

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/opinion/for-a-european-semester-that-addresses-inequalities/>

- October 12, 2020
- Opinion by: Maria João Rodrigues is the president of FEP; László Andor is secretary-general of FEPS; Mikael Leyi is secretary-general of Solidar; Mojca Kleva Kekuš is president of Društva Progresiva; Kaisa Vatanen is director of the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation; Romano Bellissima is president of Fondazione Pietro Nenni
- Recommendation from authors is to start monitoring inequality within framework of EUROSEM
  - Stats focus on absolute poverty; ignores troubles of middle class
- CSRs to improve lives of middle class can only be implemented if Semester is improved
- Social dialogue more central due to Scoreboard and Pillar of Social Rights
  - And green and climate have become more central
- But, due to pandemic, 6 million newly unemployed
- Europe has failed to acknowledge and act on the fact that social stability and cohesion are essential for economic and political stability
- Must recognize that equality is foundational for the type of growth best suited for Europe
- COVID-19 has economic consequences, but also marginalizes certain groups
- Authors recommend a strong refocusing of EUROSEM towards fighting inequality
  - First step to revise indicators that measure inequality
    - Consider things like precarity, job and financial insecurity, and access to opportunities such as childcare
- Expanding focus from poverty to inequality

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/opinion/competitive-sustainability-time-to-realise-the-eus-new-approach/>

- November 17, 2020
- EU must put its new concept of Competitive Sustainability as the heart of its policy making
- Last few weeks have marked shift – race to the top of sustainable development (as US wants to re-enter the Paris Accord)
- EU is in group that represents more than 2/3 of global GHG emissions – this shows that EU needs to turn green transition into a source of competitiveness
- EU must develop fuller analysis of their competitive sustainability
  - Authors suggest EU can apply logic of competitive sustainability through full range of EUROSEM process

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/opinion/affordable-and-sustainable-housing-must-become-a-priority-of-europes-recovery-plan/>

- October 13, 2020
- PES Group in the Committee of Regions
- Housing crisis must be at forefront of recovery plan
- Pandemic has exposed cracks in society – unequal access to healthcare, and unprepared health policy
- With new MFF – there is foundation to improve public investment to fix housing crisis
- A more sustainable EUROSEM process can enhance capacity of member states to invest in affordable housing
- European Pillar of Social Rights (as signed in 2017, as part of EUROSEM) should be used as roadmap to ensure affordable housing – it must then become pillar of recovery

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/meps-warn-of-insufficient-control-over-eu-climate-spending/>

- July 23, 2020
- EP rejected Council’s proposal on MFF and recovery plan – citing concerns about the climate budget
- Not clear yet how recovery plan’s budget would be monitored
  - Member states must submit plan to Commission based on their national climate plan and the EUROSEM
    - \*Shows EUROSEM role in COVID-19 and recovery\*

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/council-brokers-historic-stimulus-pact-as-budget-cuts-rule-of-law-retreat-plague-deal/>

- July 20, 2020
- Council agrees on historic stimulus package
- Different compensation of different countries
- Because Italy was the hardest hit, it is the biggest beneficiary
  - 127 billion euros in loans, 82 billion euros in grants
- In order for countries to access funding – they will present national plans on reforms, based on CSRs made by Commission under the framework of the EUROSEM
  - Commission acceptance or rejection of plans will not be based on unanimous voting – thus, one country cannot block another’s plan

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/eu-to-face-difficulties-without-a-deal-on-recovery-plan-budget-commissioner-warns/>

- July 7, 2020
- Italy among countries that voiced opinion that conditionality should be minimal in relief packages
- Netherlands is one of “Frugal Four” asking for strings attached to new funding

- EUROSEM can serve as benchmark to reconcile between south and Frugal Four and to identify where needs are
  - Countries to come up with national reform programmes to be approved by both Commission and Council

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/opinion/housings-role-in-europes-green-transition/>

- July 2, 2020
- Just Transition Fund must recognize housing as cornerstone of green tradition
- JTF strengthened by investment from Recovery Plan
- Recovery Strategy suggests investments be guided by EUROSEM
- “Knowing that several member states received [CSRs] mentioning the lack of (affordable) housing, investment in housing is a piece of evidence, starting with the rehabilitation of inadequate housing as a basis for improved living conditions of the 50 million people experiencing energy poverty”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/opinion/staying-on-course-during-the-storm-eu-tools-for-a-sustainable-future/>

- June 24, 2020
- Recovery Plan aim is to keep countries afloat, but also to push sustainable future
- National recovery plans must address issues identified through EUROSEM
  - Also, “either significantly contribute to climate- and environmental-friendly systems or to the digital transformation”
- This shift shows increased importance in the EUROSEM process
  - With this shift however, reform of EUROSEM must follow
    - “Allowing for a focus on the well-being of people and planet, not on reducing public expenditure”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economic-governance/news/commission-vows-to-break-up-with-troika-type-conditions-in-recovery-phase/>

- June 3, 2020
- Commission vows to not make same mistakes it made during recession in the lockdown period
  - Instance of austerity measures
- Under Commission plan – members will have a margin to decide what investments they propose to save, but also to transform their economies
- Members must justify how their plans address CSRs and priorities of EUROSEM
- This allows EU oversight, with member state participation
- Commission VP says other indicators (other than CSRs) will be accounted for
- EUROSEM will be a guide for their proposals
- The intent is to add coherence with EU goals

- Netherlands, part of Frugal Four, insist that southern countries, such as Italy, do more to reform their economies

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/commission-warns-against-the-risk-of-the-covid19-becoming-a-social-crisis/>

- May 20, 2020
- Commission warns during presentation of EUROSEM spring package that because COVID-19 affects certain sectors more than others, it has potential to become a social issue
- Unemployment should be main priority, says Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights
- CSRs in EUROSEM package focused largely on health-related aspects
  - Medium term goals include push towards greener future, and getting economies back on track
    - To do this, workers need to be “re-skilled”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/von-der-leyen-unveils-details-of-eus-upcoming-covid-19-recovery-plan/>

- May 13, 2020
- Von der Leyen sheds light on upcoming Recovery Plan
- Recovery Package based on three pillars
- Bulk of money will go to Recovery and Resilience tool to fund investment and reforms
  - Funds included in framework EUROSEM
    - Aim of supporting Europe in transition to green and climate neutral
- Second pillar – “Seek to mobilise private investment to kick-start the economy”
- Third pillar - “von der Leyen intends to reinforce instruments that proved their worth during the COVID-19 crisis”
  - Including creating a dedicated health programme

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/nuclear-excluded-from-eus-new-just-transition-fund/>

- January 14, 2020
- Just Transition Mechanism – tool to support regions that will be particularly affected by the greening of the economy
- Decision over which regions are to be supported will depend on Commission assessment in context of CSRs, and each countries’ priorities
- Shows EUROSEM importance in the move towards greener economy, and the fiscal role it plays in policy making in EU

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/eu-leaders-pressed-to-overcome-differences-to-agree-on-historic-stimulus/>

- July 16, 2020
- Upcoming meeting to discuss recovery fund
- Architecture of fund is very controversial
- Because of extraordinary crisis – Hague claims need for extraordinary solutions which it sees as more oversight for itself to monitor how funds are to be used
  - “EU money will be subject to conditions such as greening the economy, upholding democratic principles and the rule of law but also ensuring structural reforms to make countries more resilient to economic shocks”
- To obtain EU recovery funding, members will submit national recovery and resilience plans on basis of CSRs outlined within framework of EUROSEM

[https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short\\_news/position-on-recovery-fund-unchanged/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short_news/position-on-recovery-fund-unchanged/)

- June 9, 2020
- Hot button issue is the extent to which conditionality will follow loans and grants under Recovery plan
- Frugal four call for conditionality (aimed at South), while South, Germany, and France back idea that member states should come up with their own reform plans which are adjusted to CSRs from Commission
- Shows Italy and Netherlands at odds

General Sources (via LexisNexis) 2020:

States News Service. (May 28, 2020 Thursday). MEPS: FOCUS ON CRISIS RESPONSE WHEN COORDINATING ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY POLICIES. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6019-N201-JCBF-S022-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- May 28, 2020
- Release from EP
- MEPs looked at how crisis has exposed shortcomings of social model – EUROSEM must be at the service of recovery
- Commissioner Schmit responds to this by saying social dimension is anchored in EUROSEM by means of the social scoreboard and that through EUROSEM commission is able to tackle a multiplicity of social issues

(November 6, 2020 Friday). SDGS HAVE NEVER BEEN SO RELEVANT FOR THE EU SAY REPRESENTATIVES OF REGIONS, CITIES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION. *US Fed News*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617D-GFY1-F12F-F18G-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- November 6, 2020

- Release from EU's Committee of the Regions
- Sustainable Development Goals should have been implemented through EUROSEM, but instead EUROSEM focused on Recovery Plan
  - This came at a detriment to SDGs
- SDGs barely mentioned in EUROSEM – but all underlying initiatives are linked to them
  - Ex. Green Deal and Digital Strategy

(February 26, 2020 Wednesday). European Commission considers that Portugal continues with macroeconomic imbalances. *CE Noticias Financieras English*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y9F-2811-DY1R-B14B-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- February 26, 2020
- Commission concludes that Portugal continues with macroeconomic imbalances following in-depth analysis under framework of EUROSEM
- Some progress has been made, particularly in terms of debt reduction
- Position of international investment remains negative
- Italy still under excessive imbalance
- Germany, Netherlands considered to be experiencing imbalance

Nicholas Waller. (November 20, 2020 Friday). Economic recovery is sustainable when based on ensuring balanced territorial development. *Newstex Blogs New Europe*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61BC-PD71-F03R-N3RC-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- November 20, 2020
- Elements of new legislation that could diminish territorial impact of recovery efforts
- “Any efforts to stimulate sustainable economic recovery will only be achieved if local and regional authorities have a central role in designing and delivering the Recover and Resilience Facility, the crown jewel of the EU Recovery Plan”
- Insufficient attention has been given to regional authorities in implementation of Recovery and Resilience Plans
- “Involvement of regional authorities is crucial to best target the investments and reinforce the political ownership and democratic accountability of the Facility”
- Stronger role given to EUROSEM in defining EU investment priorities make long defended demand to base dialogue on multi-level governance more prevalent than ever

(July 10, 2020 Friday). EU must prioritise fight against youth unemployment, homelessness and poverty. *FinancialWire*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B1-MJR1-F0K1-N22F-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- July 10, 2020

- EP adopted resolution which states “The fight against youth unemployment, homelessness and poverty must be prioritised through a reinforced Youth Guarantee, a strong Child Guarantee for tackling child poverty and the Housing First approach”
- Due to employment and social consequences of COVID, MEPs call for revision of EU Employment Guidelines, which underpin CSRs of EUROSEM

(May 28, 2020 Thursday). Countries have to submit recovery plans to access EU grants. *CE Noticias Financieras English*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6012-6MD1-DY1R-B0G1-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- May 28, 2020
- In order to access Recovery and Resilience mechanism – countries must submit proposals – money will be allocated to countries with greatest needs
- It will be a voluntary mechanism linked to EUROSEM
- Countries will then have to justify to the Commission how they are going to achieve the goals set by the EUROSEM

States News Service. (May 29, 2020 Friday). COHESION AND PARTNERSHIP MUST BE THE DRIVING FORCE FOR EUROPEAN RECOVERY. *States News Service*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6013-P5F1-DYTH-G0B8-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- May 29, 2020
- Assembly of European Regions
- Cohesion Alliance calls for stronger cohesion policy
  - Also urges EU to ensure involvement of cities, municipalities, and regions and maintain focus on cohesion in all recovery measures aimed at sustainability and rebuilding economy and strengthening territorial fabric of EU – including EUROSEM
- Link between Recovery and Resilience Facility to EUROSEM has potential to lead to further centralization in policy making, mostly through CSRs
- Urge Commission to ensure that all national plans for Recovery and Resilience comply with Partnership Principle

Megan Darby. (May 27, 2020 Wednesday). EU €750 billion Covid recovery fund comes with green conditions. *Newstex Blogs Climate Home News*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:600P-58J1-JCMN-Y2BH-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- May 27, 2020

- EUROSEM link with the need to propose budgets before receiving grants and loans is important because it ensures that recommendations that the EU is making are getting respected
- Commission will assess progress of national programmes against CSRs they issue
- It is mostly aimed at “‘Frugal Four’ group of countries - Austria, Denmark, Sweden and The Netherlands - who fear southern and eastern EU states lack the discipline to spend wisely”
  - Appeases them in that it gives oversight over spending for South countries

(September 29, 2020 Tuesday). Child poverty puts 1 in 4 children at risk in the EU, EU auditors say. *CE Noticias Financieras English*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60YG-S9J1-JBJN-M0T0-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- September 29, 2020
- Almost 1/4 children at risk of poverty in EU according to report published by European Court of Auditors
  - And it is difficult to tell whether measures to combat this at EU level are effective
- Italy at around 30% risk rate for children falling into poverty or social exclusion
- Netherlands at 15.2%
- Court of Auditors recommends that Commission “introduce actions and objectives” into European Pillar of Social Rights
- Another solution offered is to create “clear orientation to identify situations” that could lead to CSR recommendations related to child poverty in EUROSEM process

EU Reporter Correspondent. (November 13, 2020 Friday). What is the Education and Training Monitor?. *Newstex Blogs EU Reporter*. <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:618W-YYN1-JCMN-Y0K3-00000-00&context=1516831>.

- November 13, 2020
- Education and Training Monitor gathers evidence to indicate the transformation of education systems and training systems across the EU
  - Also provides insights into measures taken to address educational needs through EUROSEM process – CSRs
- \*Part of the new focus on Social rights within the EUROSEM\*

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