



Social Affairs Forum

Policy update for November 2018 - March 2019

1. Key EU developments

Romanian EU Presidency

On 1 January, Romania took over the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. The main priorities related to social affairs include:

- the multiannual financial framework negotiations (MFF)
- the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- the migration and asylum policy
- hate speech and countering racism, intolerance, xenophobia, populism, antisemitism
- reducing development gaps
- ensuring equal opportunities to men and women
- ensuring access to education and training for disadvantaged categories.

Find [here](#) the website of the Romanian presidency and the full programme [here](#).

MFF and Cohesion policy post-2020

MEPs set down their priorities for the long-term EU budget

On 14 November 2018, MEPs adopted their position on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) post 2020. Priorities were put on youth, research, growth and jobs, as well as migration and security. Accordingly, increased budgets were asked for:

- Horizon Europe (from €83.5 billion in Commission's proposal to €120b)
- Juncker plan (from €44.3b to €51.7b)
- Erasmus + (tripling the resources for a total of more than €41b)
- Youth unemployment under the ESF+ (doubled). Learn more [here](#).

Commission launches data portal on ESI funds 2014-2020

The European Commission recently launched a new open data portal for the European Structural Investment Funds. This new portal gives access to data on financing and achievements under the ESI Funds 2014-2020. The platform visualises, for over 530 programmes, the latest data available (Dec. 2017 for achievements, Sept. 2018 for finances implemented, daily updates for EU payments). This is a very good tool to check real-time data on EU funding by theme, by fund both at EU level, member state level of regional level. You can access it here: <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>

ESF+

On 3 December 2018, European Parliament's EMPL committee adopted its position on the Commission's proposal for the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) 2021-2027. The proposal was then adopted in plenary in January. It includes an increase of 19% in the ESF+ budget from the Commission's proposal. Regarding priorities, MEPs want to put more focus on youth employability and Child Guarantee. Key elements for cities include:

- The role of local authorities is recognised throughout the report by stating explicitly that the ESF+ should support member states' efforts at all levels of governments, including at local level
- The partnership article calls explicitly on member states to ensure partnership with local and regional authorities
- The link of ESF+ to cohesion policy is reinforced by providing for ESF+ to contribute to the objectives of a Union that is closer to citizens in view of tackling the socio-economic inequalities in cities and regions
- An article was added to explicitly mention that ESF+ should support integrated territorial development



- A flexibility clause was introduced with reinforced territorial dimension of ESF+ mentioning explicitly in the text that sufficient flexibility shall be ensured at managing authority level to identify priorities for ESF+ investments in line with the specific local or regional challenges
- A strong focus was introduced for social innovation to give special focus on promoting the scaling up of local projects developed by cities, local and regional authorities, in the field of reception and social inclusion and integration of third-country nationals.

Learn more [here](#) and find the final report with highlights of amendments relevant for cities [here](#).

Invest EU

On 16 January, the European Parliament adopted its position on InvestEU. This new programme, replacing the current [EFSI](#) (European Fund for Strategic Investments or ‘Juncker Plan’) aims at supporting investment and access to finance. MEPs propose to increase the budget from €38 billion to €40.8 billion. Through co-financing, they aim to reach a total of more than €698 billion additional investment in Europe. Territorial and social cohesion as well as increasing the EU employment rate are among the new objectives. Find out more [here](#).

Urban Agenda for the EU

Urban partnership on affordable housing

In December 2018, the partnership has adopted its final action plan, which puts forward 13 actions and recommendations:

- better legislation:
 - guidance on EU regulation and public support for housing
 - capacity building for the application of state aid rules on affordable housing at city level
 - revision of the SGEI decision with regard to the narrow target group of social housing
- better knowledge and governance:
 - affordable housing good practice database
 - policy guidance for the supply of social and affordable housing in Europe
 - exchange programme for urban housing professionals
 - monitoring system for affordable housing in the European Union
 - exchange on affordable housing at member-state level
 - recommendations on improvement of EU urban housing market data
 - recommendations on the improvement of EU gender-poverty-energy nexus data
- better funding:
 - recommendations on EU funding for affordable housing
 - recommendations on the European Semester and affordable housing

Next, the partnership will focus on the implementation of the actions and recommendations, at all levels of governments, in order to help cities to ensure the right to affordable housing to all people.

Urban partnership on jobs and skills in the local economy

This partnership entered the implementation phase of the 10 actions agreed in the action plan:

1. **Talent Office** (leader Porto) aiming to pool the best innovative practices, such as an Observatory and digital platforms, to address Talent mismatch, acting as an enabler to connect talent and all the stakeholders related with the talent supply and demand and to raise awareness on present and future skills, through lifelong career guidance.
2. **Training for Digital Competences** (leader Berlin) creating an online repository of local examples of integration of digital competences into vocational education and training and professional training.
3. **The European pillar on social rights** (leader Ghent) developing the EPSR into a framework for the reconversion towards a sustainable economy.
4. **RiS3 2.0** (leader Rotterdam) including a Human Capital Agenda and the local dimension into the Regional Innovation Strategies.
5. **Long-term Investments** (leader Rotterdam) promoting and optimising the long-term investment framework for jobs and skills.



6. **Simplification 2.0** (leaders Rotterdam & Jelgava) simplifying future EU cohesion policy programmes for urban areas.
7. **Funding deprived areas** (leader Jelgava) encouraging an ongoing dialogue with EU institutions to promote a more social and economic approach on investments in deprived areas.
8. **ITI flexibility** (leader Jelgava) aiming for a more place-based approach - flexibility in integrated territorial investments (ITI).
9. **Cluster of State Aid and de-minimis** (leader Jelgava) Arguing for more flexible State Aid rules for innovative start-ups - change of De-minimis for investments in innovative start-ups (decrease of binding period or increase of De-minimis amount), and more flexible rules for regeneration projects - eligible costs for real-estate in deprived areas.
10. **Job oriented eco-system** (leader Romania) creating favourable conditions for business development, including a job-oriented ecosystem, improved public services and effective local governance.

Urban partnership on innovative and responsible public procurement

The action plan was finalised putting forward 7 actions seeking to facilitate a joint effort for a public procurement strategy of cities that facilitates and supports innovation and sustainability (social, economic and environmental). The actions relate to three clusters:

- Building a procurement strategy and managing strategic procurement (actions 1-3)
- Developing relationships with economic operators; utilising the market potential and bringing it closer to the purchasers (action 4)
- Providing guidance on legal tools and improving competence on innovative and sustainable procurement (actions 5-6).

The partnership also outlines cross-cutting issues and links with the New Urban Agenda/Sustainable Development Goals and other Partnerships. The partnership formalised 7 actions, namely:

1. Guidance on building city strategic procurement and how to manage strategic procurement
2. Measuring spend and wider impact in European Cities
3. Recommendation(s) for future EU funding for joint cross-border procurement, procurement of innovation, strategic procurement in particular social procurement and circular procurement
4. Innovation procurement broker
5. Legal handbook innovative public procurement
6. Develop a flexible and customisable concept for Local Competence Centres for innovative and sustainable procurement
7. Competence building in circular procurement

The partnership is carrying out a survey, to which you are invited to respond until 29 March [here](#).

Urban partnership on integration of migrants and refugees

The European Commission in collaboration with EURO CITIES is organising the 2nd edition of the Urban Academy on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees. This will take place in Antwerp on 21-22 May. This year, the two themes of the Academy are integration into the **labour market integration** and **housing for migrant inclusion**. You can apply until **1 April** to present a case study from your city on which you would like to receive feedback during the academy. [More info here](#)

European Pillar of Social Rights

One year since the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights

On 17 November, the EU celebrated the first year on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Several legislative proposals are being negotiated and will foster its implementation:

- [European Labour Authority](#)
- [Work-life balance for parents and carers](#)
- [Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions](#)
- [Reform of the rules on social security coordination](#)

EU agreement on the work-life balance directive

On 24 January, the European Parliament and Council of the EU reached an agreement on the work-life balance directive. The agreed directive sets:



- minimum requirements for at least ten working days of paid paternity leave (not lower than the level of sick pay)
- two months of non-transferable paid parental leave
- 5 days per year of leave as carer (for caring responsibilities)
- flexible working arrangements are encouraged. Read more [here](#).

European Semester

Launch of the annual cycle of economic governance coordination

On 21 November 2018, the European Commission published [The annual growth survey](#) that sets out the EU economic and social priorities for 2019. It also released the [draft of the joint employment report](#), analysing the employment and social situation in Europe. The key messages are:

- improvement of the overall social situation in Europe with less unemployment, decline in the number of people in poverty or social exclusion and lower income inequalities.
- remaining discrepancies among vulnerable groups, especially the low-skilled, migrants and persons with disabilities who experience more difficulties to access the labour market. Similarly, and despite improvement, the level of youth unemployment remains high.
- further progress can be achieved through upskilling and reskilling of workers.
- importance of adequate unemployment benefits (with regards to their duration, amount and accessibility). Read more [here](#)

Country reports for 2019

On 27 February 2019, the European Commission released the country reports [here](#). The country reports analyse the social and economic situation in each EU member state. This country analysis is the basis for formulating recommendations for reforms in each member state, which the European Commission and the Council of the EU release in May.

Investment guidance for future cohesion policy priorities

The analysis of progress in country reforms as well as the remaining challenges make the basis for identifying investment needs that will guide the allocation of EU cohesion policy funding in post-2020 - the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund for the period 2021-2027. In concrete terms, for the very first time, the 2019 country reports include an additional annex on **'Investment Guidance on Cohesion Policy Funding 2021-2027'**. Cities should have a say on this country analysis in order to influence the investment guidance for cohesion policy funding in the period 2021-2027. EUROCIITIES is launching an exercise to gather city inputs and feedback on the country reports via a survey until 29 March. EUROCIITIES will then compile the inputs into a report that will be discussed during the spring Working Groups meeting. All working groups' reports will be gathered into an overview EUROCIITIES report that will be presented to the European Commission in view of influencing the country specific recommendations and the investment guidance on cohesion policy funding for 2021-2027.

National events to present and discuss country reports

The European Commission is organising events in each EU member state to present and discuss the country report and especially the annex on the investment guidance for cohesion policy priorities for 2021-2027. The events will take place in EU capitals between early March and late April. EUROCIITIES is in the process of obtaining the calendar of these events for member cities to attend.

Committee of the Regions underline links between European Semester and cohesion policy

On 15 February, CoR adopted an opinion on European Semester and cohesion policy. The assembly stressed the lead role of local authorities in shaping country-specific recommendations within the Semester. As of 2019, these will indeed also include investment priorities for cohesion policy. CoR recommends the establishment of a formal, structured and permanent presence of local authorities in the European Semester, possibly through a code of conduct. Read more [here](#).

Migration

EP vote on AMIF 2021-2027

On 19 February, the LIBE committee of the European Parliament adopted its [report](#) on the Commission's proposal on the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for 2021-2027.



The approved amendments are very favourable to cities. They provide for:

- mandatory partnership principle: local authorities will be consulted on national operational programmes
- a minimum of 5% (€200 million) of the thematic facility to be allocated to local and regional authorities
- emergency assistance funding will be accessible directly by local governments
- a new objective to ensure solidarity and fair responsibility sharing between member states
- a separate objective for the effective integration and social inclusion of migrants
- 10% of the thematic facility for integration

The plenary vote in the European Parliament will take place on 13 March. Meanwhile, the Council is still negotiating its position. Inter-institutional negotiations will start after the European elections.

Adoption of the UN Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees

On 10 December, following a two-year negotiation process, the [UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#) was adopted at UN Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakech. The Compact puts forward 23 objectives that focus on the human rights of migrants. On 17 December, the UN General Assembly adopted the [UN Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#). Both Compacts outline the need to engage local authorities in national and international contexts given their key implementing role. For instance, the GCR recognises local authorities and communities as the first responders to large-scale refugee movements, recognises they are among the actors that experience the most significant impact over the medium term, and calls for the international community in consultation with national authorities to strengthen local institutional capacities and infrastructure, including through funding and capacity building. The GCR also explicitly recognises the value of networks of cities and municipalities and invites city networks to share good practices on refugee response in urban settings.

Action Plan on refugee labour market integration by OECD and UNHCR

On 15 October, the Action Plan ‘Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees’ was launched by the UNHCR, the OECD and the French Inter-ministerial Delegation for Reception and Integration of Refugees (DiAir). The Action Plan is composed of ten action areas identified as key to supporting the successful labour market integration of refugees. The action areas are illustrative of the process and issues faced by employers concerning the hiring of refugees. For each action area, the support that governments, civil society, employers and refugees can provide is highlighted. Read more [here](#).

Council of Europe’s handbook on children in migration

On 18 December, on the International Migrants’ Day and as part of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), the Council of Europe launched a practical handbook for professionals called ‘How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration’. Read more [here](#).

Eurodiaconia published practical guidelines for the integration of migrant women

In December 2018, Eurodiaconia published a set of guidelines for the integration of migrant women. The combination of their gender and immigration status often hinder these women to enjoy full access to the labour market, training courses or basic services such as healthcare, housing or integration programmes. To confirm this finding, the report first assesses the situation of migrant women, providing key data and understanding of their specific challenges. Recommendations include gender sensitive assessments; flexibility in access and eligibility to services; assistance to the creation of social and professional networks of migrant women and community building activities. Read the guidelines [here](#).

EU education agenda

The Council of Europe launches a new education campaign

On 14 November, the Council of Europe launched a four-year campaign entitled ‘Free to speak, safe to learn - democratic schools for all’. The goal is to create ‘safe spaces’ in schools where controversial issues can be discussed. This way hopes to prevent violent extremism through open debate but also raise awareness on fake news and stop bullying and discrimination. Read more [here](#).

EP report on education in the digital era



On 26 November 2018, the European Parliament published a report on ‘education in the digital area: challenges, opportunities and lessons for EU policy design’. The report recalls the need for a lifelong learning approach with regards to digital skills in both formal and informal education. It underlines the role of local authorities in this process and calls on member states to promote and finance local initiatives. Inclusion is considered the leading principle and specific attention to gender-gap participation in the digital sectors, targeting diversity in age groups or initiatives such as providing training in the language spoken by minorities, or funding for libraries which are an important means to access digital services. Read the full report [here](#).

Children

European Commission launches 18-month feasibility study on the Child Guarantee proposal

In November 2018, the European Commission announced a study to consider the establishment of a commitment by European countries to address children poverty and ensure access to essential services. A proposal from [the European Parliament in 2015](#) demanded access for children in poverty to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The study aims at investigating the feasibility of such a process and evaluate the interest of creating a specific funding program. Therefore, a group of research consultancies and civil society organisations will map the situation of children in Europe, using online consultations and involving children directly. The results and recommendations are expected for early 2020. Read more [here](#).

COFACE call for ‘A new deal for childcare’

In December 2018, in the context of the negotiations on the proposal for an EU work-life balance directive, COFACE published a paper on childcare. The key messages focus on:

- The need for a systemic two-generation approach to childcare both as an investment in the health and education of children, and as a support to parents in reconciling work and family life
- Key EU frameworks which support investment in childcare,
- The multiple benefits of childcare as a measure to support child wellbeing, education and cognitive development, a social inclusion measure that prevents and reduces poverty and social exclusion, and a crucial employment support measure for parents;
- The childcare that families want: it has to be accessible, affordable and of high quality;
- Recommendations for a ECEC 2030 Roadmap to guide the development of a 2030 agenda for childcare based on a mix of policy, targets, funding and monitoring. Read more [here](#).

EU employment and skills agenda

Youth Guarantee reports

On 19 December, the European Commission published two reports on how to foster young people’s access to the labour market through skills development. Based on experience from the Youth Guarantee, the reports focus on continued education and quality traineeships. Vocational Education and Training (VET) is highlighted as a way to prevent early leaving from education and training. When coordinated with demands from the labour market, training schemes are also identified as successful tools. For traineeships, the EU Quality Framework should enable employers and young people to benefit equally from these work experiences. Read reports on [education](#) and [traineeships](#).

The challenge of plenty: Tackling labour shortages in the EU

In November 2018, Eurofound released a publication on approaches to reduce labour shortages. Countries facing the highest vacancy rates include Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and United Kingdom. The report identifies strategies used by employers and governments to tackle this issue. Solutions adaptable at local level include targeting older workers, the long-term unemployed, stay-at-home mothers and part-time workers. Find the report [here](#).

MEPs want to ensure more flexibility and clarity for EU mobile workers

On 23 November, MEPs adopted a report proposed a new set of rules for the coordination of social security systems. The modifications should facilitate work mobility while also guaranteeing fair access to social security. Modifications foresee that a person receiving unemployment benefits could retain them for at least six months after leaving a member state. Rules applying to family and long-term care benefits have also been modified. Find out more [here](#)



Urban ageing

Not finished at 50: Keeping older workers in work

In November 2018, Eurofound released a report denouncing the stereotypes that hinder older workers to find a job. They contribute to long-term unemployment for this age-group. The report regrets the rarity of initiatives specifically targeting older workers whose knowledge and sometimes skills become obsolete. A working paper on state initiatives supporting the labour market integration of older workers provides examples of public measures to tackle this, while drawing conclusions on the interventions that work best. These aim at a long-term approach, enabling older workers to benefit from reduced working time, training or networking system. Read more [here](#).

Housing

Affordable housing under pressure as prices are increasing in the EU

On 18 January, Eurostat released data on housing prices for the third quarter of 2018. The figures show that pricing of housing increased, adding even more pressure on local housing. Compared to the same period in 2017, we witnessed an increase of 4.3% in housing prices. This trend reinforces pressure of affordable housing in cities. Slovenia, the Netherlands and Ireland are the most affected European countries with increases in house prices up to 15% compared to the third quarter of 2017. More information on the data of [the Housing Price Index \(HPI\)](#) can be found [here](#).

Innovative projects in housing can strengthen ties between refugees and host societies

On 24 and 25 January, the third conference on social innovation for refugee inclusion organised by the European Economic and Social Committee highlighted the importance of the notion of home in the integration of refugees. Thus, innovative housing solution could create a feeling of safety and security while encouraging social and economic integration. Read more [here](#).

Roma inclusion

Commission evaluation of the EU Roma Framework 2011-2020

On 4 December, the European Commission published a communication of the evaluation of the EU Roma Framework 2011-2020. The report highlights limited progress on Roma integration. While some improvements can be seen in education (especially reduced early school leaving, increased participation in early education but a worsening of school segregation), the access to employment, healthcare or housing remain very low. Women and young Roma are mainly affected. The report denounces that the flexibility of the framework led to a lack of systematic implementation of effective measures. Thus, actions taken often fail to target multiple causes of exclusion or to include the diversity of the Roma population. Read more [here](#).

MEPs call for EU rules to better protect minorities' rights

On 13 November, MEPs adopted a resolution demanding more measures that target equal rights for national minorities. The Parliament calls on member states to fight discriminatory practices more actively. Specific attention is on tackling the marginalisation of Roma people with a call to end statelessness and guarantee full human rights. Read more [here](#).

Gender equality

EP report on in-work poverty of women and call on the European Institutions to act

On 7 November, MEP Ernest Urtasun presented an Oxfam report to the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality ([FEMM](#)). He underlines that in-work poverty mainly affects women. He calls for tackling the causes of the issue, including the gender pay-gap and the precariousness of temporary contracts. According to him, the [European Semester](#) could be a powerful tool if the gender aspect was to be included in the recommendations.

Public consultation on gender equality in the EU

The Commission's current strategic framework for gender equality (2016-19) is ending this year. As a result, the Commission is holding a public consultation to gather views from all interested stakeholders about the current situation of gender equality in the EU and suggestions for priorities for the next 5 years. You can complete the survey here: <https://bit.ly/2NYKpPN> until 31 May 2019.

Accessibility

European Accessibility Act: Parliament and Council negotiators strike a deal

On 8 November, European Parliament and Council reached an agreement on the European Accessibility Act. Noticing that around 80 million people live in Europe with a disability, the directive demands more accessibility to everyday services and tools such as smartphones, PCs, ticketing machines, banking and transports. A progressive adaptation of the infrastructures enabling access to those services is also foreseen. Public procurement is considered a key tool to encourage business innovation. Specific provisions for micro-enterprises have been included as a way to avoid a disproportionate burden. Read more [here](#)

Social innovation

The European Investment Bank invests in the first Spanish institutional social fund in Spain

In November, the European Investment Bank announced investing €13 million into two projects supporting social enterprises. €10m will be dedicated to Creas Impacto fund and target early and late stage of social enterprises focusing on SME involved in the sectors of health and wellbeing, education and social innovation. Another €3m will be invested in Equity4Good, which acceleration programme entails sector labs in health, environment and inclusion. The operation is expected to support 30 companies, especially in Barcelona. Learn more [here](#).

Resources of EU reports:

- Cedefop, January 2019 - [Vocational education training opinion survey country reports](#)
- Cedeop and Eurofound, December 2018 - [Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030](#)
- DG EMPL, November 2018 - [Inequalities in access to healthcare - A study of national policies](#)
- DG EMPL, November 2018 - [Report of the implementation of the Fund for the European Aid to the Most Deprived \(FEAD\) in 2016](#)
- EPIC, January 2019 - [Policy Memo - Access to quality education for children with special educational needs](#)
- Eurofound, December 2018 - [Progress on convergence in the socioeconomic area](#)
- Eurofound, December 2018 - [Progress on convergence in employment](#)
- Eurofound, December 2018 - [Wage and task profiles of employment in Europe in 2030](#)
- Eurofound, December 2018 - [Working conditions - Work on demand: recurrence, effects and challenges](#)
- Eurofound, November 2018, [Quality of life - Social and employment situation of people with disabilities](#)
- Jacques Delors Institute and Bertelsmann Stiftung, February 2019 - [How are you doing, Europe? Mapping social imbalances in the EU](#)

2. EURO CITIES secretariat, social affairs forum and working groups

EURO CITIES launches new initiative of city pledges at the European Parliament

We launched our new EURO CITIES initiative ‘Inclusive cities for all: social rights in my city’ on 21 February at the European Parliament in the presence of MEPs, Commission officials and over 100 other policy-makers. **21 cities**, representing 20 million citizens, announced their pledges to act on the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights through dedicated investments for city measures totalling over **€4.32 billion** for the next five years (2019-2024). Half of the pledges focus on city measures for provision of more affordable housing and support for the homeless, a pressing challenge. Cities have pledged to build 75,000 new affordable housing units by 2024 with an investment of €2.17 billion.

14 deputy mayors travelled to Brussels to present to the European Parliament the pledges made by their cities: Malmo, Madrid, Stuttgart, Gothenburg, Braga, Vienna, Barcelona, Timisoara, Warsaw, Athens, Nantes, Leipzig, Utrecht, Tampere. Another eight cities have signed pledges: Ljubljana, Turku, Leeds, Ghent, Glasgow, Lille, Milan and Lyon.

The chair and vice-chair of the Social Affairs Forum, Andreas Schönström (deputy mayor of Malmo) and Maarten van Ooijen (deputy mayor of Utrecht), handed over the 21 city pledges to the representatives of the European Parliament and European Commission.



Speaking about the role of cities, MEP Maria João Rodrigues said: “Cities are where inclusion happens. You, city leaders, need to invent the inclusive city of tomorrow. The European Parliament is at your disposal and available to work with you to make inclusive cities for all people”.

The city pledges were welcomed also by European Commission Director for Social Affairs, Katarina Ivanković-Knežević, who said: “These city pledges are not just mere declarations of intention, they are real budget allocations and concrete actions at local level. We see the huge potential of cities to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights”.

We will continue this initiative throughout 2019. We aim to gather as many pledges on different principles of the social pillar. Our goal is to build an inclusive Europe with inclusive cities for all people. If your city is interested to join the initiative with a pledge, please contact us.

You can check the highlights, pictures, interviews and full recording of the event [here](#).

New EUROCITIES report: Cities delivering social rights

Coinciding with the launch of the city pledges at the European Parliament, EUROCITIES also launched a new report mapping cities’ existing policy measures in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The report covers 20 cities in 12 countries governing a total of 20 million people. We analyse the competences, trends and good practices of cities in 4 policy areas:

- Inclusive education
- Gender equality
- Equal opportunities
- Active support to employment

We found many cities already deliver inclusive social policies to promote social rights for all people, but their efforts are not always known or recognised at national and EU levels. In fact, most city authorities go beyond their legal responsibilities to address the urgent needs of their residents. Inequality is rapidly increasing in cities and is hitting hardest the most vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees, the long term unemployed, the lowest income earners and people living in the most deprived areas. Read the highlights [here](#) and the full report [here](#).

Video and report of the Solidarity Cities Study visit in Milan

The video of the study visit organised in Milan under the framework of EUROCITIES’ Solidarity Cities initiative is now available [online](#). EUROCITIES and 43 delegates visited some key elements of the reception and integration system of migrants and refugees in the city of Milan. The report from the study visit is also available online. The report presents key findings on the Centre for Job Orientation and Placement (CELAV) and two reception centres run by the city. Read report [here](#).

Integrating Cities VII conference

The video of the Integrating Cities conference in Milan on 7-8 November 2018 is available [online](#).

New EUROCITIES handbook on critical friend review

The report is based on a methodology developed and tested in the EUROCITIES Working group on Social Inclusion through Education. It aims at encouraging mutual learning between cities during study visits. Under this method, visiting city experts act as ‘critical friend’ and provide constructive feedback to the host city. The handbook is a practical manual to guide you through the steps of the process and maximise the learning process and outcomes from a study visit. Read the report [here](#) and watch a video on how to use a critical friend review [here](#).

New EUROCITIES report on Roma inclusion at local level

EUROCITIES published a new report on Roma inclusion at local level. The report presents the key findings and lessons learned from the study visit in Timisoara on 12-14 June 2018. Supported by EaSi, this mutual learning opportunity used the ‘critical friend review developed by EUROCITIES. This enables active participation from visiting cities and positive suggestions for areas of improvement. Underlining the achievements already reached by the city, the study visit was concluded with constructive feedback. Following, the director of Social Services Department of Timisoara committed to several actions complementing the action plan for 2019. Read [here](#) and in the [report](#)



Video showcasing Vienna's model on preventing evictions and homelessness

'The story of Andreas and Franziska in Vienna' is our new video showing the successful practice of Vienna to prevent evictions and homelessness. Through Wiener Wohnen, the property management company, Vienna engages social workers to reach out and provide tailored support to people at risk of being evicted. In Vienna, the early intervention has a rate of success of 75% in preventing evictions. EUROCITIES working groups on housing and homelessness had a joint meeting and study visit in December 2018 to learn from Vienna's approach. Watch the [video here](#).

Working groups on housing and homelessness joint study visit in Vienna, 6-7 December

On 6 and 7 December, 50 participants representing 18 cities enjoyed a study visit on Vienna's approach to prevent evictions and homelessness. A new service ensuring early intervention of social workers for tenants at risk of being evicted was introduced as well as a programme combining temporary innovative housing solution with support system that includes specialised social services. Key challenges, success-factors and lessons learnt were specifically underlined. Five other cities (Barcelona, Birmingham, Glasgow, Ljubljana and Newcastle) also benefitted from the opportunity to present their initiatives. Learn more [here](#)

EUROCITIES annual report 2018

Our annual report for the year 2018 was published and is available [here](#).

3. News from EUROCITIES members

Barcelona presents White Paper on the future of work and jobs at EU level

On 21 January, Barcelona Activa, the local economic development agency of Barcelona City Council presented a [White Paper on the future of work and jobs](#) to policy-makers from the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The newly-translated white paper is based on a deep analysis of the local labour market, coupled with interviews of labour-experts. Based on these elements, an in-depth reflection on changes that will affect the labour market was conducted. Potential impacts of changing technology, robotics but also adaptations on basic income, education, women empowerment, flexible working hours, etc. were considered. The book also underlines more than 70 recommendations to inspire future policies.

21 cities adopted city pledges to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, as part of the EUROCITIES initiative on 'Inclusive Cities for all: Social Rights in My City':

- [Madrid](#) on long-term unemployment and affordable childcare
- [Stuttgart](#) on inclusion of people with disabilities
- [Gothenburg](#) on education, training and lifelong learning
- [Ljubljana](#) on healthcare, housing and assistance for the homeless.
- [Braga](#) on long-term care
- [Vienna](#) on gender equality
- [Barcelona](#) on minimum income and affordable housing
- [Timisoara](#) on childcare long-term care and affordable housing
- [Nantes](#) on housing and assistance for homeless
- [Leipzig](#) on housing and assistance for homeless
- [Ghent](#) on housing and assistance for homeless
- [Glasgow](#) on housing and assistance for homeless
- [Warsaw](#) on childcare and support to children
- [Turku](#) on equal opportunities and active support to employment
- [Athens](#) on education and equal opportunities
- [Leeds](#) on equal opportunities and childcare and support to children
- [Milan](#) on equal opportunities
- [Malmo](#) on equal opportunities and active support to employment
- [Lille metropole](#) on equal opportunities, active support to employment and
- [Utrecht](#) on housing and assistance for homeless
- [Lyon metropole](#) on principles 2, 4, 9, 11 and 19

Your city wishes to sign a pledge? Find all useful information [here](#)



Stockholm: digital billboard guiding homeless people to the nearest shelter

In Stockholm, 53 digital billboards have been programmed to replace advertisements with directions to shelters with temperatures diminish under -7°C . These target homeless people in need of emergency shelter and are located in areas known to be gathering spots for people in need. When temperatures do not reach this low point, citizens can read information on how to volunteer or donate useful items including blankets and food. Beyond providing emergency aid, this initiative raises awareness on homelessness. If this pilot project is successful, it could be extended outside Sweden. Read more [here](#).

London - Mayor calls for better deal for night-time workers

On 8 November, London Mayor Sadiq Khan called for an improvement in pay and working conditions of night-time workers. This demand is based on research results showcasing the importance of night-time work in London. 1.6 million Londoners work at night, representing one third of the total workforce. This phenomenon is likely to be reinforced in the future as the sector grows faster than the overall economy. The report raises awareness on the high level of poverty in the sector and the uneven gender balance with mainly men being affected. To counter these worrying trends, London Mayor announced the creation of Good Work Standard to support employers and showcasing good practices on diversity, flexibility, health and well-being, skills development and employee representation. Learn more [here](#). Read the full report [here](#).

Nuremberg - Council of Europe Bank loan for education and refugee integration

In December 2018, the [Council of Europe Development Bank](#) signed a loan of €80 million to the city of Nuremberg. This money should foster effective integration of migrant and refugee families through education. Construction and renovation of schools, child-care facilities are foreseen, as well as programs to determine migrants' potential and qualifications. Find out more [here](#).

Gothenburg, Lisbon, Ljubljana and Milan finalists of the Wellbeing City Awards

The Wellbeing City awards in an international award launched in September by [Newcities](#). Gothenburg, Lisbon, Ljubljana and Milan were selected among more than 100 cities from all over the world. Only 16 cities made it to this stage. Four categories were considered. [Milan](#) was selected under 'community', [Ljubljana](#) for 'economy and opportunity', [Gothenburg](#) in 'public health' and [Lisbon](#) in 'sustainable environment'. Find out more about the award [here](#).

4. Upcoming events

Social Innovation Lab, 26-27 March

For the very first time, EUROCITIES is organising a Social Innovation Lab. Over two days, we will address new and emerging social challenges in cities by fostering co-learning, co-sharing and co-creation of innovative solutions. We will gather over 100 urban policy-makers, city practitioners and 'change makers' from over 50 cities in Europe to share social innovations, learn to transfer their lessons and co-create potential solutions to implement in cities. Our aim is to strengthen the capacity of cities to develop and implement innovative solutions to new social challenges. Do not miss out this unique event! Register **before 15 March** here: <https://eurocitiessocialinnovationlab.eventbrite.com> More information [here](#).

WG smart social inclusion meeting in Glasgow, 27 March

The meeting will include a site visit to Glasgow Social Enterprise Network and a presentation of the OECD-EU tool for better entrepreneurship with a focus on social and inclusive entrepreneurship. You can register [here](#) until 15 March. Agenda is available [here](#).

WG urban ageing meeting in Glasgow 27 March

The meeting will include a site visit to Glasgow 'Generations Working Together' and an update on the ESPON project. You can register [here](#) by 15 March. Agenda is available [here](#).

WG Roma Inclusion and homelessness - Policy transfer study visit - 9-10 April, Toulouse



How can cities support Roma to move from camps into adequate housing? This is the theme of our study visit to Toulouse on 9-10 April. Toulouse is working to support a sustainable exit of Roma from camps into adequate housing. The city is implementing an integrated plan for Roma housing inclusion with accompanying support from education, employment and social services. It is also piloting a Housing First approach, Roma being among the beneficiaries. Is your city facing similar challenges? Apply to be one of the five 'transfer cities' to receive support to develop actions based on learning from Toulouse's approach. **Deadline: 21 March.** Agenda, concept note and application form are available [here](#).

- **WG Education meeting in Barcelona, 24-26 April**

This working group meeting will take the form of a critical friend review with a focus on diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Register [here](#) by 12 April. Agenda is available [here](#).

- **WG Employment in Lille - 28-29 May** - study visit with a focus on Lille's approach to tackle long-term unemployment via social cooperatives
 - **WG Housing meeting in Lyon, 6 June** alongside the International Housing Festival 4-8 June
 - **WG Urban Ageing** - focus on accessibility - 12-14 June, Ljubljana
 - **Autumn Social Affairs Forum meeting - 22-24 October 2019, Warsaw**
 - **EUROCITIES Annual General Meeting - 'Cities at a crossroads' - 28-29 November, Prague**
- Apply now for the City Awards:** a new category was added for this year's awards for our SAF members - Innovation for social transformation. We are looking for projects that are changing the fabric of our cities, be this through facing up to the challenges of gentrification and providing affordable housing, integrating migrants into communities, or tackling inequalities, urban poverty and homelessness. **You can apply until 3 June** [here](#).

These and all social affairs forum related events can be found [here](#).

Relevant EU and international meetings

- [5th European migration forum - From global to local governance of migration: How to ensure safe and regular pathways to the EU](#) - 3-4 April 2019, Brussels
- [3rd Biennale of validation of prior learning](#) - 7-8 May 2019, Berlin
- **Urban Academy on Integration of Migrants and Refugees** - 21-22 May, Antwerp
- [International housing festival](#), 4-8 June, Lyon
- [European week of regions and cities](#) - 7-10 October 2019 - Brussels

5. Project news

ReSOMA: New report highlights the role of cities as service providers for migrants and refugees

The project ReSOMA continues its aim to ensure European policymakers and stakeholders' access to accurate and reliable evidence for policies. A new report on cities as service providers for migrants and refugees highlights cities' central role in immigrant integration and analyses the impact of EU policies at local level. Cities are where integration measures and public services are provided to a vast majority of migrants and refugees in the EU. Furthermore, the local level can tailor integration services to the needs of immigrants, coordinate among city departments to align access (education, training, employment and health), and develop their own language learning and orientation activities.

Whether services are adequate, respond to needs and are available across all relevant areas is a key determinant for long-term integration. However, the ability of local authorities to deliver services depends on their national contexts, such as cities' legal competencies in different policy fields, the strength of the welfare state, the efficiency of coordination with the national or regional levels of government, and cities' financial capacities. Read more [here](#)



VALUES: Volunteering Activities to Leverage Urban and European Social integration of migrants. This is our new project aiming to improve coordination and mutual understanding between 16 cities and volunteer organisations by bringing them together in ‘communities of practice.’ In four thematic clusters, city officials and volunteers will learn from each other through targeted workshops, sight visits, staff exchanges, on-the-ground training and action planning to identify and implement best practices on migrant integration. Coordinated by EURO CITIES, supported by MigrationWork and the European Volunteer Centre (CEV), VALUES will benefit third-country nationals, their wider urban communities as well as local volunteer organisations in the cities of Amsterdam, Bristol, Brno, Cesena, Dusseldorf, Madrid, Nuremberg, Ostend, Riga, Sheffield, Terrassa, Thessaloniki, Toulouse, Turin, Oslo and Zurich. The project runs between Feb 2019 and Jan 2021. More [information here](#)

6. Funding news

1. Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)

The European Commission, together with the Urban Innovative Actions programme (based in Lille), have unveiled the four topics selected for the 5th and last UIA Call for Proposals in the current programming period for EU funding 2014-2020:

- Air Quality
- Circular Economy
- Demographic change
- Culture and cultural heritage

The full definitions of the topics (incl. the related sub-topics) will be available as of April 2019. The 5th Call for Proposals will be launched in Autumn 2019. For inspiration with your project ideas, check out the [UIA projects](#) already supported under the Urban Innovative Actions!

2. REC

Find here the [link](#) to the work programme for 2019

- Call for proposals on capacity-building in the area of rights of the child - child-friendly justice REC-RCHI-PROF-AG-2019. **Deadline:** 14 May 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- Call for proposals to improve the awareness on EU citizenship rights and inclusion of mobile EU citizens and to support coordination among national authorities competent in electoral matters. **Deadline:** 11 April 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- Call for proposals to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women. **Deadline:** 13 June 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- Call for proposals to promote the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination. **Deadline:** 20 June 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- Call for proposals to support National Roma platforms. **Deadline:** 20 June 2019 [Link to FB](#)

3. Erasmus +

Find here the [link](#) to the work programme for 2019

- Sport - Collaborative partnerships/ Small collaborative partnerships/ Not-for-profit European sport events. **Deadline:** 4 April 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- Key Action 3: Forward-looking cooperation projects. **Deadline:** 19 March 2019 [Link ton FB](#)

4. Horizon 2020

This is a list of some of the Horizon2020 calls potentially interesting to SAF members. For the complete list please check the funding forecast.

- **SC1-DTH-05-2019:** Large scale implementation of digital innovation for health and care in an ageing society. **Deadline:** 24 April 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- **SC1-DTH-11-2019:** Large Scale pilots of personalised & outcome based integrated care. **Deadline:** 24 April 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- **LC-SC3-EC-2-2018-2019-2020:** Mitigating household energy poverty. **Deadline:** 3 September 2019 [Link to FB](#)



- **MIGRATION-03-2019:** Social and economic effects of migration in Europe and integration policies. **Deadline:** 14 March 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- **DT-MIGRATION-06-2018-2019:** Addressing the challenge of migrant integration through ICT-enabled solutions. **Deadline:** 14 March 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- **GOVERNANCE-04-2019:** Enhancing social rights and EU citizenship. **Deadline:** 14 March 2019 [Link to FB](#)
- **DTH-05:** Digital health and care solutions for an ageing society, € 10M, **Deadline:** 24 Apr 2019) [Link to call](#)
- **ICT-34:** Open to ICT based solutions in any area of public interest, € 6M, **Deadline:** 28 Mar 2019) [Link to call](#)

Indicative topics for calls to open in 2020:

- **MIGRATION-05-2020:** Inclusive and innovative practices for the integration of migrants in urban areas
- **MIGRATION-06-2018-2020-continued:** Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migration children
- **MIGRATION-09-2020:** Narratives on migration and its impact: past and present
- **MIGRATION-10-2020:** Innovative solutions and evidence-based recommendations on migration
- **SU-GOVERNANCE-09-2020:** Addressing radicalisation through social inclusion

5. URBACT III - Action planning

URBACT call for **Action Planning Networks**. **Deadline:** 17 April 2019 [Link to FB](#)
Recording of URBACT webinar from 31 January is available here: [Link](#)

6. Active Assisted Living Programme - Ageing Well in the Digital World

Call for proposals on sustainable smart solutions for ageing well. **Deadline:** 24 May 2019 [Link to FB](#)

The latest edition of the **EUROCITIES funding forecast** with information on all open and upcoming funding opportunities for cities and the specific funding briefs, is available [here](#) (after log in).
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