The implementation of the EPSR through the European Semester

Conference ‘Implementing and enforcing the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR): Quo Vadis?’

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Dr. Sebastiano Sabato
Senior researcher- European Social Observatory (OSE)
Structure of the presentation

1. The implementation of the EPSR in the European Semester 2018

2. The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR

3. Summing up

• References
The implementation of the EPSR in the European Semester 2018 (1)

• **Annual Growth Survey 2018**
  – Follows *structure of EPSR*, but not all the principles taken into consideration

• **Joint Employment Report 2018**
  – Revised *Employment Guidelines* inspired by EPSR Principles
  – Headline indicators of the *Social Scoreboard* used

• **Country reports 2018**
  – The EPSR informs the *analysis*

To a large extent this also applies to the 2019 Semester documents
The implementation of the EPSR in the European Semester 2018 (2)

The CSRs 2018

Share of ‘social CSRs’ over total CSRs (quantitative analysis)
The implementation of the EPSR in the European Semester 2018 (3)

Social CSRs by ‘policy orientation’ (qualitative analysis)

Distribution of social-policy prescriptions within the socially oriented CSRs according to their orientation (percentage of the total number of social-policy prescriptions)
The implementation of the EPSR in the European Semester 2018 (4)

Two conclusions

- Since 2014 the European Semester is ‘more social’

- Evolution of CSRs 2017 – 2018: Pillar effect

‘Formal’ impact of the EPSR on the Semester
Is this sufficient to say that the Pillar has been a success?
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR(1)

The real tests for the EPSR start now and they will mainly concern three aspects:

• The support from the EU budget (MFF 2021 -2027)

• The elaboration of an enabling and coherent EU policy approach for the implementation of the EPSR

• The integration of the rights and principles of the Pillar into the Sustainable Development Agenda
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR (2)

An enabbling and coherent policy approach at the EU level, ensuring coherence between macro-economic, fiscal and social priorities in the Semester

- Enough budgetary margins for manoeuvre for the Member States for a full implementation of the Pillar.

- Coherent EU recommendations, allowing for a full implementation of the principles and rights of the EPSR?
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR (3)

The full implementation of the Pillar will not be ‘cheap’.

However

‘The Pillar should be implemented according to available resources and within the limits of sound budgetary management and Treaty obligations governing public finances’ (European Commission, 2017)
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR (4)

The need of policy coherence between economic, fiscal and social objectives/measures in the Semester

- More studies (by country) needed
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR (6)

The case of ITALY (Björn Hacker – ETUI WP 2019/5)

CSR 2018 (+ recitals):

- **Fiscal consolidation** (reduction of public deficit/debt) as the top priority

- Particular attention to the improvement of **ALMP** (incl. training); adopting measures to increase **labour market participation of women** (incl. childcare facilities); increase the participation in **vocational-oriented tertiary education**.
The next ‘key tests’ for the EPSR(7)

- Reduce the share of old-age pensions in public spending to create space for other social spending

Conclusion (Hacker, 2019:48): ‘[...] policy recommendations highlight the conflict between economic and social policy orientations, with the Commission unable to come up with any solution’. 
Summing up

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‘Formal’ impact: YES

‘Substantial’ impact (ability to affect MS’ policies): TO BE SEEN

To ensure the latter, importance of:

- Enough budgetary margins to manoeuvre for the Member States;
- Policy coherence in the objectives and recommendations of the Semester
Summing up

Without enough ‘money’ and ‘policy coherence’, the full implementation of the EPSR in the Member States will be severely constrained.
Thank you for your attention!
References


