

Chapter 4

Social Inclusion on the European Policy Agenda

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4.1 Introduction

In the context of a modest economic recovery, addressing Europe-wide social challenges is not an easy task. Despite the economic progress, there are still large disparities between Member States, and some are struggling with reducing poverty, income inequality and finding ways to ensure social cohesion across the European Union. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, poverty and income inequality have increased across the European Union. It is notable that between 2009 and 2014, there has been an increase of 1% in the proportion of people whose income is below 60% of the national median (European Commission 2016). Although the proportion of socially excluded people has decreased since 2013, it was estimated that in 2015, there were 119 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (European Commission 2016). The crisis slowed down or reversed convergence between Member States. The European Commission considers that countries with well-developed social institutions and reformed social systems have weathered the crisis better than others. Increased investment in social inclusion policies is important for upward convergence in the European Union.

This chapter firstly explores the concept of the social inclusion in the European debate. It continues with some key European (EU)-level initiatives for specific groups of people. The EU-level social partner's work particularly with regard to work-based social inclusion is briefly discussed in the following section. Lastly, the last two sections sketch the work of international organisations, such as ILO, UN, and conclude the chapter.

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4.2 The Concept of Inclusion on the European Agenda

The issue of inclusion has been at the heart of several European Union initiatives and actions. To provide with a picture of European policies on social inclusion, this section will highlight the notion of social inclusion as used in the European debate and policy. The role of the European Union on combating social exclusion and supporting and complementing the work of the Member States in that respect was recognised through the Articles 136 and 137 of the Amsterdam Treaty.

The concept of social exclusion was until early 1970s often used interchangeably with poverty. The first European anti-poverty programmes were adopted in 1975 with a focus on material deprivation but since then the concept has evolved and encompassed cultural and social resources. In the joint European Commission's and Council Report on social inclusion is defined quite broadly, reflecting its multidimensional nature as follows:

Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights. (Council, EPSCO, 2004, p. 8)

This definition has been part of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Subsequently, indicators to capture social exclusion were developed, and social cohesion became a major priority in European policies.

In the following years, a group-based policy was pursued focusing on individuals and groups who are unable to fully participate in society's activities. Groups at risk of social exclusion (European Commission 2014) received specific attention, including unemployed, people with disabilities, ethnic/language minorities (such as Roma), migrants and those with a migration background, drug abusers, the homeless (disadvantaged), children and youth, the elderly, women, single-parent families and families with a large number of children, and people leaving institutions.

4.3 European Policy Initiatives

Some key initiatives go back to 1990s, with the two White Papers (European Commission 1993, 1994), setting the topic of social exclusion firmly on the European political agenda. Later on, in the context of the Lisbon strategy in 2000 the EU heads of states and governments (European Council 2000) set the objective of making Europe "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy

in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. Social inclusion has been signified as utterly important objective and actions to combat racism and xenophobia, to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and to assist disabled people. It was agreed that Member States should coordinate their policies for combating social exclusion and poverty through an open method. The latter would include common objectives, National Action Plans on inclusion and Community Action Programmes. Having agreed on the common objectives the Member States designed national strategies to fight social exclusion and poverty using an integrated approach. The open method allowed national governments to compare strategies and practices and learn from each other.

In the new start of the Lisbon strategy (European Council 2005), a review of its objectives took place, and the Council of the European Union maintained its determination to preserve the European social model and social cohesion. The multifaceted notion of social inclusion was recognised, and interventions by both the Member states and the European Union were designed, focusing on target groups (for instance the Youth Pact aimed at the full integration of young people).

The Europe 2020 strategy¹ launched in 2010 aims at creating conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It sets targets to get people out of poverty and social exclusion with specific actions. A number of flagship initiatives support this strategy, including the Platform against poverty and social exclusion which provides support to EU countries to address their social challenges. Similarly, EU funds such as the European Social Fund and initiatives such as the Social Investment Package can address social exclusion problems in the Member States.

While social inclusion is a shared competence with the Member States, the EU policy developed a “soft law approach” which is part of the EU Semester and the Europe 2020 priorities. In particular, the European Commission works with the Social Protection Committee using the open method of coordination. This process includes a large number of stakeholders (apart from the Member States) including the civil society and the social partners.

4.4 Policy Initiatives for Specific Groups

This section will concentrate on two vulnerable groups that have been a concern for policy makers due to the risks associated with their exclusion from the society and labour market, youth and migrants/refugees.

¹For more information on the Europe2020 strategy, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/european-semester_en.

4.4.1 Addressing Challenges of the Youth

A group severely hit by the crisis is that of young people. Evidence demonstrates that protracted periods of unemployment and disengagement from society can have negative consequences on their well-being and future labour market outcomes (Eurofound 2012). It was estimated that 8.7 million young European had difficulties finding a job, and 13.7 million were not in employment, education or training (NEET) (Eurostat 2014) according to the 2015 European Youth report. Poverty rates are higher for young people than the general population which renders them to a precarious situation and is a risk of long-term poverty.

Inclusion of young people at risk has been the focus of several EU initiatives and funding projects, since 2001, when the White Paper “A new impetus for European Youth” (European Commission 2001) set specific priorities for focused action on youth. Several initiatives have been taken in the wake of the economic crisis with a view to support young people. The Europe 2020 flagship initiative Youth On the Move (European Commission 2010) is specifically targeting young people, and the issue has been a priority on the EU agenda. The group not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been considered most at risk already in the 2000s EU debate which also highlighted the heterogeneity of the group. The group consists of young people with different needs such as long-term unemployed, short-term unemployed, youth people with family responsibilities, with disabilities. As their situation exacerbated with the crisis, a separate NEETs indicator was proposed by the Employment Committee (EMCO) group, which allows cross-country comparisons. The situation of the NEETs in the Member States is monitored through this indicator, and a number of initiatives have focused on that group. There are wide variations between Member States regarding the size and composition of the NEETs, as analysis shows. A Eurofound report (2015) found that short-term unemployed are the largest group in Nordic countries whereas long-term unemployed and discouraged are more prevalent in Mediterranean countries. The majority of NEETs in eastern countries are women with family responsibilities.

In 2011, the Youth Opportunity Initiative (European Commission 2011) was launched which required coordinated action between EU institutions and Member States pooling resources (such as national, the European Social Fund (ESF)) to tackle youth unemployment and particularly the NEETs. The initiative takes the form of a broad partnership with different actors, including social partners and different business organisations.

The Youth Guarantee (YG) issue was debated before the economic crisis hit Europe but it was recommended as an action by the European Commission in December 2012 (European Commission 2012). The Council of the European Union finally endorsed the action in April 2013 which was then rolled out in the following year. What the YG guarantees is that young people in the age group of 15–24 not in employment, education or training are provided with a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. Financial instruments for the

YG ensure it is actively supported; therefore, ESF funds and other national funds were prioritised for young people and NEETs. Additionally, the Youth Employment Initiative, promoted by the European Commission in 2013, provided additional financial means to support NEETs.

Ensuring quality traineeships in terms of quality of learning and working conditions for trainees has been the concern of the Quality framework for Traineeships as mentioned in the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (Council Recommendation (EC), 88/2014). Actions for youth participation in the society and support for intercultural dialogue has been also assisted through the ERASMUS+ programme. Through this programme, four million young people and educators will be assisted in increasing their learning in a different country than their own and with a total budget of 14.7 billion up to 2020. Member states report on the implementation of the framework for European cooperation on education, job and participatory opportunities in inclusive communities.

Monitoring implementation and ensuring that Member States learn from each other, national actions are monitored by the European Commission in the context of the European Semester that takes place every year. Specific country recommendations are then provided to Member States that need to improve certain policy actions. The European Semester takes place in the framework of the European Employment Strategy which also assesses national performance on youth employment and specifically NEETs.

4.4.2 Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees

The recent refugee crisis has been on the EU political agenda in the last few years initially, as a humanitarian response and then as an attempt to integrate the refugees and asylum seekers into the European societies. The majority of those displaced originate from not only Syria but also Africa and South Asia. A World Bank report (2016) estimates the world migrants, refugees and asylum seekers numbers to 60 million which is as many as the population of Italy. With an unprecedented number arriving at European shores in 2015 through Greece and Italy, managing their resettlement and integration became a major political concern. Eurostat data showed that since 2010 there has been a steady increase in the number of migrants; however, 2015 was marked as the year of migrant and refugee crisis in Europe. Eurostat figures for 2014 bring the number of asylum seekers to over 600,000, and the next year, those were increased to 1,322,000. Forced displacement causes enormous human suffering particularly for certain groups such as youth, women and children.

The existing Dublin agreement designed to address occasional and contained migrant flows has proved to be non-sustainable as it put enormous pressure on the receiving countries. Disagreements between the EU Member States regarding the course of action provided a challenge for an early and coordinated response at EU level. However, a number of policy measures have been adopted at EU level: (i) the relocation scheme, (ii) resettlement scheme and (iii) EU–Turkey agreement.

A Eurofound report (2017) highlights challenges faced by Member States in integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the issues raised pertain to housing shortages which often make access to jobs very difficult. Opportunities for self-employment are not always forthcoming. Social security entitlements for asylum seekers vary across countries and may differ for other migrant groups. Furthermore, schools are not always well prepared to receive children of asylum seekers.

Social inclusion of refugees is also linked to their integration in the labour market, and to that end, a number of steps have been taken at EU level. In particular the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), which focuses mainly on asylum seekers, covers among others, employment issues.

The European Commission presented in 2016 an Action Plan for the integration of third-country nationals. The Action Plan covers five main policy priorities: (i) Providing support to third-country nationals for pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, as part of the resettlement scheme; (ii) education and training (iii) Labour Market Integration and access to vocational training; (iv) access to basic services (such as housing and health care); (v) active participation and social inclusion, through intercultural dialogue, youth and sport combating discrimination, gender-based violence, etc.

With a view to support policy coordination, the Action Plan suggests to upgrade the existing Network of the National Contact Points on Integration into a European Integration Network with a stronger coordination role. Additionally, a European Integration Forum was set up in 2009 with a view to give voice to civil society and European institutions regarding integration issues. That Forum has since 2015 been evolved into European Migration Forum which will be used to provide further input. Furthermore, inclusive education, non-discrimination, etc., are areas where the European Commission will stress cooperation among Member States for addressing challenges related to migrant integration.

It is important to highlight that Actions without funding would not have any prospects of successful implementation. Funding of migrant integration activities through the Action Plan is foreseen through instruments addressing social and economic cohesion across Member States. The European Integration Fund financed in the previous planning period (2007–13) activities amounting to EUR 825 million. Additionally, funding of further integration actions is foreseen under the structural funds; dedicated funding by ESF (for instance EUR 21 billion for social inclusion) and the European Regional Development Fund (for example, EUR 21.4 billion for social inclusion, housing, education, etc). Another funding mechanism can be provided through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (indicatively, EUR 14.4 billion in the current programming period can cover job creation and provision of basic services and action for social inclusion).

The migration situation is monitored by the European Commission who provides regular reporting and engages with Member states, particularly those falling behind the targets, with a view to find the more suitable ways to implement the Council decisions.

As regards relocation, the European Commission's² ninth progress report (European Commission 2017a), issued in February 2017, states that there has been an improvement in action by Member States, and a total of 11,966 people have so far been relocated, very low number compared to those originally anticipated by the Council decisions (approximately 153,000). It is indicative that 13 Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland have provided pledges for relocation during that reporting period while Austria and Hungary have been the only two countries without any pledges or relocation actions at all. Furthermore, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic have not implemented consistently their obligations and others, such as Poland have not followed up their promises, and as a result, no relocations have taken place there.

For the same reporting period, a total of 13,968 people have been resettled while the agreed number was 22,504 following the EU Resettlement scheme. This scheme seems to be working more efficiently as the figures suggest, and the original commitment was more realistic. Under this scheme, Member States should provide "safe and legal avenues" to those people originating from Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa needing international protection. Again, Member States are encouraged to step up their efforts but not all of them have embraced the measures. In the European Commission ninth report, it is reported that most of the Member States participating in the scheme have concentrated efforts (but not exclusively) on Syrians staying in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This also refers to the EU-Turkey agreement to resettle Syrians from Turkey.

The figures above may suggest that the overall outcomes are modest; however, significant efforts at EU level have been taken to coordinate action and convince individual Member States to respond to the challenge. Certain Member States either do not agree to commit themselves to taking action required or do not effectively deliver on commitments, as highlighted in the ninth report (above). Recommendations by the European Commission are regularly provided to Member States for showing solidarity and sharing responsibility with countries mainly affected by migration, such as Greece and Italy.

Lastly, on the occasion of the United Nations' World Refugee Day (20 June), the European Commission launched the "EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals". The tool is an instrument that contributes to the successful integration of migrants. It makes it possible for non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications and experiences in a way that is clear and understood by employers, education, training providers and organisations working with migrants across the EU.

²The reporting period is for December 2016 to February 2017.

4.5 Social Inclusion at the Workplace Level

With regard to the workplace, the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) (2000/78/EC) prohibits discrimination based on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation. Any form of direct (due to the characteristics of a specific group) or indirect discrimination (provisions, criteria or practices that put certain groups in a disadvantageous position) is prohibited. This Directive has already been transposed by all EU Member States. Furthermore, the 2006/54/EC Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation aims to combat discrimination and particularly in relation to (i) access to employment, including promotion, and to vocational training; (ii) working conditions, including pay; and (iii) occupational social security schemes.

Both EU legislation and soft law promote inclusive workplaces, as it is the case for instance with the equal opportunities for women and men, protection against discrimination, ensuring that young people, part-timers or other groups are not deprived of certain rights. Furthermore, social dialogue can also play a major role. Employees and their representatives should be informed about changes in the workplace and the impact those have on different parts of the workforce. The 2002/14/EC Directive sets minimum principles, definitions and arrangements for information and consultation of employees at the enterprise level within each country and plays a key role in promoting social dialogue. According to the Directive, employees should receive information on the employment and economic situation of the company as well as on decisions likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or in contractual relations.

The European Commission recently launched a series of consultations on the introduction of a European Pillar of Social Rights, which “takes account of the changing realities of the world of work and which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area”.³ The principles to be introduced will complement the existing EU “social acquis” rather than replacing them. The “social acquis” is essentially all social legislation; it constitutes part of the *acquis communautaire* which includes “the body of laws (Treaty provisions, regulations, directives, decisions, European Court of Justice (ECJ) case law and other Union legal measures, binding and non-binding), principles, policy objectives, declarations, resolutions and international agreements defining the social policy of the EU” (Eurofound, *Industrial Relations Dictionary*).

In April 2017, the European Commission introduced the European Pillar of Social Rights Package. The package contains a Commission Recommendation (European Commission 2017b) containing 20 principles regarding the 20 areas proposed in 2016, prior to the public consultation. This provides some direction

³For more information on actions, see http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/towards-european-pillar-social-rights_en.

regarding upward convergence and provides a proposal for a joint proclamation (European Commission 2017c) by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. A social scoreboard⁴ is also established to track trends and performance of Member States in 12 areas and to assess progress towards a social “triple A” for the EU as a whole. It is expected that this analysis will feed into the European Semester of economic policy coordination. It also includes a series of documents as part of the consultation of the social partners and other stakeholders on access to social protection—the Written Statement Directive and consultation of social partners. If EU actions are deemed necessary, there will be a second stage of consultation with the social partners on the content of proposals for action. Additionally, a package on the work-life balance of parents and carers was suggested. A staff working document on the **implementation of the Recommendation on Active Inclusion** (European Commission 2013) of people excluded from the labour market was produced and was part of the package.

Another staff working document (European Commission 2017d), the REFIT Evaluation of the “Written Statement Directive” (Directive 91/533/EEC) summarises the findings of this evaluation. Clearly, the Directive has a social role as it intends to provide employees with improved protection against possible infringements of their rights. However, as the labour market has changed significantly over the last 25 years since the Directive was launched, the evaluation assessed the extent to which it still fits its purpose.

The European Social Pillar contains three chapters: (i) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; (ii) Fair working conditions, and (iii) Social protection and inclusion. It is notable that 10 out of 20 principles refer to the social protection and inclusion, and the areas they cover are the following:

- Childcare and support to children
- Social protection
- Unemployment benefits
- Minimum income
- Old-age income and pensions
- Health care
- Inclusion of people with disabilities
- Long-term care
- Housing and assistance for the homeless
- Access to essential services.

It is expected that the European Pillar will serve as a reference document for the national employment and social policies which will continue to be monitored closely with a view to secure greater convergence between Member States.

⁴<https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/>.

4.6 European Social Partners

The role of EU-level social dialogue was recognised in the Val Duchesse process in 1985. Building on that the social partners' involvement in shaping and implementing Community social and employment policy was agreed between them in 1991 and then consisted part of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Following that, the European social partners developed their own work programme and initiatives as well as an autonomous dialogue. The European-level cross-sector social partners include the following organisations: BusinessEurope,⁵ UEAPME,⁶ CEEP⁷ and ETUC.⁸ Social inclusion issues for specific groups of workers were included in various work programmes agreed by the EU-level social partners.

In their 2009–2010 work programme, they agreed to jointly address economic migration issues and promote “the integration of migrant workers in the labour market and at the workplace in order to identify possible joint actions”. With Europe at the crossroads, the work programme 2012–14 focused clearly on youth employment and the link between education and work and transitions into the labour market. The social partners committed themselves to provide recommendations to the Member states and EU institutions. Joint actions were also proposed with regard to apprenticeships and integration of migrant workers in the labour market.

The latest 2015–17 work programme promotes an intergenerational approach to the workplace and commits the signatory parties towards considering “joint actions going beyond their regular participation in the Commission’s advisory committees linked to free movement of workers”. The social partners will also work on the renewal of the EU policy on migration in a mutually beneficial way.

In the context of article 155 of the Treaty, the European-level social partners can sign autonomous European framework agreements,⁹ as mentioned above, which commit their members to implement various measures. Those can take place at national, sectoral and/or company levels following the national tradition and industrial relations practice of each Member State (or the European Economic Area state). The agreements also constitute a responsibility of the social partners towards contributing to EU social policies and actions related to the issues tackled in their framework agreements. The signatory parties also invite their member organisations in candidate countries to implement this agreement.

⁵BUSINESSEUROPE represent all-sized enterprises at EU and international level.

⁶UEAPME is the employers’ organisation representing the interests of European crafts, trades and SMEs at EU level.

⁷CEEP is the **European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest**.

⁸The liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC is usually represented when framework agreements are concluded.

⁹For a list of the EU-level social partners’ framework agreements, see the European Commission web page <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>.

Several autonomous framework agreements have been concluded by the EU-level social partners, and the one agreed back in 2007 recognised mutual respect for the dignity of all at the workplace and deals with forms of violence and harassment within the competence of the social partners.

The 2015–2017 social partners’ autonomous framework agreement on active ageing and an intergenerational approach encourages social partners at the appropriate level to work towards developing a working environment that enables workers of all ages to work together. This is particularly relevant for young workers as the agreement encourages collaboration with education institutions or public employment services to ease transitions into and within the labour market. It also refers to mentoring or tutoring for young workers and actions to enhance their skills so that they can fulfil their potential in the workplace. Both sides are urged to consider the implications of demographic change in the European workplaces. Offering a working environment where workers can stay healthy, safe and productive until legal retirement age and ensuring cooperation for transferring knowledge and experience between different age groups and generations at the workplace are some of the concerns of the agreement. Implementation of the agreement will be within the next 3 years, and the signatory parties will report on implementation to the European Social Dialogue Committee.

Unlike national collective agreements, EU-level framework agreements are not concluded often and have a different scope and mandate. The latest framework agreement “constitutes the social partners’ contribution to the European social policies” and the non-discrimination legislation.

4.7 International Initiatives for the Inclusion of Youth, Migrants and Refugees

At the international level, United Nations entities, including ILO, have taken initiatives in support of youth inclusion, migrants or refugees integration in the societies and labour market.

4.7.1 Youth Programmes

The ILO global programme for youth employment has been developed over decades and following different priorities; prior to the 1970s, it focused mainly on the adoption of international labour standards. The following decades were marked with initiatives, such as the Action Programme on Youth Unemployment (1996–97) and the Action Programme to Combat Youth Marginalization and Unemployment (1998–99). More integrated approaches were pursued with the Youth Employment

Programme (YEP) set-up in 2005 and supported by the 2005 and 2007 Resolutions. YEP aimed at coordinated labour market, economic and education and training policies which would better support employment growth and decent jobs.

Later on, the ILO Conference adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (ILO 2008), inviting their members to follow policies that meet the strategic objectives: (i) employment, (ii) social protection and (iii) fundamental principles and rights at work.

At the height of the economic crisis, the ILO adopted a Resolution for immediate, targeted and renewed action to tackle the youth employment crisis (ILO 2012). Measures in the area of macroeconomic policies, employability, labour market policies, youth entrepreneurship and rights were suggested. At the same time, guides were produced for National Action Plans on youth employment.

The United Nations Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth,¹⁰ (United Nations 2016) brings together the United Nations resources and several other key global players. It is in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The priority areas addressed are the following:

- Green jobs for young people
- Apprenticeships
- Digital skills and tech hubs to facilitate youth access to digital economy
- Youth in the informal economy, as an attempt to promote their transition to the formal economy
- Activities for young people in rural areas; in fragile states
- Young entrepreneurs
- Action area for youth (15–17 years old) in hazardous jobs and ensuring decent jobs.

The United Nations programme for youth goes back to the mid-1990s with the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) with fifteen fields of action covering education, employment, poverty and hunger, girls and women, leisure, environment, substance abuse, juvenile justice, participation in life and society, HIV/AIDS, ICT, globalisation, armed conflict and intergenerational issues. The adoption of the programme means that governments will do their utmost to promote rights and freedoms, protect young people against discrimination within the context of the Action for Youth. To ensure coordination and complementarities of all UN entities' work on youth, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development was set up and has been operating within the context of the WPAY. Built on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals came into force in 2016. The Goals related to Quality of education and Decent work and economic growth make specific reference to young people (e.g. reducing the

¹⁰Different UN entities came together in 2015 to bring this forward: FAO, ILO, ITC, ITU, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNRWA, UN-WOMEN, UNWTO, WIPO, the World Bank Group and (ex-officio) the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

number of NEETs, full employment and decent jobs for young people, access to training).

With the development agenda at the heart of its work, the World Bank established the Youth Summit, a platform that connects youth with the development community, researchers, governments, private sector with a view to promote new ideas and debate the future of education. It is the conviction of the Bank that economic growth and human capital accumulation are intertwined and providing better opportunities for education, and skilled youth will assist towards more growth and development. Various programmes in developing countries are aimed towards inclusion of young people through education.

4.7.2 Migrants and Refugees

The issue of migration has been at the heart of the ILO work since its establishment. A number of fundamental rights conventions cover the issue of migration; these are the ILO Conventions No. 97 (migration for employment convention) and 143 (migrant workers convention) on the protection of migrant workers and the governance of labour migration as well as the accompanying Recommendations No. 86 (Migration for employment) and 151 (migrant workers). Furthermore, non-binding principles and guidelines provide a set of good practices on labour migration and incorporated in the Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (ILO 2006). The Fair Migration Agenda ILO (2014) initiative aims at setting up an agenda for fundamental rights and decent jobs for migrant workers, respecting human rights (including labour rights) and social dialogue, making migration a choice, promoting bilateral agreements for well-regulated and fair migration, etc.

Similarly, the Declaration of the UN General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development adopted in 2013 (United Nations 2013) recognises the role migration can make towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide for protection of labour rights and promotion of safe and secure working environments for migrant workers, in particular women migrants. They also aim at reducing inequalities through facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

A number of high-level meetings have taken place under the auspices of the UN to coordinate international efforts with a view to address large movements of refugees and migrants particularly since the Syrian war crisis. The Summit in September 2016 at the Heads of State and Government level concluded with the signature of a Plan for addressing the issue. This was culminated in the New York Declaration which strongly condemns xenophobia against migrants and refugees and includes commitments for securing human rights for refugees and migrants; preventing sexual and gender violence; ensuring education for children of migrant or refugee background; assisting refugee and migrant receiving countries; etc. The

New York Declaration provides for plans for more equitable sharing of the burden for hosting and supporting refugees in 2018.

The World Bank's response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been of humanitarian nature, shoring up public services and institutions in the receiving countries or emergency aid (e.g. in countries such as Lebanon, Jordan). Most of the Bank's operations focus on development with a direct or indirect effect on migration. A number of projects (World Bank 2016) fund activities (lending) and provide technical assistance and advice to governments concerned with management of migration flows and migrant integration.

4.8 Conclusions

European and international efforts towards addressing social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in societies have been stepped up in the last years, particularly as the economic crisis left a mark on the societal fabric. As the European economy has been recovering (albeit modestly), improvements in the social situation are noticeable in Member States however at different pace. Large social disparities still remain, and economic growth does not lift all boats across the Member States. Therefore, narrowing the divide between Member states and focusing on convergence should be a priority of EU policies. Persistent divergences pose significant risks to social inclusion in the European societies. It is clear that policy interventions have contributed towards containing the negative effects of the crisis but they need to be strengthened in order for them to achieve upward convergence across Europe.

At the time of financial distress as a result of the economic crisis, social policies of the Member States have been under significant strain. Severe youth unemployment has made the situation of young people precarious; many of them are experiencing or threatened by economic and social marginalisation. While the situation in many EU countries has improved, there are still high levels of youth unemployment. Coordinated EU and national policies have gathered pace in the post-crisis era in preventing and addressing youth unemployment and breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

Furthermore, an unprecedented number of migrants and refugees entering the EU in the last few years have put the social infrastructure and social cohesion of the Member states into test. Undoubtedly, migration is a significant challenge for the European Union. With a large demographic problem (at least for some Member States), migration can possibly address some of the EU labour markets' bottlenecks while social policies will have to deal with the social and economic integration of the migrants.

Undoubtedly, EU financial instruments play a key role in encouraging social inclusion policies; implementation of national policies has been supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds, particularly with the ESF priority on social inclusion (including active inclusion) and access to services in the last years

(since 2014). These initiatives have certainly helped steering reform processes in the Member States with a strong social inclusion focus. Further developments with the introduction of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the social scoreboard, etc., provide a strong focus on social protection, inclusion and overall social performance. The positive elements provided by the European Pillar of Social Rights could be further strengthened for making a lasting effect. Currently, it constitutes a framework of principles which could be complemented by more binding elements. Further work would need to concentrate on how the principles enshrined in the Pillar will be implemented at national and EU level. Actions resulting from the social scoreboard would need to be complementary to existing monitoring instruments to allow better monitoring of social trends in the European Union. It would be important for the Member States to share ownership of the Pillar with a view to ensure effective implementation, particularly as they have different starting points. Social investment should continue to be a priority at EU level to balance economic policies.

This short overview of key EU initiatives shows that the concept of social inclusion has come a long way since the early days in the 1970s. Moving from poverty to social exclusion and then gradually to social inclusion of different groups, EU-level initiatives complemented and coordinated the Member States' actions in addressing social challenges. The multidimensional character of social inclusion should also be reflected on multidimensional policies. Focusing on one aspect while neglecting others may cancel out the positive effects of the intended policies. Social policies are part of the Europe2020 strategy, and the European Pillar of Social Rights with ten principles focusing on social protection and inclusion aims at meeting the objective of upward convergence for a "fair and truly pan-European labour market" (President Jean-Claude Juncker, State of the Union Address, European Parliament, 9 September 2015).

A key component of the European social model, the European social dialogue can also make a significant contribution to social inclusion through autonomous agreements concluded by the EU-level social partners and other coordinated actions. The recent (March 2017) autonomous agreement is certainly moving towards this direction. The EU social partners' contribution to EU policies through consultations on social policies takes into account impacts of social policies on different groups of workers, such as young workers, migrants, in the Member States.

The debate on the European social model is ongoing, and several questions about the EU social future actions are raised: what actions need to be taken to ensure that the social model is sustainable; how to secure social investments for sustainable growth; how to ensure well-functioning social institutions; how to pursue better social policies for upward convergence; how to shield social policies against future shocks; and eventually, what kind of social Europe do EU citizens want and how to work together? Perhaps it is pertinent to answer these questions in conjunction with the White book on the Future of Europe (European Commission 2017e) presented recently by the President of the European Commission,

Jean-Claude Juncker, which provides some alternative scenarios for the future of the 27 Member States.

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