



FEPS  
FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES



## **Call for tender: Research & Project Coordination for a stock-taking policy study on the state of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the future of the EU Social Agenda**

**Project Partners: Social Platform, FEPS (Foundation for European Progressive Studies) AK Europa (Austrian chamber of Labour), Solidar, ETUI**

**Contracted with: FEPS through a service provision agreement**

**We are looking for a Research & Project Coordinator (6 months contract approximately) to gather information from national contexts and work with members of Social Platform, FEPS and Solidar as well as national civil society to draft a policy study including:**

- 1) a stock-taking report on the state of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) with specific reference to a specific set of countries and policy areas (see the call below) and**
- 2) an analysis on the future of the EU Social Action Plan, with concrete proposals for EU initiatives, anchored to the EPSR, for the next EU legislature.**

**This opportunity would be ideal for a consultant, doctoral candidate or post-doc researcher with expertise on EU social affairs. Applications from research organisations are also welcome.**

### **Context**

The EPSR is the EU's compass for achieving better working and living conditions in Europe. Since its launch in 2017, the EU and its Member States have been implementing its 20 thematic principles through various initiatives. However, progress in implementation has been limited and mixed.

In 2021, the European Commission put forward the [Social Pillar Action Plan](#), which sets three headline targets on employment, skills, and poverty reduction to be jointly reached by Member States by 2030 through national targets. It also outlines planned EU actions and recommendations for action at national level to continue implementing the Social Pillar until 2024. It will be reviewed in 2025 after the next EU elections, setting further actions at EU level with a view to achieving the 2030 targets.

### **Reasons for the policy study**

Supporting the implementation of the EPSR and its Action Plan is a core interest of the organisations partnering for this project. It is also clear that in the spirit of the Porto Social Summit and thanks to the engagement of the Spanish and Belgian Presidency of the EU, the social agenda might come back as a relevant policy field for concrete action at the European level. It will be equally relevant to ensure that even after the EU elections, which take place in 2024, the ambitions around the Social Pillar Action Plan remain high and the revision of the Action Plan as well as the future Commission's work program include far-reaching measures in this domain.

The upcoming proposal for a new European Semester may provide an ulterior line of policy impact for this project. So far, the European Semester has allowed for a monitoring the implementation of some Social Pillar principles, particularly certain labour market and social trends, through the Social

Scoreboard and progress towards the EU headline targets. In the context of a reformed Semester, possibly including a future social convergence mechanism, it is necessary to check whether different headline and secondary indicators and disaggregation of data in the Social Scoreboard may help sustain Europe's socio-economic stability and prevent social imbalances.

### **Objectives of the policy study**

The objective of the report is to fill some of the gaps in the existing monitoring of Social Pillar implementation at national level in selected Member States from various geographic regions (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, Poland, Portugal, and Romania). The policy study would complement work of the European Commission, providing an analysis based on the perception and data gathered by civil society and the people working in the field at national level.

A secondary objective is to employ the research above based on national focuses to design a shadow European social agenda responding to the main problems and worrisome trends identified at EU and national level.

### **Content of the policy study**

The research would be two-fold:

#### 1. Country-specific chapters

The chapters will focus on principle 3 of the EPSR on "Equal opportunities" as a transversal principle, which almost all Social Platform's members and their national members share an interest in. It is also a principle that is insufficiently covered in the European Semester process.

The research could focus on several groups, depending on participating organisations at national level, who are more likely to be discriminated against and analyse whether key reforms adopted since 2017 in the selected Member States have increased their access to one or several of the areas of life described in principle 3 as follows:

- Employment;
- Gender equality, including work life balance transposition and care;
- Social protection with a focus on minimum income;
- Access to services i.e. social services, education etc.

The exact content of the research would be defined in close cooperation with the involved national civil society organisations (members of Social Platform's European members) in the selected Member States.

Focus groups with member foundations and national experts, surveys, desk research and semi-structured interviews are expected to be used to collect data and information for the national cases.

#### 2. EU chapter

The EU chapter will summarise, categorise, and conceptualise the gaps in implementation of the Social Pillar overall. Importantly, the chapter should put forward a Shadow European Social Agenda with recommendations that can influence the review of the Social Pillar Action Plan and the next Commission work programmes.

Semi-structured interviews with national and European experts and institutions should be foreseen, plus at least one workshop to share and discuss preliminary findings.

### **Approach to the policy study**

The development of the research would be supported by partners, with Social Platform providing input to the broader EU scope and civil society in the selected EU Member States working with the selected groups, spotlighting their progress on social rights, e.g. through qualitative interviews. It would also include desk research on the progress in implementing the selected Social Pillar principle in the selected Member States for the selected groups using Social Scoreboard and other available indicators.

We welcome applications from both individuals and research organisations provided that the team members who will be allocated to this project are identified when applying.

### **Expectations of the role**

- Create an inclusive research methodology in the form of surveys, focus groups and semi-structured interviews;
- Carry out research for the country reports in collaboration with the members of the partners involved and desk research;
- Carry out the research for the EU chapter by employing the results from country reports and semi-structured interview and desk research focused on EU institutions;
- The policy study should be drafted in a simple, easy to read style and should be no longer than 50 pages (about 5 pages per country report);
- Proper referencing, a sharp executive summary and support in the elaboration of smart infographics are expected;
- Support the organisation of meetings and events connected with the implementation of the project, including two public conferences (Madrid and Brussels);
- Manage the research project including coordination between partners. However, partners will be responsible for event management, design and dissemination of the publication once finalised.

### **Experience:**

- Advanced research experience in EU social affairs;
- Ability to coordinate research projects;
- Desirable: Experience with member-based organisations;
- Desirable: Track record of impact research in EU affairs;
- Solid background in qualitative and mixed research methodologies for social science, with a proven track record of survey design and inclusive research methodologies engaging with vulnerable individuals;
- Commitment to equality, solidarity and social inclusion;
- Experience communicating for a wide audience would be an asset;
- Academic track records (at a doctoral or post-doctoral levels) in the fields of (EU) Social Policy, Political Economy, Sociology, or related social science disciplines.
- Essential English Language proficiency, and preferred proficiency in one or more of the following languages: German, French, Flemish/Dutch, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian;

## Timeline

- May - Researcher designs survey and starts outreach to national level + kick off meeting with local partners on methodology and objectives
- June - July - deadline for input from members on national level
- August - September - finalise national chapters
- September - begin drafting EU chapter with input from stakeholders and plan event for October + round table exchange to test the findings and policy recommendations, finalising of the policy with copy-editors
- Late October/November - launch of policy study in Spain
- January 2024- public event in Brussels with partners

## Compensation

21.000 Euro (incl. VAT) for overall management of the research and project, with guidance from partners. Additional budget for other aspects of the project (e.g. editorial costs, design, launch events, etc.) will be covered by partners. The successful candidate can claim reimbursement for travels and other costs not covered by compensation.

## How to apply?

Please submit your application to FEPS, [info@feeps-europe.eu](mailto:info@feeps-europe.eu) with the subject line "Application Research & project coordinator – your name/your organisation" with the following documents by 26/05/2023:

- CV of the person or the team conducting the research;
- Letter of motivation (1-page);
- A 2-page document, breaking down the potential methodology for the research (including interview and survey template, as well as a proposal of organisations to be consulted to gather the data) discussing existing gaps of monitoring of Social Pillar implementation through the European Semester process and the Social Scoreboard;
- A list of your academic publications and other relevant publications, reports or research of the person or the team conducting the research.

Please note that only shortlisted candidates and organisations will be contacted.

In case of any questions about the role, please contact [Katja.Reuter@socialplatform.org](mailto:Katja.Reuter@socialplatform.org).