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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee for 2024

Delegations will find attached the 2024 Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee and its permanent and temporary subgroups, as adopted in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, with a view to the EPSCO Council on 11 March 2024 (Any Other Business item).

2024 Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee

1. Context

The Social Protection Committee (SPC) is an advisory policy Committee, established in accordance with art. 160 of the TFEU, providing a representative forum for multilateral social policy coordination, dialogue and cooperation at EU level. It brings together senior policy makers from all EU Member States and the Commission in an effort to discuss and identify the most appropriate policy measures to respond to the various social policy challenges across the EU. The Committee actively participates, on behalf of the Council of the European Union for employment, social affairs and health (EPSCO), in the European Semester process of policy coordination¹.

The Treaty-based mandate of the SPC stipulates that the Committee monitors the social situation in the EU and the development of social protection policies.² The SPC delivers on this mandate through the use of the social open method of coordination (OMC), covering all major social policy strands: social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care. The SPC further uses the OMC tools (peer reviews and mutual learning activities) to promote mutual learning and the sharing of experience and expertise among the Member States.

The SPC may, if necessary, prepare additional reports, formulate opinions or undertake other work within its fields of competence, at the request of the Council, the Commission or on its own initiative as per Article 2(1c) of the Council Decision 2015/773, establishing the Committee.

To deliver on its mandate and strategic priorities, in 2024 SPC will be supported by the following subgroups:

- The permanent SPC **Indicators' Sub-Group (ISG)** will continue to provide support to the SPC, especially to its monitoring activities (development of **indicators**, as well as **benchmarking and monitoring frameworks**), in accordance with its own Work Programme (Annex 2).

¹ Article 2 (2b) of Council Decision (EU) 2015/773 establishing the SPC.

² Art. 160 TFEU

- The **Minimum Income Network Group (MINET)** will continue following up on the policy developments in the field of minimum income through its mutual learning activities and support the delivery of the next joint SPC-COM report, as per its renewed mandate until end 2025, in accordance with its own Work Programme. It may also provide inputs to support the further development of the benchmarking framework.
- The SPC ad-hoc **Working Group on Pension Adequacy (WGPA)** will finalise its work and submit the 2024 edition of the Pension Adequacy Report (PAR) for adoption by the SPC.

2. Policy Framework - Strategic Priorities

The SPC work programme takes into account the **EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024** adopted by the European Council³, **the policy priorities of the forthcoming Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies**, as well as the **Commission’s Work Programme (CWP)**, adopted on 17 October 2023⁴. In addition, the SPC will stand ready to address and follow up the initiatives included in the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan presented by the Commission in 2021 and monitor the progress towards the 2030 EU and national targets on poverty reduction⁵. **Due to the European Parliamentary elections in 2024, the work programme might need to be adjusted to the new strategic agenda.**

In general, the Committee activities will focus on three main interlinked areas of policy work, which also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan. The first area is related to the European Semester, the second is focused on thematic in-depth work, while the third is related to the Committee’s monitoring and reporting activities.

³ At its meeting in Brussels on 20 June 2019, the European Council agreed on an agenda for the EU for the next five years: “[A new strategic agenda 2019-2024](#)” sets out the priority areas that will steer the work of the European Council and provide guidance for the work programmes of other EU institutions.

⁴ [Commission Work Programme 2024](#): “Delivering today and preparing for tomorrow”.

⁵ The EU headline targets were welcomed by the [European Council on 24-25 June 2021](#), following the [Porto Declaration of 8 May](#). National targets were formulated by the Member States in close cooperation with the European Commission and the national target-setting process was subject of a [joint EMCO-SPC opinion](#) in 2022 (9520/22).

In delivering on these areas, the Committee will continue to make full use of the opportunities provided by the social open method of coordination, including peer reviews and other mutual learning activities. In addition, the Committee will take into consideration - where appropriate - the use of EU funds contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular through the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the related Recovery and Resilience Plans adopted by the Council; and the programming and implementation of the European Social Fund+ (ESF+).

2.1. Multiannual outlook

Based on the main references mentioned above for setting policy priorities, in particular the European Pillar of Social Rights, the SPC follows up on various policy initiatives, with the subsequent time schedule. A table in annex 3 lists the main ongoing initiatives and related actions, which might be relevant for SPC work in the next years. The list is not exhaustive and does not represent equivalent activities or commitments for the SPC across the various areas.

The SPC in the next few years will be focusing on the monitoring and exchanges of practices related to certain initiatives, identified as main priorities, and falling under the scope of its core tasks.

- a) The Committee will fulfil its commitments under the European Semester by delivering on the respective activities in contributing to all aspects of the European Semester within its field of competence and providing support through various opinions and reports to the Council.
- b) In terms of in-depth work, the Committee will focus on the delivery in the following areas in the coming years:

Table 1

2024	Pension Adequacy Report – discussion and adoption Thematic social reporting on measures to implement the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care Thematic discussions on the implementation of the Council recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed Joint opinion with EMCO on the European future social agenda
2025	Joint SPC-COM report on minimum income – discussion and adoption Review of Council Recommendations on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality – discussion and conclusions
2026	Report on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee – discussion and adoption
2027	Report(s) on pension adequacy and long-term care – discussion and adoption Contribution to the Commission report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on long-term care Contributing to the Report on the implementation of the Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions - discussion

In addition, the priorities of the upcoming presidencies will be considered, with the schedule of presidencies as follows:

1/2024 Belgium	2/2024 Hungary
1/2025 Poland	2/2025 Denmark
1/2026 Cyprus	2/2026 Ireland
1/2027 Lithuania	2/2027 Greece

2.2. Areas for SPC work in 2024

In general, the Committee activities will focus on three main areas of policy work, as mentioned above, namely the 1) European Semester, 2) the thematic in-depth work and 3) monitoring and reporting activities. The SPC will monitor the progress of its work and, if necessary, consider **possible adaptations to its work-programme in the course of 2024**.

2.2.1. The European Semester

The European Semester is the main framework for integrated surveillance and coordination of economic and employment policies across the European Union. Since its introduction in 2011, it has become a well-established forum for discussing Member States' fiscal, economic, employment and social policy challenges under a common annual timeline⁶. As part of its mandate⁷, the Social Protection Committee contributes to all aspects of the European Semester within its field of competence and provides support through various opinions and reports on them to the Council. To this end, the SPC will engage in the following activities in the course of 2024.

⁶ Depending on the outcomes of the ongoing Economic Governance Review, the foreseen activities might be adjusted in the course of 2024.

⁷ Council decision (EU) 2015/773, article 2b

2.2.1.1. Contribution to the EPSCO input for the Spring European Council

The SPC will contribute to the preparation of the EPSCO input to the Spring European Council with its assessment of the social protection issues raised in the **2024 Autumn Package**. It will also take part in any negotiations on possible changes of the **Employment Guidelines**, and the monitoring framework(s), in particular **the Social Scoreboard** and/or to the **Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)**.

Based on the joint EMCO-SPC *Opinion on the value added of social investment and the role of the EPSCO Council filière in the governance of the European Semester*, the Committee will also follow developments related to the ongoing **Economic Governance Review**⁸ and its impact on the employment and social dimension of the European Semester.

	Activities	Deliverables to the Council
1st half 2024	Reaction to the 2024 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey (ASGS) and the Joint Employment Report (JER), offering an analysis of the relevant social protection and social inclusion issues	The SPC, together with the Employment Committee (EMCO), will prepare the draft Council Conclusions on the 2024 ASGS and JER: political guidance on employment and social policies. <i>March EPSCO</i>
1st half 2024	Examination and input into the Joint Employment Report and its key messages on issues related to social protection and social inclusion, including the analysis of key employment and social indicators.	Final Joint Employment Report <i>March EPSCO</i>

⁸ On 9 November 2022, the Commission adopted a [Communication setting out orientations for a reformed EU economic governance framework](#). The communication is based on an online public consultation with stakeholders and Member States launched in February 2020 and on a further communication presented in October 2021. To follow up on the latest orientations, the Commission put forward [its legislative proposals](#) on the economic governance review on 26 April 2023.

2.2.1.2. Multilateral implementation reviews (MIRs)

The SPC will continue its **multilateral surveillance on the implementation of structural reforms in the Member States in the context of the European Semester**.

To carry out this task, the Committee will engage in **country-specific reviews** of the relevant 2023 country-specific recommendations (CSRs).

In line with the successful practice from past years, the SPC will engage in **joint reviews with EMCO** on the CSRs of common interest and will continue seeking **cooperation with the Economic Policy Committee (EPC)** on these matters whenever relevant. The Committee will also make use, where appropriate, of the results of the peer review programme and relevant social policy innovation projects to enhance the multilateral nature of the exercise.

The SPC will also follow the developments related to the implementation of the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, given in the implementation of social policies in the Member States. To this end, in the context of the SPC reviews Member States without a CSR, but with relevant reforms, included in their National Reform and Resilience Plans (NRRP) will be invited to share the latest developments with the implementation of those reforms. Where appropriate, thematic discussions could be organized, based on the Commission's thematic analysis⁹ and implementation reports¹⁰.

	Activities	Deliverables to the Council
1st half 2024	Multilateral examination of the implementation of structural reforms in the Member States in response to the 2023 Council country-specific recommendations in the areas under SPC competence.	Horizontal opinion and country-specific conclusions <i>June EPSCO</i>

⁹ [Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e3000000/1/press-19-2023-01-11-01_en.pdf)

¹⁰ [Recovery and Resilience Facility Annual Report 2023 \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e3000000/1/press-19-2023-01-11-01_en.pdf)

2.2.1.3. Review of the proposals for Council country-specific recommendations, revision of the Employment Guidelines and Euro area recommendation

The Committee will prepare the Council's adoption of the **2024 country-specific recommendations (CSR)** by discussing the Commission's proposals falling under SPC competence. In its assessment, the Committee will use the conclusions of the multilateral implementation reviews, to be carried out in the first half of the year. The SPC will adopt joint opinions with other Committees on all recommendations falling under joint competence and will contribute to the preparation of the EPSCO view.

In the second half of the year, the SPC will examine any social protection issues, which may be included in the **Commission proposal for a Euro area recommendation**. It will also discuss the possible **revision of Employment Guideline 8**.

It will engage in these exercises in cooperation with the EMCO and the advisory committees of the ECOFIN Council.

	Activities	Deliverables to the Council
1st half 2024	Cooperation with other Committees on 2024 CSRs of common interest	Horizontal opinion <i>June 2024 EPSCO.</i> Country-specific conclusions <i>July EPSCO (TBC)</i>
2nd half 2024	Examine the possible revision of Employment Guideline 8	<i>October EPSCO (TBC)</i>
2nd half 2024	Examine social protection and social inclusion issues included in the Commission proposal for a Euro area recommendation	Contribution on social protection and social inclusion parts of the 2024 Euro area recommendation . <i>December EPSCO</i>

2.2.1.4. Monitoring of the social situation and developments in social protection policies

Through its annual report, the SPC will continue its **monitoring of the social situation in the EU and of the development of social protection policies**, including the progress towards the 2030 **European and national poverty and social exclusion targets** introduced with the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (EPSR AP).

Based on the report, the Committee will propose for endorsement in the October EPSCO **key messages on the main policy priorities in the area of social protection and social inclusion** in view of the Commission's preparatory work for the **2025 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey**.

	Activities	Deliverables to the Council
2nd half 2024	Preparation of an annual report on the social situation in the EU and overview of social protection reforms on the basis of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and thematic social reporting by Member States	Annual Report and Key messages on the social situation and the main social policy priorities as input to the preparation of the 2025 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy <i>October EPSCO</i>

2.2.2. Thematic Work

The SPC will continue its **thematic work on priority issues in the areas under its competence**. The selection of topics will take into account existing Committee commitments, relevant socio-economic developments and/or EU policy initiatives, as well as the priorities of the Belgian (January-June) and the Hungarian Presidencies (July-December). The outcomes of such thematic work could be reflected in the SPC Annual Report; it could be transmitted to the Council as Key Messages or background information in support of Ministerial discussions. It may also be used to support the preparation of Council conclusions or provide orientation to forthcoming Commission initiatives.

2.2.2.1. Based on the Commission Work Program and ongoing initiatives, the thematic areas identified as priorities for 2024

- **Joint opinion on the European future social agenda**, based on the invitation of the ES and BE presidencies, also as a follow up on the reflections of the High Level Group on the Future of Social Protection and of the Welfare State in the EU.
- 2024 edition of **Pension Adequacy Report (PAR)**, delivered by the SPC Working Group on Pension Adequacy and the Commission, to be adopted by the SPC. Key messages to be endorsed by the Council.
- Joint reflection with EPC on **longevity challenges to pension and long-term care systems** building on the 2024 editions of the Pension Adequacy Report and the Ageing Report.
- **Thematic discussions** on the implementation of the Council recommendation on **access to social protection** for workers and the self-employed building on the Commission reviewing and reporting on progress in the implementation of the Council Recommendation , in line with the priorities of the Belgian presidency, focusing on the monitoring of the recommendation (role of SPC and ISG) and reinforcing the adequacy and transparency dimensions of the recommendation.
- Delivery of **thematic social reporting** on measures to implement the Council Recommendation **on access to affordable high-quality long-term care**.

2.2.2.2. Additional initiatives or developments to follow up, as information points

The SPC will take note and will reflect on implications for its work in the field of social policy with regards the following initiatives:

- Based on the first round of the biennial national progress reports (due in March 2024), **review progress** on implementation of the **European Child Guarantee, in coordination with the national Child Guarantee coordinators**.

- Discussion on the possible revision of the **Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services**.
- Monitor the possible outcome of the **Economic Governance Review** in relation to its impacts on the employment and social dimension of the European Semester and the related workstreams.
- **Receiving regular debriefs of the activities and joint exercises with various formations** following EU initiatives, including mutual learning exercises on distributional impact assessment (DIA) and inequalities in the framework of the Commission's Communication on better assessing the distributional impact of Member States' policies.
- Following the developments for the Directive establishing the **European disability card**
- Following the developments regarding the **Communication on digitalisation in social security coordination**: facilitating free movement in the Single Market.
- Following on the Commission's **9th Cohesion report** outlining the state of social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU, taking stock of the actions undertaken in the last years.
- Following the developments regarding the Communication "**A comprehensive approach to mental health**".
- Following the developments regarding the Commission Communication "**Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action**".
- In line with the potential priority of the **Hungarian Presidency** in the policy fields of the EPSCO Council, discussions to find possible **solutions of demographic challenges**. In this regard, the focus will be on the integration and social inclusion of certain disadvantaged groups.

The SPC mutual learning activities will include **peer reviews** and other mutual learning events, in particular in the areas of the **distributional impact assessment of policies, access to social protection, access to quality long-term care, developing framework of the social economy and minimum income**. Mutual learning activities would not require the presence of the national SPC members, but rather the participation of national experts/delegates in the respective fields.

2.2.2.3. Thematic social reporting

Every year, the SPC Members engage in thematic social reporting on a topic chosen according to the current social policy priorities. The outcome of such reporting serves to promote mutual learning and exchange of best practices among the Member States, including in the form of support information for dedicated SPC discussions; it may be included in the SPC annual report, or used to inform Ministerial discussions and relevant Commission's initiatives.

The 2024 SPC thematic social reporting would be dedicated to ***policy measures to support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care*** (2022/C 476/01), a key deliverable of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. This would contribute to fulfilling the Recommendation's provision that Member States should communicate to the Commission, within 18 months from the adoption, the set of measures taken or planned to implement it. The synthesis of the social thematic reports will be part of the 2024 SPC Annual Report and feed into the report on the progress made in implementation, which the Commission is mandated to submit to the Council by December 2027. In executing the exercise, synergies are to be ensured and overlaps with existing data collection exercises avoided.

2.2.3. Monitoring tools, benchmarking frameworks and development of indicators

The SPC will continue, **through its indicator Subgroup (SPC ISG)**, to work on the **identification and development of indicators to monitor the social situation** and the development of social protection policies in the Member States and the Union. The Committee will continue its involvement in the governance and monitoring activities of the implementation of relevant recent initiatives.

In 2024, and in cooperation with the EMCO, the SPC will continue to **review the current monitoring tools** (including the EPSR scoreboard, SPPM, JAF¹¹ and various monitoring frameworks), in view of simplifying and consolidating the existing tools in line with the findings of the 2019 joint EMCO-SPC report on the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Committee will continue its work on the development and review of **benchmarking frameworks** in the area of social protection and social inclusion, in line with the common approach agreed as concerns the use of benchmarking in the context of EPSCO work. In particular, further elaboration of the **minimum income** benchmarking framework is foreseen, following the conclusions of the 2022 joint SPC- EC Report on minimum income and the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion.

Beyond its work on monitoring tools and benchmarking, the SPC, through its ISG, will also seek to:

- Update and further develop the **monitoring frameworks** for the *Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed* and for the *European Child Guarantee Recommendation*
- Agree on a framework of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to high-quality affordable *long-term care*, in the context of the recently adopted European Care Strategy and building on the joint work on common indicators on long-term care and other monitoring frameworks;
- Follow work on **indicators relevant to monitor** the social and labour aspects of the **fair transition towards climate neutrality**, and in particular examine the use of existing indicators and the need for additional indicators to assess the fairness of the transition. In this context the ISG will develop indicators on *purchasing power across the income distribution*, as well as work further on development of indicators related to *energy poverty* and on new indicators on *transport poverty* and on *carbon and environmental footprint inequality*.

¹¹ European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)

- Work on developing and refining indicators in the area of *homelessness and housing exclusion and deprivation*, including in the context of the *European Platform on Combating Homelessness*.
- Following up on Council Conclusions on the **inclusion of persons with disabilities** in the labour market adopted by EPSCO on 8 December 2022, which reiterates calls of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to set up national targets for employment (by 2024) and participation in adult learning of persons with disabilities. Pending input by the Commission, a first reflection on national approaches to indicators and target setting could take place in 2024, jointly with EMCO and its indicator group.

In addition, the SPC ISG will continue improving its indicator frameworks in the areas of *active inclusion and inequalities*. The Committee will also follow analytical work on *access to healthcare, social resilience* (including the resilience of Social Protection systems) and work on social indicators for monitoring of the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*. It will also carry out a detailed review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators in view of its further updating and streamlining and **improving its user friendliness**.

3. Summary of deliverables

Activities	Deliverables	Time (frame)	Code	Level of priority
Reaction to the 2024 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey (ASGS) and examination and input the Joint Employment Report (JER)	Draft Council Conclusions Final Joint Employment Report	January – February March EPSCO	2.2.1.1	1
Multilateral examination of the implementation of structural reforms in the Member States in response to the 2023 Council country-specific recommendations in the areas under SPC competence.	Horizontal and county specific conclusions	February – May June EPSCO	2.2.1.2	1
Cooperation with other Committees on 2024 CSRs of common interest	CSRs Horizontal opinion	Horizontal opinion June EPSCO. Country-specific conclusions July EPSCO (TBC)	2.2.1.3	1
Examine the possible revision of Employment Guideline 8	Revised guidelines	October EPSCO (TBC)	2.2.1.3	1
Examine social protection and social inclusion issues included in the Commission proposal for a Euro area recommendation	Euro area recommendation	December EPSCO (TBC)	2.2.1.3	1
Preparation of an annual report on the social situation in the EU and overview of social protection reforms on the basis of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM)	Annual report Key Messages endorsed	June-September October EPSCO (TBC)	2.2.1.4	1
Drafting joint opinion on the European future social agenda	Joint opinion endorsement	January-February March EPSCO	2.2.2.1	1
Thematic discussions on access to social protection	Thematic conclusions Adoption of SPC	15-16 February (informal SPC meeting)	2.2.2.1	1

Pension Adequacy Report (PAR)	Report adopted by SPC KMs endorsed by Council	WG draft by February SPC adoption by May June EPSCO	2.2.2. 1	1
Joint reflection with EPC on longevity challenges to pension and long-term care systems	High-level conference	June	2.2.2. 1	2
Thematic social reporting on LTC	Delivery of reports, synthesis, discussion Section in the Annual Report on thematic social reports	June - September	2.2.2. 1	1
Review progress on European Child Guarantee	Discussion Conclusions (TBC)	TBD	2.2.2. 2	2
9th Cohesion report	Information Contribution with view	TBC	2.2.2. 2	3
Regular debriefs of the activities and joint exercises with various formations	Information Section in the AR	continuous	2.2.2. 2	3

4. Working methods and relations with other Committees and advisory bodies

In 2024, the SPC meeting arrangements would include a mix between physical/in-person meetings, taking place in Brussels or the Member State holding the Presidency of the EU and virtual meetings, organized via a teleconferencing system. The organization of hybrid meetings is not foreseen. The format of the meeting will be determined close to the meeting dates and will depend on the availability of meeting rooms and an assessment on the proposed agenda items. Potentially, the provision of interpretation services will be reduced to limit the administrative workload of the Secretariat Team and ensure its ability to secure adequate conference rooms for physical meetings.

In its cooperation with other policy Committees (Employment Committee - **EMCO**, **EPC**, **the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC)** and **the Education Committee (EDUC)**) and with the **Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level (WPPHSL)**, the SPC will be guided by the Council Decision (EU) 2015/773 establishing the SPC, the European Council Conclusions of 15 October 2013, calling for more work to strengthen cooperation between the various Council configurations in order to ensure consistency of the economic, employment and social policies in line with the common EU objectives, as well as by the EPSCO Council Conclusions on Economy of Well-being, which call on the SPC to continue fostering a close cooperation with other Council Committees and preparatory bodies. This may include joint meetings, preparation of joint papers, as well as coordination of the views on cross-cutting policy issues, in particular with EPC concerning the Economic Governance Review and joint reflection on longevity challenges to pension and long-term care systems.

5. Cooperation with the EU social partners' organizations and social NGOs

In delivering on its work programme, the SPC will continue its co-operation with EU-level social partners and social NGOs.

In accordance with the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union, the SPC will contribute to the monitoring of its implementation by involving civil society organisations and social partners into selected thematic discussions.

In addition, as traditionally, the social partners and representatives of NGOs are systematically invited to an exchange of views on the spring and autumn packages of the European Semester. In addition, NGOs are consulted on the thematic outputs of the Semester in general, while social partners are consulted on the packages prior their adoption.

Annex 1: Tentative calendar for SPC meetings in 2024

Annex 2: Work Programme of the SPC Indicators Sub-group (SPC ISG)

Annex 3: Ongoing initiatives, potentially in the interest of the SPC

Annex 1: Tentative calendar for SPC meetings in 2024

The calendar below is provisional and subject to changes. For each physical meeting, delegates are invited to book their travel arrangements only upon receipt of the draft agenda.

Extraordinary videoconference meetings can be planned according to the needs of the group and in line with the Work Programme.

The list of main topics for each meeting mostly presents the timeline for the presentation and adoption of the regular deliverables of SPC and is not exhaustive.

An update of this rolling planning calendar will be provided by the Secretariat in every quarter.

Date	Format	Venue	Provisional Topics
24-25 January	Joint with EMCO Physical	Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2024 Joint Employment Report – Key Messages - Finalisation - Council Conclusions on the 2024 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey and Joint Employment Report – Finalisation - 2024 Work Programme - Adoption - Exchange on the Future of Social Agenda PDCY priority
15-16 February	Physical	Antwerp (informal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion on joint opinion on the Future of European Social Agenda - Exchange on returns of social investment - Thematic exchange on access to social protection recommendation - Discussion of MIR format - Exchange on social services
<i>Week of 19 February</i>	<i>Joint with EMCO</i>	<i>Virtual (TBC)</i>	<i>- Drafting session of joint opinion on the Future of European Social Agenda</i>
12-13 March	Physical	Brussels	- TBC
9-10 April	Physical	Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MIR exercise - PAR (first discussion)
15-16 May	Partially joint with EMCO (TBC) Physical	Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MLS/MIR - PAR (second discussion)
21 June	Joint with EMCO	Virtual (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the Spring Package - Priorities of the Hungarian Presidency
2- 3 July	EMCO-SPC-EPC Physical	Brussels	- 2024 CSR negotiations
September	Physical	Budapest (informal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PDCY priority 1 - PDCY priority 2 - Adoption of AR
24-25 October	Physical	Brussels	- TBC
28-29 November	Joint with EMCO Physical	Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autumn Package - 2025 Work Programme – Discussion
Week 9-13 December	Joint with EMCO	Virtual	- 2025 Euro Area Recommendation

Annex 2: Work Programme of the SPC Indicators Sub-group (SPC ISG)

2024 ISG Work Programme

1. Introduction

The work programme of the Indicators Sub-Group (ISG) of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) for 2024 will focus on contributing to delivering on the 2024 SPC priorities, follow up of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its Action Plan for implementation, the European Semester, and relevant priorities arising from the Commission Work Programme 2024. In addition, the ISG will contribute as necessary to in-depth thematic work in the context of the open method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion (Social OMC). Furthermore, the ISG will continue to provide evidence and analysis to monitor the social effects of the rise in the cost of living.

Given these priorities and on-going activities, the work of the ISG will focus on the main areas listed below. The impact of new activities that the SPC decides to undertake in the course of 2024 will be assessed on an ongoing basis and the ISG work programme will be adjusted as necessary. Annex 1 contains an overview of next year's provisional meeting dates and agendas, with an indication of the timing of the main activities over 2024.

2. Review of monitoring/reporting frameworks and follow up on the European Pillar of Social Rights and implementation of its Action Plan

- **Follow up to the European Pillar of Social Rights and implementation of its Action Plan, including monitoring of the poverty and social exclusion target for 2030**

The ISG will contribute as necessary to relevant aspects related to the implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and in particular the monitoring of progress towards the EU and national poverty and social exclusion targets for 2030. It will review the analytical content of the draft Joint Employment Report, and in particular, the assessment based on the EPSR scoreboard.

- **Review of the current social monitoring framework**

The ISG will continue to review the current social monitoring framework (EPSR social scoreboard, SPPM, JAF, etc.)¹². It will reflect, jointly with the EMCO Indicators Group (EMCO IG), on the scope to simplify and consolidate the existing tools in line with the findings from the assessment report of the EMCO and SPC on the Europe 2020 Strategy. It will also review improvements to the timeliness of indicators. Specific activities in this area will include:

¹² European Pillar of Social Rights Scoreboard, Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and Joint Assessment Framework (JAF).

- **Reflection on the role of the EPSR scoreboard**

Jointly with EMCO IG, the ISG will reflect on the role of the EPSR scoreboard in relation to the action plan on the EPSR and other existing monitoring tools, including on the possible inclusion of secondary indicators in the scoreboard.

- **Timeliness of social indicators and flash estimates**

Timely estimates of the social situation are essential as highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis and the recent cost of living crisis. The ISG will follow Eurostat work on improving the timeliness of social indicators and on flash estimates of key income-based indicators (and the possibility to extend estimates to cover other indicators). It will further discuss the possibility to use flash estimates more systematically in the EU monitoring framework, as well as possible other data sources (such as “financial distress” indicators).

- **Joint Assessment Framework (JAF)**

The ISG will review the Joint Assessment Framework together with the EMCO Indicators Group and the European Commission. This will cover aspects such as the continuing review of the structure and content of the social part of the JAF, the visualisation and dissemination of JAF outputs, and the JAF methodology, in view of its improvement and further development and use for the purposes of the Social Open Method of Coordination.

- **Benchmarking**

The ISG will continue the work on benchmarking as tasked by the SPC. The ISG will also, whenever called upon, review and update already existing frameworks.

- **Assessing social impacts of EU policies**

The ISG will follow developments in the field of assessing the social impacts of EU policies, including distributional impact assessment and the Better Regulation (BR) Package, the governance of the assessment of the social impact of new initiatives, and the social impact of CSR-linked reforms at the national level. The ISG will support the implementation of BR Guidelines and efforts to quantify the social impacts by reviewing possibilities to improve availability, accessibility and timeliness of evidence (including administrative data).

Planned deliverables for 2024:

- The ISG will, in collaboration with EMCO IG, review the current monitoring frameworks in view of updating them to the context of implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and its targets for 2030, also with the overall aim to simplify and consolidate them.
- It will make progress on the availability and use of timelier indicators of the social situation, including the more systematic use of flash estimates.

3. Monitoring of the social situation and the development of social policies

➤ Preparation of the SPC Annual Report

The ISG will contribute to the update on the social situation in the European Union and the monitoring of progress towards the EU and national poverty and social exclusion targets for 2030, through preparing specific inputs based on its monitoring tools, on-going work as well as through providing analysis based on the EU social indicators. It will review the technical and analytical content of the annual report, and also reflect on the schedule for its production in view of earlier availability of EU-SILC data. The ISG will also continue collecting statistics derived from administrative data on benefit recipients and provide analysis and evidence on social aspects of the cost of living crisis.

➤ Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM)

The ISG will continue the work on updating the SPPM, especially regarding the set of key social indicators, in view of recent statistical developments and ISG adoption of new indicators (including in the context of the JAF revision). It will produce an update of the SPPM dashboard based on the set of available EU-SILC 2024 data.

➤ Thorough review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators

Following on to the intermediate update conducted in 2022, the ISG will continue to carry out a detailed review of the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators in view of its further updating and streamlining, and improving its user friendliness.

Planned deliverables for 2024

Reports

- The ISG will contribute to the SPC annual report through an update on the social situation in the European Union and analysis based on the EU social indicators.

Indicators and tools

- Update of the Social Protection Performance Monitor
- Review and streamline the Portfolio of EU Social Indicators

4. Thematic work

➤ Social inclusion

• Inequality

The ISG will further explore indicators on inequalities, including about the middle-income group and about environmental inequalities. It will also give an update on the evolution of purchasing power.

• Active inclusion indicators

In line with the 2022 joint SPC-EC report on minimum income, the ISG will review potential areas for further expansion of the benchmarking framework on minimum income in different dimensions (such as eligibility criteria, access to services and labour market transitions and incentives) and resume the exploration of indicators for measuring the quality of social services (encompassing inter alia such criteria as: accessibility, availability, affordability and coverage). Together with the Commission, the ISG will also develop an outline of the next joint SPC EC report on minimum income due in 2025.

• Child poverty

In November 2023, the SPC endorsed the first version of the monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee Recommendation, developed by the ISG, and granted a new mandate to the ISG. In line with this mandate, the ISG will update and work further on the monitoring framework aiming to address some of the remaining gaps identified, including on the basis of the biennial progress reports due in Spring 2024. It will also update the Benchmarking Framework for Childcare and Support to Children, in line with the monitoring aspects of the Council Recommendation on the Revision of the Barcelona Targets on early childhood education and care, and in cooperation with EMCO IG and other groups as necessary.

➤ Situation of persons with disabilities

Together with the Commission, the ISG will continue to develop new indicators for monitoring the situation of persons with disabilities. This includes further development of indicators in the area of education for persons with disabilities (for example early school leavers) and employment or others such as health when data from surveys will be available. It will also explore the possibility to include the new indicators for persons with disabilities in the joint assessment framework (JAF), and new indicators following the inclusion of a disability question in social surveys. The ISG, in cooperation with the EMCO IG, will discuss indicators for setting employment targets for persons with disabilities.

➤ Homelessness and housing exclusion, Housing conditions

The ISG will look into the area of homelessness and housing exclusion with the aim to further refine indicators (e.g. concerning the way housing benefits are treated in the housing cost overburden rate indicator) and discuss possible ways to monitor housing deprivation on a more regular basis. It will contribute as relevant to the analytical projects under the umbrella of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, in particular the EU-funded project carried out by the OECD on data mapping and monitoring systems and the pilot project on a European Homelessness Count.

➤ **Indicators on Social and Labour Aspects of the Fair Digital Transition**

The ISG will follow work on indicators relevant to monitor the social and labour aspects of the fair digital transition, and in particular examine the use of existing indicators and the need for additional indicators to assess the fairness of the digital transition.

In this context the ISG will focus in particular on further developing a set of indicators related to access and affordability of digital infrastructures and contribute to the monitoring process in this area.

➤ **Indicators on Social and Labour Aspects of the Fair Transition towards Climate Neutrality**

The ISG will follow work on indicators relevant to monitor the social and labour aspects of the fair transition towards climate neutrality, and in particular examine the use of existing indicators and the need for additional indicators to assess the fairness of the transition. In this context the ISG will focus in particular on further developing a set of indicators related to energy poverty, transport poverty and carbon and environmental footprint inequality and contribute to the monitoring process in this area.

➤ **Transport poverty**

The ISG will follow and support work on a definition and indicators of transport poverty (focusing on affordability, accessibility and availability of transport). Pros and cons of the various definitions will be considered, as well as different data sources and methodologies for adequately measuring and monitoring transport poverty in the EU. Results will be assessed also in comparison to standard social indicators.

➤ **Carbon and environmental footprint inequality**

The ISG will follow and support work on strengthening data availability and indicators on carbon and environmental footprint inequality based on the ongoing work by EMPL-JRC on “*Distributional assessment of the consumption footprint of households in the EU: addressing carbon and other environmental footprints.*” (The research project will provide a new, ready-to-use dataset of the consumption footprint of EU households (April 2024) as well as analysis on the level and distribution of the consumption footprint across several dimensions: income, geographical, socio-demographic, consumption areas and product groups (July and Sept 2024)).

➤ **Health**

The ISG will support the further development of the OMC health work stream and follow closely the work of DG SANTE on measuring access to healthcare, including considering the feasibility of new indicators for future work on the JAF Health framework of indicators.

The ISG will maintain regular contact with Eurostat and international organisations such as OECD and WHO in terms of policy needs and priorities in the area, and follow-up the work of the Working Party on Public Health (WPPH) working group on Health System Performance Assessment.

➤ **Long term care**

The ISG will support the further development of the OMC long-term care work stream. In particular, it will continue to contribute as necessary to the development of a framework of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to high-quality affordable long-term care, building on the joint work on common indicators on long-term care and other monitoring frameworks. In addition, the ISG will follow the work of the EUROSTAT Task Force on LTC in order to improve the availability and quality of indicators relating to LTC.

➤ **Pensions**

The ISG will support the finalisation of the 2024 Pension Adequacy Report as necessary.

➤ **Reconciliation of private and professional life**

On the basis of the guidance manual and indicator framework on comparative EU-level data on the reconciliation of private and professional lives, the ISG, in coordination with the EMCO IG, will follow-up as necessary on Member States' progress in preparing for and delivering the data required for the Directive on reconciliation of private and professional life.

➤ **Access to social protection**

In addition to updating existing indicators, the ISG will focus efforts on further development of the indicator framework for monitoring access to social protection for workers and the self-employed in the context of the 2019 Council Recommendation on access to social protection. The work will build on recent analyses of possible improvements to the indicators of effective access and adequacy and the presentations made at the ISG in 2022 and 2023 (notably from OECD and the Joint Research centre). The aim will be to test the feasibility of improving the indicators for these two dimensions, building on both EU and national level data as well as on simulation tools. Moreover, some areas of further developments listed in chapter 8 of the monitoring framework (version 0) will also be investigated during 2024 (e.g. social situation of self-employed, measurement of new forms of work). Other areas of improvements could relate to formal coverage (clarification of concepts, use of MISSOC) and transparency (mapping existing surveys and data, suggesting indicators).

➤ **Social investment and resilience, especially regarding social protection systems**

The ISG will follow analytical work on social resilience, including on the resilience of social protection systems. If tasked by the SPC, it will explore indicators, methods and frameworks for timely analysis of the role of social investment in supporting sustainable and inclusive growth and socio-economic resilience.

➤ **Social indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The ISG will follow work on social indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and contribute as necessary to the further development of the indicators in this area.

Planned deliverables for 2024

Thematic work

- Completion of the monitoring framework for the Recommendation on access to high quality and affordable long term care.
- Update and further develop the monitoring framework for the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.
- Review of the benchmarking framework on minimum income and identification of potential areas for further expansion.
- Developing an outline of the 2025 joint SPC EC report on minimum income.
- Development of additional indicators on the distribution of income (e.g. for the middle-income group) as well as further development of indicators related to energy poverty, transport poverty and carbon and environmental footprint inequality.
- Further develop the monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee Recommendation.

5. On-going activities on enhancing statistical capacity and methods

The ISG will follow up on issues identified in the 2022 seminar to mark 20 years of the existence of the group. In particular, the ISG will:

- explore addressing some of the remaining priority gaps identified in coverage of indicators. The ISG will also explore how to include more contextual information in order to help users to better interpret the available indicators;
- further explore the use of alternative data sources that could complement the traditional ones, such as administrative data and Eurostat data on the joint distribution on income, consumption and wealth;
- further reflect on practical improvements to working methods and organisation, and on the dissemination of ISG outputs

The ISG will follow up on the implementation of the framework regulation for Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS). It will also review and enhance its indicators wherever necessary on the basis of new data or analysis. For example, the ISG will collaborate further with Eurostat on the possibility of inclusion of non-monetary income components in the definition of income. In this regard, it will follow closely and provide guidance on any follow up to the Eurostat project on “Social transfers in kind”. It will also explore potential methodological improvements to the calculation of tax-benefit indicators through the recent extension of the EUROMOD Hypothetical Household Tool (HHoT), and follow up on the recommendations contained in the report on Net-SILC2 analysis on “Monitoring the evolution of income poverty and real incomes over time” and on related work carried out under Net-SILC3.

The ISG will follow and advise the work Eurostat is carrying out in compiling and analysing existing data to better describe the joint distributions of income (including a follow-up on the use of tax data to enhance the SILC data on the income distribution), consumption and wealth and the statistical links between micro and macro perspectives.

It will explore developing indicators which give a better view of the dynamic aspects of the social situation, such as indicators on poverty transitions, persistence and recurrence, making greater use of the longitudinal component of EU-SILC.

The ISG will support the EMCO IG as necessary in the further development of the LTU Recommendation monitoring framework.

The ISG will also work, in collaboration with the Commission, on ways to measure and analyse social spillovers and explore strengthening the ability to analyse the link between social policy and economic policy.

It will also review the European data strategy developed by the Commission and recent Council conclusions in the ECOFIN filière that had included elements related to social statistics, and reflect on the implications of these for ISG work. It will continue to follow the use of social indicators in the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) scoreboard.

6. Cooperation with other relevant groups and organisations

The ISG will cooperate with other relevant groups of other Committees, including the working group on Social Protection Statistics and the related ESSPROS Task Force on methodology, the Eurostat Working Group on Public Health Statistics and the EPC LIME group. It will continue its close collaboration with the EMCO Indicators Group including concerning interactions between the labour market and social inclusion, further development of the JAF, and the review of the current social monitoring framework.

The ISG will monitor research of potential interest for ISG work, especially through cooperation with services of the Commission including the JRC and will liaise where needed with the MISSOC and MINET networks. It will also collaborate with academics and international organizations, such as OECD, developing research relevant for the group's activities.

Annex 3: ongoing initiatives, potentially in the interest of the SPC

Initiative	Related action
<p>Council recommendation on access to social protection</p>	<p>Further developing the indicator-based monitoring framework in SPC ISG (based on Council mandate and also following recent EPSCO Council Conclusions of 9 October 2023 on social protection for the self-employed).</p> <p>Organisation of specific mutual learning activities (and potential thematic peer reviews) to support the implementation of the Recommendation.</p> <p>Dedicated thematic discussions and policy exchanges on the different dimensions of the Council recommendation (eg adequacy, effective access) and in relation to specific target groups (eg self-employed, specific categories of people in non-standard forms of employment).</p>
<p>Council recommendation on European Child Guarantee</p>	<p>Further review and develop the monitoring framework in SPC ISG.</p> <p>Organisation of mutual learning activities, including with the ECG coordinators.</p> <p>Based on the first round of the biennial national progress reports (due in March 2024), review progress on implementation and initiate reflection on the structure of the report to the Council due in 2026.</p>
<p>Council recommendation on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030</p>	<p>Potentially the Commission will <i>“explore the possibility to develop further indicators in cooperation with the EMCO and the SPC... ”</i>.</p>
<p>Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion</p>	<p>Triennial report on adequate minimum income (next edition in 2025).</p> <p>Organisation of mutual learning activities in MINET.</p>
<p>Council recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care</p>	<p>Reporting by Member States on implementation measures (by June 2024) and stocktaking of implementation measures.</p> <p>Finalisation of the indicator-based monitoring framework in SPC ISG (by June 2024).</p> <p>Organisation of mutual learning activities and thematic peer reviews to support the implementation of the Recommendation.</p> <p>Commission report to the Council on the implementation (by end 2027).</p>

European Platform on Combatting Homelessness	Development of a policy toolkit and monitoring framework with OECD (2024). European Homelessness Count pilot project (starting in 2024).
Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SRPD) 2021-2030 European Disability Card	Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community. Framework for Social Services of Excellence for persons with disabilities (2024). European Disability Card: in negotiation by the two co-legislators.
Pensions	Triennial Pension Adequacy Report (fifth edition in 2024).
Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions	Reporting to the Commission 4 years following the adoption (2027) and 5 years after that (2032). The first reporting will be aligned with the reporting to be done under the OECD Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation. Based on MS' reporting, the Commission will prepare a report evaluating the actions taken and submit it to SPC and EMCO.
Council Recommendations on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality (FT)	Biennial review completed in SPC and EMCO, in accordance with the specific arrangement proposed by the European Commission (first review 2023, next in 2025).
Communication: A comprehensive approach to mental health	Following up on the Commission package and organisation of thematic discussion
Communication “ Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action	Following up on the Commission package and organisation of thematic discussion
A Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services	Following up and potentially review the framework