



Call for tender: Researcher

Basic Information

Project	The profits-prices spiral: measures to avoid inflation
Partners	TASC (Ireland), Pietro Nenni Foundation (Italy)
Timeline	6 October 2023 – 31 May 2024
Contracting organisation	FEPS (through service provision agreement)

Call

FEPS together with its partners – TASC (Ireland), Pietro Nenni Foundation (Italy) are looking for a Researcher to collaborate on a new project “The profits-prices spiral: measures to avoid inflation”. The main product of the project will be a policy study, complemented with a strong dissemination and public engagement component, aiming to generate informed public discussion about policies to curb inflation. Given the prominence of the inflation topic on everyone’s agenda, this is a great opportunity to have a strong impact on public opinion and policy direction.

Context

The recent surge of inflation has become a major policy challenge for the EU and globally. The debate on the appropriate response by central banks involved heated discussions on how much this shock is caused by supply-side factors and how much it is demand driven. There is a general recognition that it is both, but more detailed understanding is needed, especially on the supply side. Of particular relevance for the EU are price dynamics in some key sectors, such as energy and food.

Based on the macro data, we see a large contribution of profits to inflation in Europe, much higher than historic averages. This phenomenon needs to be understood better. Depending on the sources of profit-price inflation, policy responses can be designed to address the current inflation round and to prevent it from happening in the future. Many European countries have already deployed diverse measures to curb supply-side inflation, such as price caps or windfall profit taxes. It would be helpful to understand which of these measures worked and how this experience can be improved and applied in the future.



Goal

The goal of the project is to develop a set of policy proposals to cope with current inflation in the EU and prevent such spikes in the future. More specifically:

- The project is meant to consolidate and reinforce the narrative that links the crisis of living cost to capitalism and shareholder greed and not to expansionary demand-side measures. The project should clarify that the current inflation in Europe has little to do with excessive spending, that excessive demand is in case a matter of limited EU productive capacity and global supply chain disruptions due to Covid-19. Furthermore, the study should provide evidence that wage growth does not contribute to inflation (see the example of Belgium with the automatic indexation). In a sense, the study should encapsulate the progressive narrative contrasting the neo-liberal approach that pushes for high interest rates and no salary raise.
- Putting the accent on “greedflation” and excessive profits in several industries as a key determinant of inflation, thanks to the support of fresh data, helps to generate support towards unconventional measures to address inflation besides monetary policy.
- The study should present a variety of measures that can be used to contain inflation by limiting excessive profits and market dominance. Ideally, the second part of the study should be like a toolbox with an inventory of potential measures from the least invasive to the more invasive.

Implicitly, the goal of the project is to empower progressive policymakers with fact-based knowledge and innovative but feasible and sensible measures to address the living costs crisis.

Methodology

The following **deliverables** are envisaged:

1. A Policy study of approximately 40 pages with a very sharp executive summary of 2 pages (one on the diagnosis and one on the recommended treatments)
2. Expert roundtable for the discussion of intermediate results (online)
3. Public event to present final results (hybrid event, Brussels)
4. Workshop with experts and policymakers in Rome
5. Audio-visual materials for the broader public, for instance a simple and engaging video or a more technical infographics
6. Active dissemination of the findings:
 - Dissemination through other projects: autumn academy, day of progressive economic policy, training, progressive economics network
 - Podcasts and op-eds
 - Coordination with the progressive family

Questions for the policy study to be addressed by the researcher

The policy paper should provide answers to the following questions (the list is a guideline, the researcher can suggest changes):

- What are the causes of inflation in the EU?
- How much is it profits or wage driven?
- What stands behind country variation in inflation (with a focus on the EU, but for comparison purposes may refer to other countries and regions)
- How have countries' policy responses affected inflation dynamics? In particular, in the energy sector. What was the effect of EU response in the energy sector?
- How much of inflation can be attributed to supply-side factors, such as supply-chain bottlenecks or the pricing/monopoly power of companies? Or other reasons?
- What policy actions can help reduce the current inflation and curb excessive profits?
- How to prevent large spikes from happening in the future?

Policy Study outline

1. Macro and sectoral data analysis / The roots of inflation
2. Industry analysis / Understanding the price dynamics in the energy sector
3. Policy options and recommendations / A toolkit to contain inflation

Role of the Researcher

FEPS policy analyst – Anna Kolesnichenko - will be coordinating project activities and will co-author the study. The role of the Researcher will be mostly analytical (writing of the study), with an active participation in dissemination (public presentations, social media posts, etc). Namely:

- Research and analysis on the topic, writing of the policy study. The tentative allocation of tasks between Researcher and FEPS Policy Analyst is in Annex 1
- Presentation and discussion of findings in intermediate and final events
- Coordination of / and participation in public engagement activities
- Contribution to organisation of events/presentations: involvement of relevant stakeholders and researchers into events of the project
- Support in preparation of the dissemination and communication materials; dissemination of study results in social media

Timeline

New	
-----	--



6 Oct 2023	Start of the contract
By 20 Dec	Draft policy study
Jan 2024	Online expert seminar
By 20 Feb	Final Policy study – paper submitted
By 20 Mar	Editing, design, publishing online
By 30 Mar	Printed version
Feb-Mar	Audio-visual production and dissemination
Feb-Apr	Op-eds, podcasts and social media campaign
April – May 2024	Final presentation of the study (Brussels hybrid) Workshop in Rome
May 2024	End of the project

Profile of the candidate

- Minimum master’s degree in economics or economy-related field.
- Track record of research in the field of economic policy and political economy.
- Good knowledge on European macroeconomic policies.
- Solid quantitative skills, demonstrated through publications.
- Familiarity with and commitment to progressive values of equality, solidarity, and social justice
- Full professional proficiency in English is a must

Tender evaluation criteria

In non-preferential order, the evaluation criteria used to assess the applications are the following:

- Qualitative criteria 1: Proven track of research on economic issues
- Quantitative criteria 1: Years of experience
- Quantitative criteria 2 : Cost of the service

Tendering procedure and deadlines:

We ask you to submit your tender until 2 October 2023

Evaluation by the Project steering committee will be taking place by the 4 October.



Please provide:

- Full CV with a list of publications
- Budget (lump-sum, including VAT, if applicable). FEPS envisages honorarium budget for the Researcher in the vicinity of EUR 10-15 k, but depending on the applicant, this can be adjusted.
- Comments/amendments (if any) on the study outline and allocation of tasks.

Please submit your tender with subject "Application Researcher – Inflation project" to:
info@feps-europe.eu

with a copy to

Anna Kolesnichenko, Policy Analyst, FEPS (anna.kolesnichenko@feps-europe.eu)

The result of the selection will be announced by 4 October 2023.

Selected Researcher will be contracted and paid by The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS).

In case of questions, please, contact Anna Kolesnichenko (anna.kolesnichenko@feps-europe.eu)

Annex 1: Policy study – distribution of tasks

		Main responsible
1	Macro and sectoral data analysis	Researcher
2	Industry analysis – Energy and commodities markets	Researcher
3	Industry analysis – food retail and commodities	FEPS Analyst
4	Policies:	
4.1	Price controls	Researcher
4.2	Subsidies	Researcher
4.3	Windfall tax	Researcher
4.4	Ban or limit speculation in commodity markets	Researcher on energy and FEPS Analyst on food
4.5	Increase transparency on prices and profits	FEPS Analyst
4.6	Reform of strategic sectors to contain future volatility and disruptions	Researcher on energy and FEPS Analyst on food
4.7	Industrial policy	FEPS Analyst
4.8	Limit market dominance	FEPS Analyst
4.9	Progressive conditionality of dividends for "shared" profits	FEPS Analyst

