Abstract

European Union level social policy targets represent a commitment of the Member States to integrate their national policies into this wider framework and to test national programmes and achievements in this European context. Increasingly, housing issues are included into those targets. To this end the EU provides a common process – the 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC). However, the level of awareness and acceptance of this process is widely unknown. This paper aims to address this gap by presenting results from a survey carried out among those responsible for policy and people working in the field at administrative or NGO level in Austria in 2010 within an Austrian EU-funded project (AURORA plus. New Ways Out of Poverty; 2009/10). In the results of the survey, it was shown that awareness of European processes in the social field, as well as national parts of them, is rather low.

Introduction – awareness of the European Social Inclusion Process

European Union level social policy targets represent a commitment of the Member States to integrate their national policies into this wider framework, to provide good practice examples for other countries, but also to test national programmes and achievements in this European context. Increasingly, housing issues are included into those targets. To this end, the EU provides a common process – the 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC). The responsibility to communicate this context to the national to local fields responsible for social and welfare policies and to raise awareness lies with national institutions. However, the level of awareness and acceptance of this process itself is widely unknown. This paper aims to address this gap by presenting results from a survey carried out among policy makers and people working in the field on an administrative or NGO level in Austria in 2010.

An Austrian EU-funded project (AURORA plus. New Ways out of Poverty; 2009/10) provided the framework for this activity, especially the access to the relevant groups and the opportunity to publish the results in a broader context. Also, in Austria the past ‘2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion’ has increased visibility for these European aims and the willingness to contribute.

The paper will show the level of awareness of various current EU and related national activities, of inclusion of Austrian national actors into the processes and their support for policy recommendations given by the EU to the Austrian government. In addition, it will discuss the framework of the new 'Europe 2020 Strategy', the 'European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion' and first policy recommendations addressed to these levels.
Results from the survey on 'National and European activities in combating poverty' -
the questions regarding the European level

General background

The intention of the survey, carried out within the framework of the EU project AURORA plus, was to get a broader view of the level of knowledge of Austrian people connected with the 'social field' regarding European social policy, their opinions regarding the value of those processes, their opinions on the most recent Austrian social policy and implementation and of the interim results from the AURORA plus collection of postulations and lessons learnt.

This paper concentrates on the results from the first part of the survey, on the level of knowledge of Austrian people connected with the 'social field' regarding European social policy and their opinions regarding the value of those processes. This part - 'Austria and Europe' – refers to the European Social Policy process based on the Lisbon Agenda and within the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Also, a first question on the future EU 2020 Strategy is included.

Furthermore, it attempts to discover if there have been significant changes over the years. A comparable survey was carried out as part of the predecessor project of AURORA plus, the EU funded project AURORA. Together against poverty, in 2007. There is a certain degree of consistency in the persons addressed, but the later survey does not represent the same panel as the earlier one. However, people addressed have been from the same fields of social policy and social services. (More information on 'approach and methods' see later in this paper.)

Why should these answers be relevant for various stakeholders and experts?

First of all, in an increasingly globalised world, EU Member States are confronted with similar, or even with closely interconnected challenges, in the field of labour markets, of demographic change, of migration, of education, to mention only some dominant ones, as well as an increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

There is a consensus among the Member States that economic growth in Europe should be closely linked with a high level of social inclusion, and that the Member States should communicate and cooperate in achieving this goal (see the Lisbon Agenda). However, the level of acceptance of an EU membership and of EU led activities varies a lot among the countries, information tends to be poor, and local knowledge of EU activity (see 'Open Method of Coordination' OMC) and its added value is low.

It may appear obvious to blame EU institutions, their information policy and their aloofness, however, an even stronger responsibility should be assigned to the national level – to disseminate the plans and to use the provided tools, after agreeing to common targets 'in Brussels'. And last but not least one may think that local people, stakeholders, experts, seeing themselves as EU citizens, ought to feel an obligation to collect EU information and to play a part in this EU-wide process. The main aim of the EU DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities initiative and funding for projects such as AURORA plus is to motivate the national to local level to contribute to social innovation within the framework of EU policy. EU tools as projects and funding should play a role by 'kicking off' initiatives. The continuation and – if successful – the transfer into mainstream policy lies at national to local level.

This refers to the wider framework of welfare policy, to research on social issues, but also to housing policy, which could and should play a decisive role in combating poverty. The important role of housing in its inter-relation to social, economic and environmental sustainability is increasingly acknowledged at EU policy – and funding – level, and is currently under further discussion in the discourse on a future European Cohesion Policy (integration ERDF and ESF funding). (Among other EU projects, the URBACT II project 'SUITE The Housing Project' refers to these issues. To know more, contact Heidrun Feigelfeld, the author of this paper and Lead Expert of SUITE, see 'Some References').

Homelessness is seen as an integral element within housing policy and thus also an important issue within the EU Social Inclusion Policies (see the activities of FEANTSA European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, the recent results of the European Consensus
Conference on Homelessness (12/2010) and the EUROCITIES Housing and Homelessness Working Group, links in ‘Some References’).

In greater detail: the written questionnaire of the AURORA plus survey contains questions on the level of information about the EU process for social protection and social inclusion, about the respective national reports addressed to the EU commission, their quality and the Austrian process of involvement of a broader public as well as the EU reaction to these reports and its feedback to Austria. Furthermore, it mentions the 2010 Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and the discussion on targets regarding the ‘fight against poverty’ in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

As explained above, this part of the questionnaire does not directly refer to housing or to homelessness, but it addresses the wider level (in contrast to the Austria-related part, which contains several questions on housing issues, but is not described in this paper).

**Results related to the EU process for social inclusion and social protection**

It is of great importance for Austrian social, employment and housing policies to see whether the policy developed from the local conditions and historical context can match other European states and where who can learn what from whom.

One of the central tasks of the AURORA plus initiative has therefore been to establish a connection between local/regional/national policies and activities and the shared processes on the European level. This has happened on the one hand in forums and discussions, on the other hand the survey – as in 2007 – also asked about the level of awareness of this European level and the opinions regarding the demands made there.

**EU activities on social inclusion**

The results of the survey, referring to the EU process, offer the following picture:

![Figure 1. EU activities on social inclusion](image)

English translation of the graph: answers – never heard of it / glimpsed at / yes, I know it / yes, I am involved
columns (from left to right):
- 1 EU-Process Social Security and Social Inclusion
- 2 National Reports to the EU
- 3 EU Feedback on the National Reports
- 4 EU 2020 Strategy
- 5 ‘Combating poverty is a core target (of the EU Strategy 2020)’
- 6 ‘Quantitative targets are discussed (in the EU Strategy 2020)’


Only very few had 'never heard' of the joint EU process on Social Security and Social Inclusion (10%). A large majority (70%) of the respondents feel insufficiently informed about this EU process.

This approximately corresponds to the results of the earlier survey (2007).
Information on the Austrian National Reports to the EU

The situation regarding the information on the Austrian National Reports to the EU is very similar: About a quarter is informed, or has even partly been involved in the process of its development, The majority (36%) has only glimpsed at these reports, and four out of ten have never heard about it. This also shows a deficit in dissemination in three quarters of the answers. Here it should also be taken into account that the people addressed, especially those who showed their active interest by answering the questionnaire, are actors at various levels in the discussed field of ‘Combating Poverty’, almost THE experts.

In comparison to the 2007 survey, the degree of awareness of these reports has even decreased. The few among the respondents who were able to comment because of their knowledge of the Austrian contribution for the EU rather think that the current reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion only partly picture the situation and the plans (42%), a smaller proportion are satisfied (26%).

The few critical remarks include, among others insufficient regard for the basic Austrian 'federal' political structure, insufficient transparency of the financing, especially for projects, and insufficient regard for the issue of services for the homeless. (From the open answers.)

So, obviously, the degree of information on the EU process and on the Austrian National Reports to the EU is insufficient, and accordingly also the feedback of the EU to Austria in the so-called Joint Reports:

Feedback on the Austrian National Reports from the EU (‘Joint Reports’) Consequently, also only one fifth of respondents are informed about the procedure of feedback from the EU on the national reports – in the form of 'Joint Reports', and they are also only sketchily informed.

The few among the respondents who were able to comment because of their knowledge of the EU feedback to Austria, mainly say that it is 'partly well done', the others are polarised between 'yes' and 'no'.

The European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and The Europe 2020 Strategy

Figure 2. EU activities on social inclusion (cont.) European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

English translation of the graph:

Question: Do you know that activities are taking place this year throughout Europe within the framework of: 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion?

answers – no / unfortunately no / yes, in Austria / yes, EU and Austria / yes, participated / yes, involved

Currently the standard of information seems to be improving as a result of the activities of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Also, mid 2010, the discussion of the new European Strategy 2020 is perceived in the professional community:

In comparison to the insufficient degree of knowledge of the previous exchange between Austria and the EU level, the activities of this year’s “2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” have obviously brought considerable progress. Among respondents there are only very few who are not included or who have not at least heard of it.

Around half of the respondents are either included or have already attended events. Almost 40% of the remainder have heard about events and the majority of them not only about those on national level. Those who are well-informed are rather critical. The emphasis on regional level received the greatest approval with full approval coming from around half. Respondents are split in the belief of the benefit of such a ‘European year’ for combating poverty (46% partly as opposed to 44% full approval). Around 60% think that the programme chosen by the Austrian Ministry for Social Affairs (BMASK) only partly sets the right course. Among the 11% of open answers there was just as much approval as scepticism.

The current European policy plans and measures are also relatively well-known, also in detail. Nevertheless almost four out of ten have only heard sketchily about the negotiations for Strategy 2020 (but almost as many have heard nothing at all). Combating poverty as one of the core aims is known to a large majority. Word has also got around about the disagreement on the theme. The individual commentaries are especially sceptical – an example: positive effect “only with adequate monitoring and appropriate evaluation of the prospects for implementation at national level.”

The Support for EU Feedback on ‘Challenges for the Austrian future’

For the Initiative AURORA plus it seemed all the more interesting to bring up for discussion the critical points and demands expressed in this Joint Report of the EU on Austria. Support for the defined ‘challenges for the future of Austria’ is extensive and almost unanimous. All eight appeals received full approval from at least 65% of respondents, half of them even from 89% to 94%. Hardly one of them was not shared by a small majority (5-8%).

Figure 3. Support for EU Feedback on ‘Challenges for the Austrian future’

English translation of the graph:
question:
What do you think of the following EU statements about the ‘Challenges for the Future of Austria’? Do you share the criticisms?
Answers:
- yes, partly/partly, no

columns (from left to right):
- Reduce the above-average risk of poverty for women (in particular single mothers, migrants, and pensioners)
- Improve the compatibility of family and work
- Concept for social inclusion of migrants
- Improve education opportunities and outcomes for vulnerable youth (break the intergenerational transmission of poverty)
- Reinforce measures to improve life-time earnings of women.

Here too a setting of priorities can be seen:

- As good as full support for all measures aimed at reducing the especially high risk of poverty for women along with the general demand to reinforce these measures, particularly for single mothers, pensioners and migrants, as well as the demand to facilitate the compatibility of family and work.
- Right after this with around 91% there is another demand relating to women: a dynamic comprehensive concept to promote the social inclusion of female migrants.
- The avoidance of inherited poverty is also a focal point (89%): “Further efforts are necessary to counteract the intergenerational transmission of poverty and to do so the educational opportunities and results for disadvantaged youth must be improved.”
- After ‘stronger measures to increase the lifetime income of women‘ (89%) 60 to 70% still share the criticism of the lack of a gender perspective in the overall strategy, the lack of sufficient job opportunities for older women and the general extensive lack of more precise aims and concrete information about financial means.

Support for criticism expressed by the EU thereby continues – already in 2007 there was extensive approval for the demand to do more against inherited poverty and for the active inclusion of women. Criticism of a lack of gender perspective has now received even more support than three years ago.

The appeals from Brussels addressed to the national states are in Austria’s case thus well in accord with the opinions of Austrian specialists. They are strongly directed towards the subjects of women’s poverty and the life prospects for migrants. This can be evaluated as a good starting point for processes of change in terms of European social policy.

The tenor of the results from AURORA plus also shows strong accordance with the ‘challenges’ expressed by the EU. Demands relating to women’s issues were also highly rated in AURORA plus. And the above-mentioned EU demands can also all be related to the overall priorities of AURORA plus – ‘prevention’ and ‘empowerment’. This accordance of priorities will be illustrated in the ‘final remarks’ of this paper.

(For more details regarding the method used for the survey see the chapter 'Approach and methods', below.)

Conclusions on the results from the survey on ‘awareness of the European Social Inclusion Process’

It was once again shown in the work of the initiative that awareness of European processes in the social field, as well as national parts of them, is rather low. Especially the latter, and most especially the corresponding dialogue with EU bodies, is little known.

However, this fact is not accepted with indifference but criticised as a deficit – which can be evaluated as a thoroughly positive sign, i.e. improvements are called for. In general no radical improvement in visibility can be seen in comparison to the 2007 survey.

Despite this it seems that there is some current success in increasing this visibility, as can be seen from the reception of the “2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” and the strategy “Europe 2020”.

This can certainly also be attributed to the dominance in the memory of recently received information. Nevertheless the differences can be described as conspicuous. With “2010” this can to a certain extent be explained by the inclusion of numerous organisations in a “national steering committee”, a series of activities and events as well as the media work of the responsible ministry of social affairs. However, this is particularly astonishing with “EU 2020” whose presence in the media and in discourse was only at its beginnings at the time of the survey.

It could also clearly be seen that the contents of the feedback of the EU regarding the “challenges for Austria’s future”, which essentially refer to the improved prevention on inherited poverty, as well as the ambitious measures to counteract poverty among women and migrants received extensive support from participants. Approval ratings of over 90% are impressive. The strong thematic parallels between these core feedback areas and the key points of action defined by numerous AURORA plus Initiative
participants show that there is a clear remit for future Austrian policy. (See also the chapter ‘Final remarks and outlook’.)

Here, in abbreviated form, I would like to quote from the contribution 'Exkurs - Europa Sozial? (Excursus - Europe Social? The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and its mode of operation ‘ by Harald Stöger in the concluding publication of AURORA plus (see also ‘Some References’) to show once again the framework of the current European social inclusion policy (and the EBS European employment policy):

“Open coordination means that common policy aims are agreed in negotiations but that their implementation remains left to the Member States themselves and cannot be enforced by “hard sanctions mechanisms.”…

It applies to both OMCs (author’s note, i.e.: ‘European Employment Strategy EES’ and ‘Open Method of Coordination in Social Inclusion Policy OMC/incl’) that the design of the procedure and the definition of aims are subjects of negotiation between the EU Commission and Member States. Whereas the Commission is endeavouring to gain more influence over Member States’ policies the Member States are striving towards a procedure that restricts their scope for action and autonomy as little as possible. …

The implementation of the OMC objectives depends upon the interests of central governments but also upon the successful persuasion of agenda-setters at Member State level, who use aims, recommendations and guidelines to take up new policy ideas and bring them into policy discourse at national level. … The effects of OMC/incl. can be assessed as considerably fewer than those of EBS. The demand for participation of OMC/incl. brought about more inclusion of previously rather marginal actors in policy formulation dominated by governments.”

This clearly shows the high value of activities within the OMC framework being anchored at national to local levels. Knowing about and becoming familiar with these processes and supporting the aims and coordination of concepts and implementation in one’s own field of work is therefore very important. Although the current deficits at Austrian specialist level could not be comprehensively and representatively illustrated by the results of the survey they could be presented as examples. They show the only current range of opinions in this question.

The sample was too small to be able to make well-founded conclusions about the groups where the deficits are highest. This means there is a strong need for action. However, one indication can be found in the fact that people from the field of ‘housing, homelessness’ formed a high proportion among respondents. On the one hand this points to the hybrid position of this sector between social and housing policy, which obviously hinders thematic access to EU social policy, and on the other it also leads to the supposition of a high concentration on local ‘day to day business’ which obstructs the view of higher-level agendas, especially those above national level.

A still existing need for action can be seen here with institutions and networks which have an intermediary role between European and national level (such as FEANTSA, EAPN, SOLIDAR, EUROCITIES and others), as well as with national umbrella organisations close to the field of housing.

Knowledge of European strategies and activities is also indispensable for research in the overlapping fields of urban/housing sciences and social sciences. A responsible role can also be seen in accompanying research to policy, in the transfer of knowledge between European states as well as in basic research on the role and acceptance of the European idea in these fields.

Approach and methods

The survey

In the second year of the AURORA plus project, after the scientific conference, which discussed the findings from three regional workshops on key issues in combating poverty, the written socio-scientific survey completed by a wider circle of experts on the interim results and on EU or national social policies, added another milestone to the qualitative research within the project.
The concept of the survey was based on experience gained in the predecessor project of AURORA plus, ‘AURORA. Together against poverty’ (2007). Thus, some questions are designed in a comparable way, to learn about possible changes.

A link to the eight-page written questionnaire on the project website was sent out via email using the ‘newsletter’ mailing list of the AURORA plus project. Additionally, it was distributed as a paper version at the Linz scientific conference and at the annual conference of the project partner BAWO. Due to the relatively small number of completed questionnaires (finally 71), there was a linear counting of the answers. Further breakdown was tested, but dismissed.

The respondents

Questionnaires were distributed to all those who had previously received information and invitations from the AURORA plus initiative and sometimes also participated at one or more events, for the most part a public from widest range of specialist fields.

Of those who responded to the questionnaires almost two thirds (62%) had also participated in one and sometimes more of the initiative’s events. Participants at various workshops represent almost half of the survey’s main feedback group. Four out of ten were participants at the scientific conference in Linz in April 2010.

With regard to involvement in the subjects of ‘combating poverty’ the group ‘housing, homelessness’ is most dominant with almost 40% followed by ‘social services’ with around one fifth. Other groups represented included employment market and integration/migration, health, women’s fields and various others. One reason for this could be the high degree of organisation of the first group, the direct participation of their umbrella organisation in the AURORA plus initiative and the frequent information provided to members about the project.

As can be expected respondents primarily categorised themselves in the field of services from NGOs (44%). Far behind but still with 13% came the field of policy. The other fields (administration, research, public services, interest groups, initiatives of those affected, other) are each represented with less than 10%.

With regard to position at work there was a good mix of people in leading positions (34%), in services (dominant with 40%), and in management or administration (10%) with 13% in other posts. The ‘Gender Balance’ tended in the direction of ‘female’ with 62:38%.

The team

The written survey was the responsibility of the author and her institute SRZ Urban+Regional Research (research association). The overall project was implemented as non-hierarchical team work, including Volkshilfe Oesterreich, the beneficiary, an important Austrian NGO in the social field, the non-university research institute SRZ Urban+Regional Research - as mentioned, BAWO The Austrian Federal Association for organisations working with the Homeless, the Institute of Social and Societal Policies at the Johann Kepler University of Linz, a media professional and an external evaluator. The author of this paper developed the project idea, the application and the work programme, she coordinated and directed the general project (content and organisation), organised the seminars and was responsible for and author of the final report, all this together with Christian Perl, who was representing the ‘beneficiary’ of the project, VHÖ.

Final remarks and outlook

Initiative AURORA plus fulfilled its brief to ‘raise awareness’ in several ways: it brought the issue to the fore with the ‘survey’ tool and used the results as input for information and discussion on national to local level as well as providing critical feedback to EU institutions. Various lessons can be learned from this process and its results.
Looking at the survey outputs from an Austrian point of view ...

From an Austrian perspective the lesson should be that the still visible massive deficits that come to light in the survey should be seen as a stimulus to continue intensive work here within the country. In the more recent phases of the exchange the process of working on the national reports was designed more communicatively, transparently and consultatively via the inclusion of wider groups. A widespread desire to continue on this path can be seen. As mentioned, the greater awareness of “2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” and the “Europe 2020 Strategy” indicates progress.

However, despite the welcome work of involved actors in the NGO sector such as the Österreichische Armutskonferenz (Austrian Anti-Poverty Network, which is an umbrella organisation for a very large proportion of this sector) with its ‘becoming visible’ initiative, there is still a lot to be done on the level of those working in the field, and especially of people affected.

However, the reciprocal obligation should also once again be mentioned – the duty to deliver of national institutions connected to the EU but also the duty to collect of those active in social policy and social welfare.

A broad acceptance of EU principles and activities at national levels is crucial for a future European policy. The current challenges and the discussion on possible solutions in the Member States show the fragility of the construct.

Looking at the survey outputs with an 'EU' focus ...

After the rather unconvincing results in the social field after the Lisbon Agenda period, with the additional factor of Europe hit by crisis, 'Europe 2020 - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' is currently opening new doors. It is setting the framework in which all policies will be developed and has defined long-term objectives:

- 75% of population 20-64 should be employed
- 3% GDP in R&D
- 20/20/20 goals of the climate change package (20% renewable, 20% less GHG, 20% Energy Efficiency)
- early school leavers under 10% and at least 40% tertiary education
- 20 million people should be lifted out of poverty.

(See 'Some References'.)

New initiatives of 'Europe 2020' include a 'European Platform against Poverty', which promotes tangible and innovative steps. Among the four pillars of action (the Social OMC, Social experimentation, Main Streaming and a Stakeholder Forum) the promotion of effective partnerships with inclusion of all relevant groups (NGOs, social partners, people with poverty experience, national and local institutions) is a key target. This shows, that on the one hand, the importance of these groups is recognised, but also that the EU is well aware of a gap. The Austrian survey explicitly underlines this gap by showing the deficits in dissemination and inclusion.

Also in the housing field, European umbrella organisations such as CECODHAS Housing Europe (The Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing) engage in widening the role of housing and urban issues in the EU 2020 strategy by promoting 21 proposals. Of course, these initiatives also need broad visibility and support from Member States level. Experience from the AURORA plus survey (and from further project findings, that there is still a big gap in mutual understanding and concerted action among the social and the housing field) should engage national member organisations from such federations to invest more in raising awareness of EU level activities. Not least this will influence the funding levels for research in these fields.

Finally, another field of EU action is closely interwoven with the national Member States level and currently in an important stage of re-definition – the EU Cohesion Policy 2013 - (with the related funding schemes ERDF and ESF). Comparable experience from other projects within the EU Regional Development exchange framework URBACT, such as SUITE 'The Housing Project' (see 'Some References', Lead Expert H. Feigelfeld) clearly show gaps not only in awareness of the European Social Inclusion Process but also of 'European Territorial Cohesion' and 'European Sustainable Urban
Development'. Especially regarding the recognition of integrated sustainable qualities in housing as a common European target, there is still very poor knowledge of the current European discussion and strategy from the national to local city-level. This demonstrates that deficits in information filtering up and down is not restricted to the Social Inclusion Policy field but is widespread. Of course, this is also strongly connected to the need for research and the recognition and funding of this research.

Looking at the common ambition ...

Looking at the common ambition and common level of understanding of a vision for a more social Europe as well as Austria, the most positive result from this survey was the degree of accord of the postulations of the Austrian respondents to the survey, the social or housing specialists, with the main recommendations from the EU to Austria in the 2009 Joint Report for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (see chapters 'Results' and 'Conclusions').

The graphs below show the most important and most urgent groups of issues in combating poverty, and the most important and most urgent policy implications / recommendations in those fields - both defined by the AURORA plus 'community' in a two-year process. They clearly demonstrate that it is crucial to show European Social Inclusion aims, strategies and tools for implementation to this and a still broader 'community' in a more comprehensible way. It would greatly contribute to positive reinforcement for those people that their visions and ideas are embedded in a broad European context. And a more social state, Europe and world can only be created by a motivated and engaged civil society.

Figure 4. The most important and most urgent groups of issues in combating poverty

English translation of the graph:

- 1 Concepts (on prevention, on information)
- 2 Role of people affected (empowerment, participation)
- 3 Dealing with people affected (dignity and respect)
- 4 Rights of people affected (better implementation, more rights)

Figure 5. The most important and most urgent policy implications / recommendations in those fields

English translation of the graph:

- 1 Reinforce development of preventative action!
- 2 Empowerment (strengthen capacity for self-organisation)!
- 3 Further improve access to information!


To the reader of this paper

I hope this paper has encouraged researchers from more European countries to include questions on the awareness of the European Social Inclusion Process in appropriate surveys. Still more interesting would be comparative research among a good mix of Member States, which goes beyond the general questions on acceptance of EU membership, for example in Eurobarometer. How do you think the results would be in your country? What differences would there be among groups, in policy, administration, implementation, NGO level or citizens and people with poverty experience?
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