



**Preliminary results of the International workshop  
“SDGs priorities and challenges of social policy  
in the Eastern Partnership Countries”**

**Eastern European Social Policy Network**

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## Bridge Building function of the European Centre

The **Bridge Building (BB)** function aims to connect **the research knowledge and policy evidence** between the UN European region countries and the European Union (potential) candidate countries and the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

As a tool for the bridge building, the **Eastern European Social Policy Network (EESPN)** forum brings together researchers and policymakers to better understand and to advance social welfare policies. The work of the EESPN has three main pillars:

1. Knowledge exchange and transfer
2. Development of joint research projects and policy advice
3. Networking and generating public fora

# International workshop ‘SDGs priorities and challenges of social policy in the Eastern Partnership Countries’

The aim of the workshop was to **identify and discuss common challenges** and **opportunities** in the area of social welfare and **propose meaningful initiatives** to achieve the SDGs of the social pillar in the Eastern Partnership countries.

Four **thematic sessions** related to the social pillar of SDGs were conducted:

1. Long-term Care
2. Labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups
3. Social Protection Systems
4. Active (and healthy) Ageing

## Key Questions of the International Workshop

Participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the 'reflecting friends' discussed the following key questions:

1. *What are the common and country specific **challenges** and **opportunities** across UNECE countries in the area of social welfare?*
2. *What **priorities** have been set in the area of social policies towards achieving the SDGs of the social pillar in the Eastern Partnership Countries?*
3. *What **needs to be done** by national and international stakeholders to achieve the SDGs of the social pillar by 2030?*
4. *What can the European Centre and Eastern Partnership Countries do jointly to **address the challenges and utilize opportunities** in the area of social welfare and achieve the SDGs of the social pillar?*

# Challenges and opportunities

## Challenges

- Strengthen institutions and their cooperation (inter-sector cooperation, at central and local level, between public and private sector (non-profit), and facilitate provision of integrated responses)
- Support in development of the legal framework (e.g., LTC) and regulatory impact assessment
- Increase coverage (care service, health insurance), adequacy and quality of social services and benefits

## Opportunities

- Possibility to benefit from lessons learned from other countries
- Use of technologies for advanced programme solutions
- Exchange of good practices & scaling up methods/approaches (within and outside the region)

## **Needs and priorities for cooperation identified by participants:**

### **Long-term Care**

- Protection mechanisms for vulnerable older persons
- Deinstitutionalization of services for older persons
- Service development (guardianship for older persons, care and living arrangements, homecare)

### **Labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups**

- Measures for transition from informal to formal sector
- Incentives to integrate vulnerable groups into the labour market
- Support for institutional development (e.g., labour inspectorate)

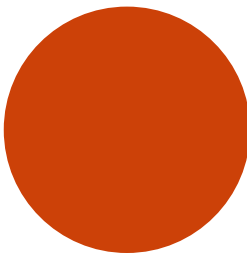
## Needs and priorities for cooperation, identified by participants:

### **Social Protection Systems**

- Development of services and protection measures for vulnerable groups (persons with disability, Internally displaced people, vulnerable youth)
- Improve efficiency of the cash benefit schemes
- Revision of the “disability model”

### **Active (and healthy) Ageing (AHA)**

- Understand the concept in the local context
- Mainstream AHA in the strategic documents and, most importantly, ensure implementation mechanisms
- Provide adequate social welfare for older population as the first step to ageing policy (e.g., more progress on the pension reform process)



## EESPN next steps

**Further exchange of knowledge and expertise** will be facilitated through:

- **Mutual exchange of know-how** on key issues identified during the October 2019 Workshop.
- **Two workshops** in the countries of the Eastern Partnership will be organized (**long-term care** and on **social security systems**).
- **Expert support** is offered by European Centre through **internally funded projects** (up to 4 small projects in 2019/2020 based on country request).
- **Regional specific analysis/research** on key issues.