



EUROPEAN SOCIETY

Re-establishing trust in politics & promoting a true European space for debate

The European Union faces an increasing number of challenges, and their diversity requires a complex approach. Therefore, the European Society pillar deals with a wide range of topics, which can be described by two different approaches.

On one hand, several activities aim to reach out to a larger audience in order to help bridging the gap between the citizens and the European Union. These include amongst other the annual Call to Europe Conference, the EU4U project, introductory visits to the European institutions and fringe events organised at various conferences, held by FEPS members, civil society organisations, EU institutions or international organisations. For more information on these events, please address the FEPS team.

On the other hand, it deals with setting up a vision for an inclusive society. The notion of social inclusion is currently mainly associated with the financial situation of citizens. Indeed, according the Eurobarometer on Poverty and Social Exclusion, for the 15% of the citizens who feel left out of the European society, the most important factor influencing their answer was their occupational scale. This approach is also reflected in the communication of the EU institutions. It should be underlined that the risk of poverty is much more elevated in the case of vulnerable groups, like women, people with migrant background and minorities.

Nevertheless, the notion of inclusive society goes way beyond social inclusion from a financial, material point of view. Cohesion in society is based on several factors, just to name of few: social order, tolerance for each other, social and political equality, participation actively and with respect towards the rules of democracy in civil society and political life.

It seems that unfortunately the current realities work against these factors. The financial and economic crisis had an immediate effect on the material conditions of inclusiveness. It also speeded up and strengthened some tendencies towards more individualism that has already started long ago. On the long term dissatisfaction has contributed to faster growing inequalities, emerging intolerance towards otherness and diversity, the rise of political and civil activities outside the scope of democracy, favoring also the increasing popularity of political extremism. Communities in society are formed on the basis of making a distinction between us and them, which makes our society as a whole seriously fragmented. Against this background, there is the need from progressives to address the issue with more efficient policies.

The project strengthens the cooperation of national think tanks, academia, the Party of European Socialists, the S&D Group in the EU institutions and other partner organisations to develop a long-term vision accompanied by policy proposals for the creation of more inclusiveness by focusing on three main areas: gender equality, migration and minorities.

For further information concerning these issues, do not hesitate to contact Judit Tánzos.