

EurActiv.com – 2015:

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/regional-policy/news/european-council-mulls-stability-pact-lenency/>

- February 12, 2015
- European Council considering allowing “member states to offset money designated for co-financing projects using structural funds from their annual budgets under the stability and growth pact”
- Would allow member states to contribute to projects under the Juncker plan using structural funds “and offset their share of co-financing such investments from their balance sheets within the European Semester”
- Juncker plan is to invest in south, diverting money from wealthier north, to boost solidarity
- *Article rather complicated, did not make much sense to me*

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/news/german-centre-right-disappointed-over-extension-of-french-deficit-deadline/>

- February 27, 2015
- Germany using framework of Semester to show that Commission has failed with its new responsibility and added power
- Commission given France 2-year extension to reduce its deficit
- With creation of the EUROSEM, Commission took on more responsibility for budgetary discipline, and now when situation is tough, they relent – says German MEPs
- The delay wears away at the binding nature of the CSRs
- Commission using its first real “touchstone” to act in favour of deficit offenders
- German MEPs also confused as to why Greek government is trapped in debt dispute when soft-hand is used on larger countries
- Integrity of the Stability Pact is on the line

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/eu-seen-as-dragging-its-feet-on-gender-equality/>

- March 2, 2015
- EUROSEM seen as possible avenue to address gender inequality
- Commission expected to draft a new strategy reviewing priorities of gender equality and to look at progress being made
- Austerity has made it worse for gender inequality
- EP is drafting its own version of strategy for gender equality
 - This draft urges executive to consider strategy as part of EUROSEM and insert “Gender Perspective” in CSRs and AGS
- Inequality worse in Italy (EU 4th largest economy) than it is in Nicaragua, Mozambique, Botswana

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/commission-seeks-to-revive-battered-social-dialogue/>

- March 5, 2015
- Social Partners to EU executive can foster the implementation of CSRs
- Social Partners such as trade partners call for earlier inclusion in the CSR process
 - They do not want to blindly implement decisions made by others
- This year (2015) Commission published CSRs early to give time to social partners, stakeholders, and governments time to interact with Commission based on CSRs
- EUROSEM officers have been put in place to strengthen communication between European capitals, and Brussels
- BusinessEurope (social partner) says that there is need for joint vision with social partners

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/parliament-backs-commission-s-reform-push-in-eu-countries/>

- March 12, 2015
- EP supports Commission plan to accelerate structural and fiscal reforms demanded by EU of each member state under EUROSEM
- “Reforms and fiscal consolidation are the right way to reduce unemployment and poverty” – Polish MEP
- Up to this point, countries slow to implement CSRs
 - 9% of CSRs implemented in 2013, and 2014
 - Implementation must increase
- This year (2015) Commission published CSRs early to give time to social partners, stakeholders, and governments time to interact with Commission based on CSRs

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/unions-and-employers-step-into-new-social-dialogue-design/>

- April 1, 2015
- To increase social partners activity in process, Commission placed coordinators in member states – meant to increase input from social partners into CSRs
- Members received economic assessment of their economic and/or social development three months earlier than in previous years – in order to incorporate input

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/uk-finland-scolded-by-eu-over-budget-deficits/>

- May 13, 2015

- Under CSRs for 2015 and 2016 – UK given new deadline to deal with its excessive deficit procedure, Finland warned it could be placed in extensive deficit procedure
 - UK to remain under oversight from Brussels for next two years due to breach in deficit targets
 - However, EU cannot impose fines or sanction because UK is not part of the eurozone
 - Provide fodder for Eurosceptic wing of Conservative Party in Britain – they see it as yet another oversight
- Malta and Poland – Commission recommends closing of excessive debt procedure
- At this time *Portugal*, among others, remain in Excessive debt procedure
- 2015 CSRs include proposals to implement the 315-billion-euro Juncker investment plan

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/the-commission-has-lost-sight-of-quality-jobs/>

- June 2, 2015
- CSRs will only increase distance between institutions of EU and citizens they are meant to serve
- ‘Less is more’ approach is concerning (targeting fewer areas, with more specificity)
- Long term ways to get young people out of crisis are ignored by latest CSRs
- Lack of ambitious strategies for member states to ensure more quality jobs – only some references to health, social inclusion, poverty, education, but are not part of plan for better jobs
- Commission fails to identify main reason for youth unemployment
- Recommendations highlight need for more flexibility in terms of differentiated wages and labour laws – their rational: France for example, could “provide more incentives for employers to hire on open-ended contracts
 - Ignores that deregulatory approach to labour markets is risky in terms of number of quality jobs that can be created
 - Could turn existing jobs into precarious jobs, without creating new ones
- Only 6 countries received recommendations on poverty and social inclusion – even though EU is far from their goals on poverty reduction
- EUROSEMs focus on key areas brings EU further away from citizens
 - Less influence of young people when areas of contention are so few

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/opinion/the-eurozone-s-five-presidents-report-and-what-it-means-for-britain/>

- June 25, 2015
- Five Presidents Report
 - Proposal of “deepening by doing”
 - As evidenced by last few years, political coordination is hard politics

- EUROSEM has opened door to intense cycle of consultations and constrain space for national sovereignty
 - Also increased member states collective power
 - “Those who are tempted to free ride the eurozone’s benefits without taking responsibility are forced to change course”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/brussels-gears-up-for-maternity-leave-ii/>

- August 5, 2015
- In EU – nearly 75% of men are employed, compared to 60% of women
 - Social and moral problem because it results in feminization of poverty
- Female labour market participation and parental leave arrangements are monitored under the EUROSEM
- Commission determined to link new initiatives to existing policy coordination – under framework of Europe 2020

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/opinion/the-five-presidents-report-now-is-the-time-for-debate/>

- September 15, 2015
- With release of Five Presidents Report – time to regain trust of citizens through three steps
 - Closer coordination of budgetary and fiscal policies
 - Report proposes fiscal advisory committee – this kind of policy needs ownership by national parliaments – thus EUROSEM must be intensified simultaneously
 - (Other recommendations that do not concern EUROSEM)

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/news/juncker-eyes-single-seat-for-eurozone-at-imf/>

- October 21, 2015
- As part of broader package, executive proposes observer status for eurozone in executive board - represented by the envoy of a eurozone member state already sitting at the Board
 - Part of broader package to begin implementing some of less controversial aspects of Five Presidents Report
 - “Revision of the European Semester to streamline the process and make it more democratic”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/news/schulz-in-row-with-commission-over-parliament-s-economic-oversight/>

- November 5, 2015
- Commission promised greater involvement to EP in EUROSEM – but MEPs underwhelmed
- Recent changes to EUROSEM make it more difficult for EP to be involved
- EP says Commission is amending toolbox without required legislative procedure, which would require the EP
- Executive proposed more discussions with legislators, including debate over presentation of AGS (which includes fiscal CSRs and priorities for economic cycle)
- MEPs particularly concerned about single seat proposal for eurozone in IMF
 - Would result in individual nations losing their seats
- Worried about lack of accountability of Eurogroup as it does not report to EP

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/european-housing-crisis-left-out-in-the-cold/>

- November 19, 2015
- Poor people spend ~40% of their disposable income on housing – 2x as much as rest of population
 - This is known as housing cost overburden
- Housing cost overburden identified as a trend to watch for within the framework of the 2015 EUROSEM
 - But not enough action being taken
- 11% of population of EU face overburden
- Problem is – issue has been partially recognized within framework of EU, but not enough is being done, and issues are getting worse

General Sources (via LexisNexis) 2015:

(May 5, 2015 Tuesday). Vice-President Dombrovskis on European Semester visit to Malta. *European Union News*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5FY5-6CM1-DXCW-D2FD-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- May 5, 2015
- VP Dombrovskis went to Malta to discuss EUROSEM
 - Part of Commission outreach program for the Semester
 - During which, VP engages in discussion with national authorities and social actors about issues raised in reports – published in February
 - Reports on the Commissions assessment of member states economic and social development

Nicholas Hirst . (April 9, 2015). MEPs to grill commissioners over European semester. *European Voice*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5FPS-PGT1-JBH0-YOOD-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- April 9, 2015
- MEPs unhappy with Commissions decision to extend timeline for France to bring its deficit in line with eurozone spending rules
- Valdis Dombrovskis (Commission's vice-president for the euro and social dialogue) and Pierre Moscovici (**European** commissioner for economic and financial affairs) – to appear before Parliament to defend decision
- Shows EUROSEM decision making coming under fire
- Undermines credibility of Stability and Growth Pact – (say MEPs)

States News Service. (December 18, 2015 Friday). TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION IN THE EU SEMESTER AND IN REINFORCING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5HMX-PBH1-DYTH-G1XF-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- December 18, 2015
- Release from European Trade Union Conference (ETUC)
- Commission has adopted some recommendations in terms of involvement of social actors in EUROSEM process from ETUC, but still falls short
 - Fails to ensure involvement at all stages
- EU social partners put together declaration in 2013 regarding their involvement in EUROSEM process – some policies adopted, but others not – thus, influence of social partners has not improved
- ETUC suggests that “social dialogue can be a driving force for successful, sustainable and inclusive economic, employment and social reforms”
 - Also suggest “Reshape[ing] the Macroeconomic Dialogue”
 - “Enhancing the relevance and impact of the discussions in the Macroeconomic Dialogue by systematically linking these up with relevant steps of the EU Semester and the decision-making bodies' meetings”
- Calls to strengthen trade union coordination for more effective participation in EUROSEM
- “Permanent committees of the ETUC should coordinate to create a platform for identifying trade union priorities to be put forward during the **Semester**”

States News Service. (March 19, 2015 Thursday). SCHULZ: "ENERGY UNION IS A HISTORIC PROJECT". *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5FJG-MNM1-JCBF-S4KM-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- March 19, 2015
- Release by EP
- Schulz expresses support for Commission plan to improve EUROSEM by involving national parliaments more
 - Common stance for EP – involve national authorities more at every stage, increase transparency

(April 24, 2015 Friday). Modernisation of social protection systems: Stocktaking report on Member States progress on reforms. *Premium Official News*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5FW2-R1V1-J9XT-P0WC-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- April 24, 2015
- “2013, the Commission adopted the Social Investment Package, which urged Member States to modernise their social protection systems” – enforced (or strongly suggested) under framework of the EUROSEM
- Goal is to improve welfare systems with vision of coming out of crisis stronger than they were previously
- Shows EUROSEM moving towards social goals, rather than strictly fiscal CSRs

Targeted News Service. (December 11, 2015 Friday). Annual Growth Survey 2016: Will the European Semester Help to Enhance Independent and Dignified Ageing?. *Targeted News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5HKG-6T01-DYG2-R4K8-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- December 11, 2015
- Release from AGE Platform Europe
- Priorities of the EUROSEM have been harmful to aging population
 - Health and long-term care have been reduced or privatized in order to meet budgetary restraints of the EUROSEM
- 2016 AGS does not do enough to address ageism in employment and the fight against poverty in old age
 - Cuts to pensions leads to increased poverty
 - Cuts in long-term care and healthcare increase level of income needed to remain above poverty line
- "The next **European Semester** should link national reforms of social protection systems with the Juncker's Investment Plan to improve the living conditions and social infrastructure indispensable for a dignified and independent ageing" – Sec. General of AGE Platform Europe

Targeted News Service. (June 1, 2015 Monday). EPHA Warns That health Priorities Must Not be Forgotten in the New, Streamlined Semester Process. *Targeted News Service*. <https://advance->

[lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5G43-2421-DYG2-R4MW-00000-00&context=1516831](https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5G43-2421-DYG2-R4MW-00000-00&context=1516831).

- June 1, 2015
- European Public Health Alliance Release
- Commission release CSRs May 13 – significant reduction in health-related CSRs
 - Stand in contrast to Country Reports
- “The scope and depth of the CSRs has been reduced to 2011/12 levels, when recommendations made were vague, brief and, in the case of health”, only issued handful of members
- EPHA notes that EUROSEM and CSRs should account for Health in All Policies principal to ensure recommendations work for best health outcomes for Europeans
- EPHA urges EUROSEM to institutionalize dialogue between stakeholders
 - EP, national parliaments, social partners and civil society
- Also urges EUROSEM to maintain linkages to goals set out in Europe 2020

(September 17, 2015 Thursday). EU lacks tools to counter growing gaps between north and south - Sant. *Malta Today*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5GYB-W401-F11P-X4G9-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- September 17, 2015
- Major problem with EU is growing economic divergence between North and South – says MEP Sant
- Sant addressing ECON committee on discussion of EUROSEM
 - “Social consequences of country-specific recommendations have been ignored in practice”
 - Over-emphasis on reforms of labour market – failed to make impact on employment levels
 - Eroding labour rights allowed to continue
- CSRs implemented poorly, if at all
- “The time may have come to critically evaluate the formulation and impact of CSRs with the aim of making them more effective and acceptable as policy tools”

(October 26, 2015 Monday). EU environment ministers back proposal to reform EU ETS. *Xinhua General News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5H7M-76R1-JBTY-T4T9-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- October 26, 2015
- Environment ministers debated review of EU Emissions Trading System
- Pointed at need to phase out harmful subsidies in the environmental dimension of the EUROSEM

(June 17, 2015 Wednesday). Civic dialogue should be present in all policy processes - Kalnina-Lukasevica. *LETA*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5G7H-CY91-JD09-3308-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- June 17, 2015
- Latvian Parliamentary State Secretary for EU Affairs - Zanda Kalnina-Lukasevica
- Further calls for more civic and social actor engagement in policy making and economic cycles of the EU
 - Important to making EU more democratic, and important to rule of law and overall good governance
- “Effective social dialogue increases employment and improves job quality”

EurActiv.com	14 Articles
General Sources (via LexisNexis)	10