



February 2022

Highlighting the need to make Europe more resilient and to boost the transition towards a more social, green and digital European economy, the European Economic and Social Committee's 2022 Civil Society Days provide an ideal platform for EU citizens, organised civil society and EU institutions to discuss how best to deliver on this objective. Taking place from 15 to 17 March 2022, this event will focus on issues such as the ecological and social market economy and the democratisation of the economy, through a series of seven interactive workshops organised by civil society members of the EESC's liaison group. This digest presents a selection of relevant publications from the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).



Upskilling opportunities for all

[Breaking cycles of disadvantage through education: An EU perspective](#)

In-depth analysis by Denise Chircop, EPRS, December 2021

Looking at statistics on perpetuated disadvantage in education and training, this analysis studies a number of contributing factors, by examining evidence from case studies and other research into the educational system development. It also analyses the extent to which reform has been possible and the complex reasons for them.

[Lifelong learning in the EU](#)

Animated infographic by Denise Chircop, EPRS, February 2021

Learning is not limited to a single, specific phase in life, that of the years at school, but also happens in different contexts, over the course of a lifetime. With its strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, ET2020, the EU has supported the concept of lifelong learning by coordinating cooperation between Member States on training and formal, non-formal, and informal education.

[The future of work: Trends, challenges and potential initiatives](#)

EPRS ideas paper by Monika Kiss, EPRS, February 2021

The current pandemic and its accompanying health and economic crises have highlighted and heightened certain trends and challenges that were already affecting the labour market in Europe. These include accelerated digitalisation and automation, increased use of artificial intelligence, constraints relating to a lack of digital skills, and problems with the status of platform workers and other workers in non-standard forms of employment.

[The future of tertiary education in Europe](#)

In-depth analysis by Denise Chircop, EPRS, September 2020

The analysis focuses on six challenges facing tertiary education in the EU: the need to remain relevant to current and future aspirations; the impact of digital and disruptive technologies; the way tertiary education interacts with business; global and intra-EU collaboration; quality assurance; and financing and barriers to inclusion. It also looks at trends in two of the largest higher education systems outside the European Higher Education Area: those in the United States and China.

Further reading:

[The European Education Area and the 2030 strategic framework for education and training](#)

Briefing by Denise Chircop, EPRS, May 2021

[Education in isolation in the pandemic, following the path of Isaac Newton](#)

Briefing by Denise Chircop, EPRS, June 2020

[Early leavers from education and training](#)

Infographic by Denise Chircop and Eulalia Claros Gimeno, EPRS, March 2021

[Inclusion of migrants in formal education](#)

Infographic by Denise Chircop and Eulalia Claros Gimeno, EPRS, November 2019

[Rethinking education in the digital age](#)

Study by Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, March 2020

[Impact of the Erasmus+ programme](#)

Briefing by Klaus Müller, EPRS, April 2020

[Non-formal learning: Access and validation](#)

Infographic by Denise Chircop, EPRS, December 2018

[The quality of traineeships in the EU](#)

Study by Klaus Müller, EPRS, January 2022

[Digital automation and the future of work](#)

Study by Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, January 2021

[Digital transformation – Cost of Non-Europe](#)

Study by Niombo Lomba, Lenka Jančová and Meenakshi Fernandes, EPRS, January 2022

Intergenerational dialogue among European Union entrepreneurs

[European Year of Youth 2022](#)

'At a glance' note by Pernilla Jourde, EPRS, December 2021

In her State of the Union address to the Parliament on 15 September 2021, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, outlined the idea to make 2022 the 'European Year of Youth'. The aim was to highlight and mitigate the pandemic's impact on young people's education, employment, social inclusion and mental health. Within a month, the Commission had adopted a formal proposal for a decision.

[The European Union and regional economic integration: Creating collective public goods – Past, present and future](#)

Briefing by guest author Iain Begg, EPRS, March 2021

EPRS invites leading experts and commentators to share their thinking and insights on important features of the European Union as a political and economic system. In this paper, Iain Begg, Professorial Research Fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE), reflects on the distinctive characteristics of the EU as the world's leading exemplar of regional economic integration, and its unique experience since the 1950s in generating collective public goods for its Member States as a foundation for the continent's collective prosperity.

Further reading:

[Key enabling technologies for Europe's technological sovereignty](#)

Study by Scientific Foresight Unit, EPRS, December 2021

[Next generation or lost generation? Children, young people and the pandemic](#)

Briefing by Nora Milotay, EPRS, December 2020

Volunteers for prosperity

[European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027](#)

'EU legislation in progress' briefing by Denise Chircop, EPRS, June 2021

The distinctive feature of the European Solidarity Corps today is that it brings together volunteering, traineeship and job opportunities for young people with a clear focus on solidarity projects and uses existing management structures to maximise focus on delivery and performance.

[Implementation of citizenship education actions in the EU](#)

Study by Ex-Post Evaluation Unit, EPRS, August 2021

This European implementation assessment (EIA) was prepared to accompany the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education in its scrutiny work on the implementation of citizenship education actions in the European Union. The first part of the EIA presents an overview of the EU policy framework for citizenship education, while the second part presents actions in the field of citizenship education supported by EU funding programmes, in particular the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes. The second part also presents citizenship education policies and practices in 10 EU Member States.

Further reading:

[Inclusion measures within the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020](#)

Study by Ex-Post Evaluation Unit, EPRS, September 2021

Enabling environment for civil society: The case for meaningful participation

[A statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations](#)

Study by Klaus Müller and Meenakshi Fernandes, EPRS, May 2021

Examining both the potential EU added value and the drawbacks of the policy options (encouraging cross-border transactions, enhancing social outcomes and increasing economic contributions), this assessment also highlights additional non-legislative measures that could promote specific functions of non-profit organisations in the EU.

[Collective intelligence at EU level: Social and democratic dimensions](#)

Briefing by Gianluca Sgueo, EPRS, March 2020

Humans are among the many living species capable of collaborative and imaginative thinking. While it is widely agreed among scholars that this capacity has helped to make humans the dominant species, other crucial questions remain open to debate. Is it possible to encourage large groups of people to engage in collective thinking? Is it possible to help citizens work together to find solutions to address global challenges? Some scholars claim that large groups of independent, motivated, and well-informed people can, collectively, make better decisions than isolated individuals can. This is what is known as 'collective intelligence.'

[Support for democracy through EU external policy: New tools for growing challenges](#)

Briefing by Ionel Zamfir, EPRS, February 2021

The crisis of democracy and the rise of authoritarianism across the globe, compounded by the pandemic, highlight the importance of taking a more strategic and autonomous approach to supporting democracy worldwide – an objective often balanced against other external policy aims until now. Since the start of the current parliamentary term, the EU has been reviewing its political guidance on democracy and human rights. It has adopted or is about to adopt important measures to strengthen support for democracy.

Further reading:

[Democratic institutions and prosperity: The benefits of an open society](#)

Briefing by Jérôme Saulnier, Gianluca Sgueo, Ionel Zamfir, EPRS, February 2021

[Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme](#)

'At a glance' note by Rosamund Shreeves, EPRS, April 2021

[Upholding human rights in Europe during the pandemic](#)

Briefing by Anja Radjenovic, EPRS, September 2020

[The practice of democracy: A selection of civic engagement initiatives](#)

Study by Gianluca Sgueo, EPRS, June 2020

[Digital democracy: Is the future of civic engagement online?](#)

Briefing by Gianluca Sgueo, EPRS, February 2020

[Understanding the European Economic and Social Committee](#)

Briefing by Carmen-Cristina Cîrlig, EPRS, October 2020

Building a democratic economy for a just transition

[Social climate fund: Fit for 55 package](#)

'EU legislation in progress' briefing by Alex Wilson, EPRS, November 2021

On 14 July 2021 the European Commission adopted the 'fit for 55' package, a set of legislative proposals to meet the new EU objective of a minimum 55 % reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. The fit for 55 package is part of the Commission's European Green Deal, which aims to set the EU firmly on the path towards net zero GHG emissions (climate neutrality) by 2050. The package includes a regulation establishing a new social climate fund (SCF). The aim of the SCF is to help vulnerable households, micro-businesses and transport users meet the costs of the green energy transition in the buildings and road transport sector.

[EU energy system transformation – Cost of Non-Europe](#)

Study by Aleksandra Heflich and Jérôme Leon Saulnier, EPRS, October 2021

The EU's energy system is on a path of transformation that should allow it to achieve a net-zero emissions target by 2050. However, there are many challenges ahead and achieving this target means making profound structural changes. The cost of non-Europe (i.e. of taking no action at EU level) in this area is estimated at up to 5.6 % of EU GDP in 2050, and avoiding this will require EU budgetary, regulatory and coordination action. The benefits would be many, including averted environmental costs and damage, and more sustainable and prosperous societies emerging as a result of a just and fair transition.

[The European Green Deal and cohesion policy](#)

Briefing by Agnieszka Widuto, EPRS, October 2021

The European Green Deal aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions will require profound social and economic changes, while ensuring a socially fair and just transition. Cohesion policy supports this process by 'climate-proofing' investments, earmarking funds for climate objectives and taking practical measures in EU regions. Local and regional authorities across the EU are also working together to tackle climate change through initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and Green Deal Going Local.

Further reading:

[EU carbon border adjustment mechanism: Implications for climate and competitiveness](#)

'EU legislation in progress' briefing by Jana Titievskaja with Alina Dobрева, EPRS, January 2022

[Participatory foresight: Preventing an impact gap in the EU's approach to sustainability and resilience](#)

Briefing by Vadim Kononenko, EPRS, December 2021

[Just Transition Fund 2021-2027](#)

Animated infographic by Sorina Ionescu and Frederik Scholaert, EPRS, October 2021

[Meeting the Green Deal objectives by alignment of technology and behaviour](#)

Study by Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, July 2021

[Cities in a globalised world: Exploring trends and the effect on urban resilience](#)

Study by EPRS, October 2021

[Climate action in the European Union: Latest state of play](#)

Briefing by Liselotte Jensen, EPRS, December 2021

[EU climate action policy: Responding to the global emergency](#)

Study by EPRS, March 2021

[Ten issues to watch in 2022](#)

In-depth analysis by Etienne Bassot, EPRS, January 2022

A green social market economy for the future of Europe

[What future for the social economy?](#)

Briefing by Nora Milotay, EPRS, November 2020

Traditionally the social economy is considered to be an ever-growing set of private, formally organised enterprises and networks that build on multiple types of resources and cooperation, with local anchorage and democratic and participatory decision-making processes. Its primary aim is not to make profit but to meet the needs of its members and that of the wider society. The social economy is active in an increasing number of sectors, and while some of its actors are small non-profit organisations, others are large organisations with international outreach.

[Green and sustainable finance](#)

Briefing by Stefano Spinaci, EPRS, February 2021

The dramatic consequences of climate change and environmental degradation have brought the need for a more sustainable economy to the top of the agenda. Transforming the EU economy to make it more sustainable requires major investments, especially when it comes to enabling a green and low-carbon transition.

[The Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

Infographic by Silvia Kotanidis and Giulio Sabbati, EPRS, January 2022

The Conference on the Future of Europe is a bottom-up exercise allowing European citizens to express their opinion on the Union's future policies and functioning. Tools such as the digital platform and citizens' panels enable discussion of topics that matter to them. This EPRS infographic sets out the structures of the conference, how they will work and the topics to be discussed.

Further reading:

[EU action plan for the social economy: Pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiative](#)

Briefing by Claudio Collova and Nora Milotay EPRS, December 2021

[Decoupling economic growth from environmental harm](#)

'At a glance' note by Eamonn Noonan, EPRS, July 2020

[Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the European Union 2022](#)

Study by EPRS, January 2022

[European green bonds: A standard for Europe, open to the world](#)

'EU legislation in progress' briefing by Stefano Spinaci, EPRS, January 2022

[Sustainable Development Goals in EU regions](#)

Briefing by Agnieszka Widuto, EPRS, December 2020

[Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: Options to enhance the EU's resilience to structural risks](#)

Study by EPRS with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies and External Policies, April 2021

[Citizens' engagement and expectations of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

Briefing by Silvia Kotanidis, EPRS, September 2021

The future of social protection and the European welfare state: Minimum income schemes and access to quality social services

[EU welfare systems and the challenges of poverty and inequalities](#)

Study by Nora Milotay, EPRS, February 2022

The study examines how contemporary welfare state policies address the issues of inequality and poverty both between and within EU Member States. It combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to show the strong links between inequality and poverty not only in statistical terms, but also in terms of wealth distribution, intergenerational mobility and labour market dynamics. The study discusses welfare state systems in a multidimensional way, covering traditional welfare state policies on social protection, labour markets and health as well as policies on education and on culture. These last two are also public policies that have the potential to mitigate social risk and marginalisation – a key aim of welfare state policies.

[European Pillar of Social Rights: Gothenburg, Porto and beyond](#)

Briefing by Nora Milotay, EPRS, May 2021

The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (social pillar) by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council in November 2017 was the fourth major attempt to strengthen the social dimension of the European Union since its inception. The social pillar is set to be the fifth pillar of the economic and monetary union. It is to serve as a compass for adjusting the EU's welfare state systems and labour markets to the new realities of life and work in the 21st century.

Minimum wage in the EU

Briefing by Marie Lecerf, EPRS, October 2020

The question of setting a minimum wage is one of the most closely analysed and hotly debated topics in economics. Over recent years and in the context of the economic and social crisis engendered by the pandemic, the creation of a European minimum wage is increasingly considered as a useful instrument to ensure fair wages and social inclusion.

Further reading:

Fair minimum wages in the EU – Pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiative

Briefing by Marie Lecerf and Yann-Sven Rittelmeyer, EPRS, October 2020

Adequate minimum wages

Briefing by Mari Tuominen, EPRS, January 2021

Improving the working conditions of platform workers: Pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiative

Briefing by Monika Kiss and Yann-Sven Rittelmeyer, EPRS, December 2021

Social and employment policies in Europe

EPRS Ideas Paper by Nora Milotay, EPRS, September 2020

Addressing health inequalities in the European Union: Concepts, action, state of play

In-Depth Analysis by Nicole Scholz, EPRS, February 2020

Impact of coronavirus on EU aid to the most deprived

Briefing by Marie Lecerf, EPRS, June 2020

Understanding EU policies for persons with disabilities

Briefing by Marie Lecerf, EPRS, November 2021

Employment and disability in the European Union

Briefing by Marie Lecerf, EPRS, May 2020

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