *The only way is up? Social mobility and equal opportunities*, visit <http://bit.ly/eventmobility>.

Forum shines light on upward convergence

Eurofound's fifth Foundation Forum – the Agency's flagship event – will take place on 14–15 November 2017 in Dublin Castle, Dublin, Ireland.

The high-level event, supported by the Irish government, will examine convergence in Europe from a range of perspectives. In particular, participants will focus on upward convergence in living and working conditions, including employment. Arriving at such convergence is a key element in ensuring political and societal support for the European project; to this end, around 200 participants will seek to agree on policy pointers for possible future action. Eurofound has been bringing leading policymakers together in its Forums since 2002, to contribute its findings to the debate and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences. Among the speakers at the event will be An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, TD, (Irish Prime Minister) and Luca Visentini, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). For more on the event, please visit <http://bit.ly/efforum2017>

FINDINGS IN FIGURES

51% – the proportion of women in Portugal who think about pressing household issues at the workplace, compared with only 17% of men, in a study on gender differences in time use.

10,000 – the estimated number of prison officers who took part in a union organised protest at dangerous prison conditions and chronic staff shortages in UK prisons on 15 November last.

600 – the number of jobs European weapons manufacturer MBDA plans to create in France, part of a major plan to recruit 1,100 employees in the EU by the end of 2017.

7 – the number of EU Member States where the social partners (trade unions and employers) declare they are both equally involved in the implementation of the country-level recommendations that are part of the European Semester process.

Source: Eurofound's Network of European Correspondents

Eurofound hosts Network of European correspondents meeting in Dublin



On 27–28 March, Eurofound welcomed delegates from its Network of European correspondents to its Dublin premises. The network provides expert national inputs of key importance for the European debate, which feed into Eurofound's observatories. In addition, it provides a national and EU level comparative platform for the Agency's data and analysis. Pictured at the meeting are a number of the national correspondents, and Eurofound staff, along with Eurofound Deputy Director **Erika Mezger** (left). For more information on the network, visit <http://bit.ly/efnec>

Contributing to high-level meetings of EU institutions

In recent weeks, senior Eurofound staff have been bringing the Agency's research findings to high-level meetings of the European institutions. Taking place under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency, the informal EU Social Affairs and Employment Ministers (EPSCO) meeting in Valetta on 3–4 April addressed the theme of 'Making Work Pay'. Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, opening the meeting, stressed that societal inequalities undermine the faith of citizens in a just society, while Eurofound Director Juan Menéndez-Valdés presented new findings on inequalities in the EU labour market. And on 10–11 April, Eurofound's Head of Unit for Social Policies, Robert Anderson, addressed the informal Employment Committee (EMCO) Meeting in Bazan. He demonstrated that role that support structures can play in helping workers balance their paid work and their family responsibilities.

Income inequality on the rise in wake of recession

EU-wide income inequality had declined notably prior to 2008, driven by a strong process of income convergence between European countries. The Great Recession broke this trend. After 2008, income convergence has been sluggish, while inequality within many countries has increased significantly. In a new blog piece on the Agency's website, Eurofound researchers Carlos Vacas-Soriano and Enrique Fernández-Macías look at the development of income inequalities in Europe since the Great Recession. A key finding emerging from the research is that income disparities within EU Member States are greater than those between Member States. Blog pieces that get to the heart of our research feature regularly on the Eurofound website, as well as on the Social Europe website. Read the latest entry at <http://bit.ly/InequalitiesBlog>

Social partnership on right track in rail sector

Eurofound is mandated by the European Commission to examine the representativeness of European sectoral social partner organisations. The Agency's findings are used in the set-up and operation of sectoral social dialogue committees at European level, the Commission's vehicle for consulting management and labour. According to Eurofound's latest research – on railways and urban public transport – social dialogue in the rail sector has a history of successful collaboration between the European social partners. The fruits of this are two social partners agreements (which have resulted in two EU directives), four joint recommendations and one joint opinion. A total of 171 sector-related trade unions in railways and urban public transport in the 28 EU Member States were found to fulfil the representativeness criteria, with all countries having more than one trade union and 22 countries having four or more. See the study at <http://bit.ly/repstudies>



<http://bit.ly/Socialmobility>

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