

EurActiv.com – 2014:

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/european-semester-s-increased-target-on-healthcare-reform/>

- February 13, 2014
- CSRs increasingly targeting healthcare – 3 countries in 2011, 6 in 2012, 16 in 2013
- Only countries without health-related CSRs are outside Eurozone – could indicate that countries outside eurozone are less effected by recommendations
- Some points covered in 2013 healthcare CSRs
 - reduction of home care for elderly people
 - reduction of pharmaceutical spending and reduction of prescriptions of professional services
- Caution about over-reliance on cost-cutting
 - CSRs focus on short-term monetary relief
 - Does not take into account how healthcare markets work
- Because CSRs are still debated in many countries, some countries do nothing to implement them
- Debt crisis forced many countries to make drastic cuts – EUROSEM looking at CSRs focused on cuts

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/video/eu-forecasts-mild-economic-growth-warns-of-high-unemployment/>

- February 25, 2014
- French Green MEP Philippe Lamberts in response to Commission president Olli Rehn – EU economy is growing again, but economic reform policies are causing greater inequality across EU
 - The group Lamberts is speaking on behalf of is all for the Semester and coordination, but the two objectives of EUROSEM are not going to be effective in getting Europe out of crisis
 - Two objectives being: reducing public spending and the cost of labour
 - Which results in reduced incomes and social protections
- Rehn noted that unemployment remains too high
- MEPs not convinced by “Growth”
 - 24% of Europeans homes on the verge of the poverty line
 - Growth in 2013 was 0.0%
 - 27 million unemployed people in Europe
 - 1/5 young people unemployed

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-priorities-2020/opinion/2014-is-a-year-of-specific-opportunities-restart-europe-2020-now/>

- March 17, 2014
- 2014 is a good opportunity for ambitious policy, as economy is healing after debt crisis
- Ecological priority is missing from AGS
 - No change from previous messages of austerity to more inclusive and sustainable Europe
- 2014 good opportunity for less austerity as public deficits are being reduced, exports are rebounding
- Author calls for following changes:
 - Priority area around environmental targets
 - Increasing energy efficiency
 - Clean technologies to boost recovery
 - “Migration from countries with high youth unemployment to those with a shortage of qualified labour should be encouraged (this could be circular migration, where people return to their home country after some time”
 - Expenditure on education and training should be increased – currently only protected from cuts under AGS
- EUROSEM 2014 will be a success if social and ecological goals are emphasized

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2014/news/latest-poll-predicts-tie-in-eu-parliament-race/>

- March 20, 2014
- Upcoming EP elections
- Potential rise in Eurosceptic presence withing Parliament
 - Experts say it will not be as dramatic as debates in the media play it out to be
- Eurosceptics may still shift power in EP scale
 - A push for more growth expenditure, and less budget consolidation
 - More social indicators in the EUROSEM
 - Reservations on TTIP negotiations could strengthen

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/youth-guarantee-doesn-t-bring-quality-jobs/>

- April 9, 2014
- Youth Guarantee does not ensure good jobs for youth
 - 42% of young EU workers are on temporary contract, which compares with 13% among adult workers
- Vice-President of European Youth Forum: “Internships are of course useful, but only if they are properly regulated. Or else it’s just cheap labour”
- Better monitoring of the program can be a solution – to be included in CSRs under EUROSEM
- Current problems: lack of implementation in most states, 8 billion euros not enough, no binding wording for quality jobs

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/belgian-minister-crisis-is-an-opportunity-to-rethink-work/>

- April 30, 2014
- Bernadette Ségol, the secretary general of the European trade unions
 - Critical of the EUROSEM – too much focus on lowering wages, not enough on implementing necessary investments to be able to adapt working conditions to economic changes
- EUROSEM failing to recognize weakening working conditions
- Money is there, needs to be mobilized in investment in job creation and solid working conditions
- the European Union is not close to meeting its 2020 strategy headline targets for employment and reducing poverty
- Unemployment disparity between North and South

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2014/news/barroso-draws-back-to-the-future-vision-for-europe/>

- May 9, 2014
- President Barroso using EUROSEM as evidence of success of the EU
- Says Commission has emerged stronger from crisis
 - Uses EUROSEM as example – created to prevent another financial crisis

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/eu-prepares-first-social-monitoring-report/>

- May 12, 2014
- Commission prepares to release first ever social policy recommendations under strengthened framework of the EUROSEM
- Five key social indicators along with usual fiscal recommendations
 - Poverty, inequality, household income, employment rates and youth joblessness
- “Scoreboard for employment and social indicators”
- Social CSRs will remain non-binding
- Phillipe Lamberts (France, Green MEP) – not convinced
 - Doubt recommendations will be taken into account
 - “If Commission were to introduce recommendations to reduce inequalities, it would contradict itself” – Lamberts
 - Solutions:
 - Treaty change to give EU more executive power
 - ‘Will’ at national level
- Backlash to Lambert stance:
 - Social indicators coupled with fiscal reforms can lead to better understanding
 - Members will comply if enough visibility is given to them

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/embed-social-innovation-in-policy-making-to-deliver-on-europe-2020/>

- May 20, 2014
- In order for Europe 2020 to be a success, social policy must be better embedded into policy-making – this included within EUROSEM
- “Member States in 2010-11 set themselves targets, including lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that 75% of those aged 20-64 are in employment and that at least 40% of young people earn a third level degree by 2020” – we are far away from these goals being realized
 - Inequality rising, number of people at risk of poverty risen by 6.6 million
- Member states must implement goals in line with “Youth Guarantee, Employment Package, and Social investment package”
- Social outcomes must be better measured
- “Social policy innovation is an essential tool in achieving goals” (goals set by Europe 2020)

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/european-semester-first-ever-eu-social-indicators-fail-to-impress/>

- June 3, 2014
- One of biggest challenges is “growing divergences in the employment and social situations of member states within the euro area”
- Scoreboard focused on:
 - overall unemployment levels, youth unemployment, household income, poverty risk and income inequalities
- 8 members with high youth unemployment levels flagged for “serious implementation problems” of the Youth Guarantee scheme
 - One of which, Portugal
- Increasing number of part time and precarious jobs
- French media flagged inconsistencies with EU’s recommendations on French minimum wage
 - France calling for minimum wage to evolve in manner that supports competitiveness and job creation and that reflects high purchasing power in France
- Social Scoreboard fails to impress stakeholders who see it as too weak
- Bernadette Segol – (EUTC secretary general) says recommendations are missed opportunity
 - In Poland, there is now huge gap between wages and productivity which must be addressed

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/member-states-too-slow-in-implementing-labour-market-reforms/>

- June 11, 2014
- In CSRs – Commission displeased with member states “for failing to commit to labour market reforms in compliance with the Europe 2020 Strategy”
- Implementation of reforms to create adaptable labour markets is key in bolstering growth and job creation
- Evidence to prove that countries with already reformed labour markets were better off in recent recession – also recovered more quickly
 - Those with older labour laws suffered more harshly when hardship struck – slow to bounce back, still face high levels of unemployment
- Commission calls for greater cooperation between private and public employment services
- Purchasing power parity well-established in Netherlands for ex. – unemployed are sent to private employment services to find new job – transferred to public service after 6 months if they have not found job
- If Europe 2020 goals are to be reached – labour markets across EU must find balance between flexibility and security that will appeal to business and workers – also must be efficient
 - CSRs underline tangible steps to be taken

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/interview/fule-bulgaria-and-romania-s-accession-questioned-the-credibility-of-eu-enlargement/>

- June 26, 2014
- EUROSEM can be used as a tool in process of enlargement
- Recommendations connected with funding – if a state fails to implement CSRs, funds can be redirected to another country who is willing to cooperate with recommendations
- Candidate states can be pushed for something only after they accept common rules and become full members
- Works based on presumption that country wants to become a member

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/news/study-eu-countries-not-interested-in-the-commission-s-economic-recommendations/>

- June 27, 2014
- Only 18% of CSRs aimed at economic reform are implemented by member states
- Study by EP – looks at 3 areas
 - fiscal policies, macroeconomic imbalances and other policies such as labour market or financial stability
 - looks at each members performance in each
 - Fully implemented (in green), serious work in progress (in yellow) and not implemented (in red)
 - Ex. Belgium appeared with a lot of Red (not implemented)

- Countries will do what they think is best – they do not ignore Commission, but if Commission is recommending opposite of what they think, they will do what they want
- Poor implementation record has potential to undermine economic stability
- Poor implementation also lead to low competitiveness of EU
 - Others disagree:
 - Because Stability and Growth pact is now tougher, countries will be forced to comply – specifically with fiscal policy
- Commission tends to put more pressure of economically weaker countries, and is timid when dealing with Germany
- EUROSEM is useful in that it triggers discussions, but efficacy is called into question

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-priorities-2020/news/exclusive-the-juncker-team-revealed/>

- September 4, 2014
- Under new Jean-Claude Juncker presidency – new position created
 - Vice-President for Growth, Economic and Monetary Union, European Semester, and Social Dialogue
- Shows more emphasis given to EUROSEM

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/opinion/green-budget-europe-founded-in-brussels-on-4-november-2014/>

- November 19, 2014
- Increased participation for Green Budget Europe in EUROSEM
- Significant scope to make EUROSEM process greener and more collaborative
 - green taxes have more benign effect on jobs and output than labour taxes or VAT

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/regional-policy/news/regions-warn-juncker-plan-could-eat-cohesion-funds/>

- December 4, 2014
- Juncker’s plan – members offered opportunity to top-up amounts into the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – this will be seen as investment in the plan
- Money is then discounted from national deficits they have under EUROSEM
 - Slovakia, Spain, Finland – all interested

General Sources (via LexisNexis) 2014:

States News Service. (October 21, 2014 Tuesday). EUROPEAN SEMESTER: MEPS CALL FOR BETTER IMPLEMENTATION AND MORE DEMOCRATIC SCRUTINY. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis->

[com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5DDK-F7X1-DYTH-G50Y-00000-00&context=1516831](https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5DDK-F7X1-DYTH-G50Y-00000-00&context=1516831).

- October 21, 2014
- Info release by EP
- EP opinion of EUROSEM – out of debate on October 21
 - Implementation needs to be improved
 - Decision making process must be more transparent
 - Member states must take ownership of EUROSEM in order to increase completeness in their regions
- In response, rep. of Commission said EUROSEM has been very useful in coordinating policy response to challenges faced by members

Peter O'Donnell . (October 30, 2014). The healthcare sector's budgetary breakdown. *European Voice*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5DGG-P8T1-JBH0-Y2J5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- October 30, 2014
- Healthcare moving away from strictly national policy area to more EU control under EUROSEM framework
- More CSRs geared toward healthcare in the last three cycles
 - Mostly related to fiscal sustainability – goal of improving cost effectiveness of national healthcare systems
- Some recommendations have engaged thematic areas
 - 12 countries recommended to improve integration of their care systems – reforms of hospital sector coupled with supportive measures (ex. Rolling out e-health tools)

States News Service. (January 23, 2014 Thursday). PARLIAMENTARIANS CALL FOR MORE LEGITIMACY IN ECONOMIC POLICY-MAKING IN THE EU. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BBT-FF51-JCBF-S0H9-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- January 23, 2014
- Cooperation between national parliaments to ensure democratic quality of policy making
- “EP Vice-President Karas and Greek Parliament Vice-President Ioannis Tragakis said that parliaments needed to strengthen their cooperation” – say that national Parliaments must strengthen coordination, but that it would be meaningless if countries did not improve their implementation of EUROSEM CSRs

Targeted News Service. (January 20, 2014 Monday). Success of European Economic Governance Depends on Parliamentary Control. *Targeted News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BB9-BG21-DYG2-R209-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- January 20, 2014
- Release by the EP
- To ensure EUROSEM recommendations were properly implemented – more monitoring and supervision are needed – (says the Speaker of the Greek Parliament)
- Also, a need to deliver more tangible results to citizens

(April 10, 2014). Healthcare in the time of crisis. *European Voice*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BY7-NXC1-DY02-N00T-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- April 10, 2014
- Traditionally, countries held sovereignty over healthcare decisions, now under framework of EUROSEM, Commission can make recommendations about healthcare, social security, and pensions
- Semester is not the only way EU seeks to improve healthcare
 - EU has passed legislation to set common standards among member states
- EU getting increasingly involved in quality of care
- Last week (Week of April 3, 2014) EP approved rules for conducting clinical trials on medicines and agreed a first reading position on EU approval of medical devices
- Healthcare landscape changing rapidly – EU must keep up
 - In changes to care, and its delivery

States News Service. (February 4, 2014 Tuesday). EU MEMBER STATES IN BREACH OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S SOCIAL CHARTER. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BFC-3SS1-DYTH-G38T-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- February 4, 2014
- European Committee for Social Rights – 180 cases of violations of charter concerning health, social security, and pensions
- Economic crisis and austerity measures imposed upon member states via Commission's CSRs have had extreme impact on these violations
- In several countries, protections of health and safety in workplace is worsening
- Calling out EUROSEM for not respecting fundamental social rights

Dave Keating . (October 2, 2014). Thyssen stresses commitment to social Europe. *European Voice*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BFC-3SS1-DYTH-G38T-00000-00&context=1516831>.

com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5D8G-YWR1-DY02-N1X7-00000-00&context=1516831.

- October 2, 2014
- Marianne Thyssen (Belgian Flemish MEP, Candidate for Commissioner of employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility)
- Employment and social policies need to be much more present in EUROSEM
- Wants social indicators to play stronger role in Semester
 - Indicators to play greater role in CSRs
- Wants EP to be more involved in EUROSEM

Financial Times:

Martin Sandbu in London. (April 8, 2014 Tuesday). Ex-Barroso aide attacks Brussels on austerity. *Financial Times* (London, England). <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5BXP-DW31-DXXV-403B-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- April 8, 2014
- Commission aligned itself with Germany instead of being leader
- Reforms give Commission more say over national budgetary and economic policies (via EUROSEM recommendations)
- “Mr Legrain pointed to reforms that had given the commission a greater say over national budgetary and economic policies, known as the **European semester**, the six-pack and the two-pack. The commission "has done quite well [in increasing its influence] in a technical sense," he said. But "in a political sense it is weaker than ever". He added: "It's been a follower in the crisis rather than a leader."
 - EUROSEM criticized as a fancy tool, and not recognized as real political leadership – more control for Commission, less sovereignty for members
 - This is a criticism of EUROSEM and the creation/introduction of it by the EU

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