

30 June 2015

Observatoire social européen rapport

Activity Report 2014



European Social Observatory

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Introduction

To some extent, 2014 can be seen as the **renaissance** of the European Social Observatory, after several challenging years of recession. Following a government decision, the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (Belspo) recognized the OSE as a Scientific Institution' in June, and thereby formally acknowledged the quality of its independent research. The legitimacy, additional funding and renewed energy that are associated with this recognition enabled us to firmly entrench the OSE's as a quality research centre and think tank in the Brussels scene by means of (1) extensive research, (2) quality publications, (3) thorough training activity and (4) wider dissemination.

Institutionally, we have strengthened the OSE's governing bodies during the past year: we are thrilled to have welcomed Marie-Hélène Ska (Secretary General of the Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) and Christof Cesnovar (Austrian Chamber of Labour, Brussels Office) onto our Board of Directors, and Laurence Blésin (Director at Formation Education Culture) as a new member of the General Assembly. Paolo Graziano, an Associate Professor at the University Bocconi, also newly graced our pool of OSE Research Associates. These changes, with the recruitment of two new researchers (see Section 2), bolstered our ability to scrutinize the new debates on the European social agenda, including the question whether a new European Commission, Parliament and President will signal a new era for EU social policymaking in response to the crisis. For the first time in a while, there are a few concrete reasons that warrant a prudently optimistic reading of the current situation. Taken together, the commitment of the new Social Affairs Commissioner (who expressed the ambition to be the 'visible face' of social Europe), the new structure of the Commission, the reinforcement of DG EMPL (acquiring several new units), the gradual 'socialization' of the European Semester, and the significant innovations in the new European Structural and Investment Funds, these may well open a window of opportunity for a stronger social dimension.

Nevertheless, we should not be carried away in a bubble of optimism: it remains to be seen how Commissioner Thyssen will work towards placing social and employment issues 'on an equal footing' with the EU's economic objectives, and who will aid her in achieving this ambitious goal. At the same time, an implementation gap is looming for the EU's crucial 'Social Investment' strategy, which is a key component that Juncker's Investment Plan lacks. The pressure on Member States to cut their social investment policies often appears to be stronger than the pressure to invest. This imbalance in pressures remains a key obstacle for a stronger social dimension. In addition, eurosceptics gained considerable ground during the May 2014 European Parliament elections, and the same is true in many Member States, indicating that the social impact of the crisis has been felt by increasingly large parts of the population.

In sum: while 2014 opened a renewed window of opportunity for the creation of a social dimension, complacency cannot be tolerated. This is why we are happy to have kick-started several exciting **new research projects** in the course of 2014, examining issues like economic governance and social policy coordination, the social situation in Belgium in the context of the National Reform Programme, and the impact of the crisis on fundamental rights. Other new projects were concerned with the prospects of developing a 'European Social Union', fiscal austerity and the welfare state and social developments in the EU. We **progressed** on several health-related projects, including the monitoring of EU level developments with an impact on health care systems and health care reforms and the crisis. Other projects that we continued developing from last year were the International Digest for the RBSS and a critical assessment of the European Platform against Poverty. We also cultivated the ties to other European research networks, including the newly established European Social Policy Network (in which the OSE is Social Protection Leader), scientific guidance and quality control in the European

Minimum Income Network (EMIN), and research on social innovation in the ImPRovE project (7th Framework Programme).

The OSE's **publication record** in the past year is rather impressive. All in all, the 10 OSE researchers have been engaged in 14 different projects in 2014, which resulted in more than 35 publications, a prodigious effort to say the least. The *OSE Working Papers* examined such pressing issues as the role of taxation in pensions, voluntary occupational welfare, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, policy learning between Canada and the EU, and intergenerational justice. Taken together, the five OSE Working Papers published in 2014 have been downloaded nearly 3,000 times. If one considers *all* the Working papers of the Series, the number of downloads during 2014 exceeds an incredible 8,000.

We continued to streamline the OSE **training activity**, through regular courses on 'The European Social Model and employment' (Master of European Studies, Saint-Louis University, FUSL), teaching at the *Ecole syndicale* of the *Centrale nationale des employés* (CNE), and the publication and dissemination of our flagship book on Social developments in the European Union (on behalf of the ETUI) which is aimed at a large non-expert audience.

A number of in-house tools further enhanced the **dissemination** of OSE expertise and knowledge to a large audience of researchers, think-tanks, EU and national social partner representatives (both sides of industry) and other social stakeholders such as European NGOs. These dissemination tools, which were further developed in 2014 through the NEUJOBS FP7 project, include:

- The organization of *conferences and seminars*: 9 events throughout 2014;
- The *OSE website*, which received on average 4,200 unique visitors *every month* throughout 2014;
- The *OSE Newsletter* (around 1,300 subscribers in 2014) and the *European Health Care News* (over 1,000 subscribers) further enlarged our readership in Europe and beyond.
- The use of *social media* is a new feature in the OSE's dissemination strategy: the OSE *Twitter* account has more than 600 followers, more than 700 persons follow us through *LinkedIn*.
- Finally the OSE produces *audio podcasts and short videos* for selected events.

This Activity Report is **organised** as follows: Section 1 provides a short presentation of the OSE's goals, resources and organizational structure. Section 2 presents the OSE team in 2014 and describes each of the staff's main tasks and activities. Section 3 describes the projects carried out by the OSE during the year. Section 4 presents a list of events (co-)organized by the OSE. Section 5 provides a taste of the team member's participation in various activities. Section 6 provides key output data (i.e. the OSE's 'reach'). Section 7 shows the full list of publications to which OSE researchers contributed in 2014.

The various new projects in the pipeline for 2015 open the perspective of hiring new staff in 2015, which will allow to cover a new fields of expertise: the Europeanisation of education policies. At the same time, we will continue to work on our institutional embedding (e.g. further reinforcing the Board of Directors and the Scientific Advisory Board). Finally, we intend to further boost our dissemination strategy by creating a new website.

On behalf of the OSE team, I thank you for your interest in our activity.

Bart Vanhercke, Director.

1. THE OSE IN A NUTSHELL: GOALS, RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATION

The European Social Observatory (OSE) was founded in 1984 and is nowadays a leading centre for research, information and training, specialised in the social dimension of the European Union. It has a forward-looking approach and operates as a think-tank, identifying issues as they emerge. The OSE is a partner organisation in several European Framework Programmes and is actively involved in some major networks of academic excellence in Europe and North America.

The OSE works closely with the Belgian and European public authorities, as well as with trade unions (including in the context of [TURI](#), a network of research institutes close to the trade unions) and civil society organisations. As a result, it has acquired specialist, in-depth knowledge on the social dimension of European integration and a profound understanding of the European context.

1.1 Goals

The OSE's main goals are to produce independent and state-of-the-art critical analysis of the social dimension of European integration. This implies, more concretely, that we:

- Analyse the impact of European integration on social and employment policies both at EU level and within the Member States.
- Conduct research, formulate policy proposals and produce training toolkits.
- Provide an ongoing platform for discussion for a wide range of stakeholders, esp. trade union organisations.
- Widely disseminate the results of our reflections through the website, Newsletters, publications (incl. the OSE Working Papers), social media and events.

1.2 Resources

The OSE consists of a pluralist, multidisciplinary and multilingual team of 10 researchers and analysts – bolstered by research associates and by interns from all over Europe and North America. Together they:

- Have a variety of expertise in cross-cutting areas such as economic and monetary union and its impact on the social dimension of European integration, institutional issues and the EU's social policy-making mechanisms (including policy coordination, EU legislation, social dialogue and EU funding).
- Are able to draw upon a broad-based network of public authorities, (academic and other) researchers, think tanks, European and national trade unionists, social partner representatives and other social stakeholders.

- Have more than 20 years of expertise in organizing both major (amongst other things, within the framework of the Belgian Presidencies of the EU in 2001 and 2010) and smaller events (incl. the OSE Lunchtime sessions).
- Can draw on in-house resources, which include:
 - the website (in [English](#) and [French](#)): a valuable source of up-to-date information on OSE projects, publications, events and staff, which is also reflected in the regular [Newsletter](#);
 - the Health Care [Newsletter](#) (in English, French and Dutch) provides regular summaries of current EU developments that might affect national health care systems;
 - the Working Paper [series](#) encompasses three different publications - 'Research', 'Briefing' and 'Opinion' papers - written by the research team as well as research associates and prominent outside scholars;
 - the Lunchtime [Sessions](#), at which leading academics, policymakers and stakeholders regularly shed light on issues topping the EU agenda before an audience of OSE researchers and their guests.
 - the LinkedIn page ([OSE Group](#)) and [Twitter](#) account (@OSE_be).

1.3 Organizational Structure

The day-to-day management of the OSE lies in the hands of Bart Vanhercke, who has been Director since 2010: he takes care of the management of the team as well as the broad research strategy (including call for tenders). He is supported in these tasks by Denis Bouget, who is Senior Scientific Advisor at the OSE.

Altogether the ten OSE researchers cover the following policy areas: employment and labour markets, restructuring and industrial change; education and training; gender and diversity; institutional matters; health care; poverty and social exclusion; social dialogue; and welfare systems and pensions. Françoise Verri, the Director's Assistant, manages the administrative team as well as organisational and budgetary issues. Each staff member's golden paragraph can be found in Section 2 below, while more detailed profiles of all team members can be found on the [Team](#) page of the website.

The elected [Board](#) of Directors jointly oversees the activities of the OSE, while the General [Assembly](#) brings together the broader group of stakeholders around the OSE. The [Scientific](#) Advisory Board provides independent scientific advice, for example in the context of the peer review of the OSE Working Paper Series.

1.4 Funding

The diversity of the projects described in Section 3 demonstrates that the OSE continues to be funded through a variety of sources, which include, in order of importance: (1) contracts with and subsidies from Belgian federal and regional authorities, including wage subsidies from the Brussels regional employment office (ACTIRIS): around 60% of our funding in 2014; (2) contracts with European institutions (European Commission and European Parliament): nearly 20% of our funding; (3) contracts with and subsidies from European and Belgian trade union organisations, notably the Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions: around 15% of the OSE budget; (4) other resources, including various academic collaborations and consultancy (less than 5% of the budget).

2. THE OSE STAFF: GOLDEN PARAGRAPHS

The OSE was made up of **13 staff members** during 2014: 10 researchers and 3 administrative staff. Eight interns provided important additional human resources in terms of research assistance and to help develop the OSE social media strategy. We have been able to recruit Chiara Agostini (University of Milan) and Furio Stamati (EUI/Florence) this year, to work with us on education, pensions as well as health care policies.

2.1 The Scientific team

Dr. Chiara Agostini - Researcher - European Governance, Education and Social Inclusion

Chiara Agostini, PhD in Public Policy Analysis, joined the OSE in December 2014. She is also affiliated to the 'Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Luigi Einaudi' (Italy - Turin). She was a post-doc research fellow at the Universities of Rome (2008/2009), Bologna (2011/2012) and Milan (2013). She was a 'visiting researcher' at the University of California-Berkeley (2009). Her research interests are particularly focused on EU policies in the field of social investment, activation, social inclusion, education and vocational training. In 2011-13 Chiara Agostini carried out the research project 'Education and social policies: new perspective of analysis' for the University of Bologna. Other examples of her recent research include the projects 'Combating Poverty in Europe – COPE' (Seventh Framework Programme), 'Providing Welfare through Social Dialogue – PROWELFARE' (financed by the European Commission), and the project 'Fiscal Austerity and the Welfare State' (financed by the European trade Union Institute).

Rita Baeten - Policy Analyst - Health Care and European Integration

Rita Baeten, master of social sciences, is a policy analyst at the OSE. Her research activities focus on the impact of European integration on national health care systems and on their social character. Her research topics include themes such as the EU's economic governance and health care, patient and professional mobility in the EU; health care services in the internal market; EU pharmaceutical policies and EU-level co-operation in the field of health care. Rita Baeten was the chief researcher for the OSE contribution to EU research projects such as 'Evaluating Care Across Borders' (ECAB, 2010-2013) and 'Europe for patients' (2004-2007). Both projects addressed cross border care and were financed by the European Commission under its (6th and 7th) Framework Programmes for Research. Rita Baeten advises the Belgian federal authorities on EU policy developments with a potential impact on healthcare. She also coordinated the scientific preparation and follow-up of several international and ministerial conferences on these topics. She has published extensively in this domain.

Cécile Barbier - Researcher - Institutional Developments, Citizenship, Immigration

Cécile Barbier is a political scientist and researcher at the OSE. Since 1992, she has been studying the institutional debates and the consequences of European integration from an institutional point of view (the revision of the European treaties). She is a keen observer of the EU's economic governance and

the issues of democratic legitimacy associated with the newly established framework, which includes the new, still contested, role played by the European Central Bank in containing the euro crisis. Cécile Barbier is also responsible for the 'International Digest' for the quarterly Belgian Social Security Review (RBSS) and teaches at the *Ecole syndicale* of the *Centrale nationale des employés* (CNE). In the latter framework, she further developed reflections on the democratic, economic and social consequences of the 'new economic composite government' as well as the implications of the EU's trade policy, from a federalist perspective.

Dr. Denis Bouget – Scientific Advisor – Social protection systems, social exclusion, long term care

Denis Bouget, Senior Scientific Advisor at the OSE and Associate Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute (Brussels), has a PhD in Economics from the University of Rennes, on poverty and local assistance in France. Between 1981 and 2010 he was (assistant) Professor at the University of Nantes (France), where he is now Emeritus. His main research topics are long term care for the frail elderly (80s), social exclusion and minimum income (90s) and international comparison of social protection systems. He has been a Member of the Observatory on the national policies to combat social exclusion (1990-1994) and is co-editor of the Work and Welfare in Europe Series at Palgrave Macmillan. He was the Director of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) at the University of Nantes (1999-2005), Coordinator of a COST Action on reforms of social protection in a period of globalisation and Europeanisation (1999-2004) and was the General coordinator of a Network of Excellence on Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe (RECWOWE) between 2006 and 2011.

Dalila Ghailani –Researcher – European Law, Employment and Work, Gender Equality

Since 2001 Dalila Ghailani has gradually extended her European law academic background so as to include socio-economic issues in diverse fields such as employment, social inclusion, social security coordination, gender issues and the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU. She has conducted several studies for a range of EU institutions, including the European Commission (scope of EU coordination in the pension field), the European Parliament (impact of crisis on fundamental social rights in Belgium, range of policy instruments available for pursuing gender equality in Belgium) and the European Economic and Social Committee (the legal framework for a European minimum income). Besides, she has participated in several European projects, including PROWELFARE (which mapped the increased role of 'contract welfare' in eight EU member states), ECAB FP6 on cross-border healthcare (analysis of the EU legal framework), RECWOWE FP6 (deliverables and publications on 'job quality'). She has published several articles and research papers on the gender issue, posting of workers, pensions and taxation, and integration of the Roma population.

Dr. David Natali - Researcher - The Politics of Pension Reforms

David Natali, Associate Professor at the University of Bologna, Faculty of Political Science in Forli, is a researcher at the OSE. He is also a teaching professor for the PHD Course on Political Science and Sociology at the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS) of Pisa. He holds a PhD in political science from the European University Institute of Florence (EUI, 2002). The specific focus of his research is the coordination of social protection and social inclusion policy through the Open Method of Coordination, the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy. He is also working on social concertation and social

dialogue in broader terms. David Natali has been involved in several European integrated projects and networks of excellence financed through the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes. He is a member of the OECD Working Party on pension markets, and has coordinated several research projects on pensions and the EU social dimension and the comparative analysis of pension reforms. He is co-chair of the Italian section of ESPAnet (European Network of Social Policy Analysis) and member of the Editorial Board of *European Policy Analysis* (EPA). He is the Scientific Director of the project 'Providing welfare through social dialogue' financed by the European Commission on the comparative analysis of occupational welfare schemes. In 2014, he obtained national scientific accreditation in the field of Political and Social Sciences for full professorship from the Italian Minister of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR). In the past he has worked on research projects for the Commission (on the portability of pension rights) and the Belgian government (on pension reforms in Europe; and active ageing).

Ramón Peña-Casas - Researcher - Poverty, Social Inclusion, Employment and work

Ramón Peña-Casas, Master in Social Sciences, has been a researcher at the OSE since 2000. His skills and research interests concern the policy assessment and comparative analysis of transversal socio-economic issues related to the social dimensions of the EU. He closely follows the various soft coordination processes (Open methods of coordination) increasingly used at EU level for governance in the fields of employment, social protection, social inclusion, pensions, education and lifelong learning. He has developed a sound knowledge of EU labour markets and welfare systems and of EU comparative statistics and data sources. Moreover, through his involvement in several European research networks and projects (TURI, RECWOWE, CAPRIGHT, AgirE), he has investigated in depth a wide range of topics relating to the increasingly complex interactions between work/employment and social protection and policies, including topics such as in-work poverty, job quality and flexicurity.

Dr. Sebastiano - Researcher - European Integration, Policy Learning, Governance

Sebastiano Sabato holds a PhD in Political Science at the *Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane* (SUM) in Florence. He holds a Master's Degree in Economics and Politics of European Integration from the University of Bologna, Faculty of Political Sciences (Forlì). In 2013, he worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Social and Political Science of the University of Milan, where he was involved in the research project 'COPE - Combating Poverty in Europe' (EU 7th Framework Programme). Since 2013 he has been working at the OSE and at the Centre on Inequalities, Poverty, Social Exclusion and the City (OASeS) of the University of Antwerp in the project 'ImPRovE - Poverty reduction in Europe: Social policy and innovation' (EU 7th Framework Programme). Currently, his research interests include EU and domestic social assistance policies, as well as EU socio-economic governance - notably the OMC in the domains of social protection, social inclusion and employment as well as the Europe 2020 Strategy - social innovation, and occupational welfare.

Dr. Furio Stamati - Researcher - pensions reforms and health care

Furio Stamati finalised his PhD from the European University Institute (Florence) during 2014. He is a Researcher in the REScEU project at the University of Milan and works as an associate policy analyst at the OSE. His research deals with the politics and political economy of pension and healthcare reforms. His articles have appeared in the 'European Papers on the New Welfare' and 'European Journal of

Social Security'. While working extensively on the politics and policy outcomes of Italian pension reforms, he is also a reviewer for 'Regional & Federal Studies'. Furio has recently collaborated with Bocconi University (Milan), EUDO (EUI, Florence), NASI (Washington DC), KIHASA (Seul), CABISE (Oviedo), Associazione Bruno Trentin-Isf-Ires (Rome), FAFO foundation (Oslo), and NOVA (Oslo). His research interests include political and electoral behaviour, the sociology of risk, and the impact of European integration on national welfare states, including in the areas of pensions and health care.

Bart Vanhercke - Director - European Integration, Social Protection and Social Inclusion, Governance

Bart Vanhercke, MA in Sociology, is Director at the OSE. He is the coordinator of a European project on '*Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe: the Changing Role of Social Partners*' (ProWelfare) while being the Social Protection Leader in the Commission-funded 'European Social Policy Network' (ESPN). Until recently, he coordinated the dissemination activities of the FP7 NEUJOBS Project (2011-2014) and has been research Director of an EU-funded comparative assessment of the EU PROGRESS Peer Review Programme. Before that, Bart Vanhercke managed research projects on the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy and on the Inclusion of Roma Families. His current research focuses on the social dimension of the new European economic governance, while earlier research dealt with the Europeanization of domestic social inclusion, health care and pensions policies through different EU policy, on which he published extensively. Bart Vanhercke is finalizing his PhD at the University of Amsterdam. He was appointed, for the academic year 2013-2014, Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of Saint-Louis University (FUSL) where he has been teaching a course on 'The European Social Model and Employment' in the (FR/EN) Master of European Studies. He was the coordinator of the 'Social Affairs' Task Force of the Belgian Presidency of the EU in 2001.

2.2 The OSE back office : the administrative team

Benoît Malice - Web Assistant

Benoît Malice provides logistics support for conferences (preparing files of documents, reception – publication displays). He performs various secretarial tasks: document-binding, photocopies, transcribing texts, etc. He is in charge of the layout of the 'OSE Paper Series'. He performs a number of support tasks for the website: input to the various sections of the site, html layout of the newsletter 'European Health Care News' (French, Dutch and English); corrections and addition of various sections (French and English); checking all Web pages, uploading new content, updating bibliographical references in the publications pages (working together with Renaud Smoes).

Renaud Smoes- Webmaster

Renaud Smoes manages the IT equipment, manages and updates the OSE site, project webpages and contact database, analyses and implements online working solutions such as Basecamp and (since 2014) Google Drive, which have proved to be an essential tool for managing the constant flow of documents in the European Social Policy Network. He manages the OSE Newsletter and the 'European Health Care News' newsletter (html layout, sending out the letter, mailing list). His other tasks include

generating graphic material for researchers, slides and visual aids for OSE events. He is assisted by Benoît Malice in some of these tasks.

Françoise Verri - Director's Assistant

As well as various tasks to assist the Director, Françoise Verri works with Bart Vanhercke on calls for tender, and manages the administrative team and the finances of the institution. She produces financial reports for all projects (both European and national), draws up the budgets and is responsible for the administrative management of the OSE (staff, relations with outside bodies, supplies, etc.). She draws up the accounts, carries out payments, is responsible for invoicing and VAT, as well as for the organisation and practical coordination of the various conferences and events organised by the OSE. She supervises the layout of all OSE publications (programmes, papers, etc.), the revision of notes and reports, and manages translations for the various publications. Finally, she draws up the minutes of the key meetings: Board of directors, General Assembly, monthly meetings of the research team.

2.3 OSE Internships

The OSE concluded internship agreements with the Universities of Milan and Bologna (Italy), as well as with Brigham Young University (Utah, United States). Utrecht University and Université Montréal have been sending students on a regular basis, while we regularly receive direct applications from individuals including, in 2014, from the Universities of Florence and Ferrara (Italy) and the American University, Washington DC (see Table 1 below). As a result, Bachelor and Master students in political science, sociology, economy and law regularly contribute to the OSE research activities. The Brussels School for Journalism & Education (IHECS) ensures a regular flow of students who support the OSE's communication strategy. For most OSE interns their stay at the OSE is a mandatory part of their curriculum.

Moreover, the OSE provides these students with opportunities to network with top researchers and politicians in various fields, as well as with letters of recommendation that they can take to future job interviews. For many that intern at the OSE, it is the first time that they get to experience work in research, which often proves to be invaluable in their future career decisions. Interns are involved at different levels in a variety of research projects covering all social fields from education to poverty. Interns involved with these projects contribute in the form of interview work, desk research, editing work, translation, and written pieces, many of which appear in the final form of some of the OSE's publications.

Table 1. OSE interns in 2014

Name	Duration	Sending Institution
1. Valentina RECALCATI	January – February 2014	University of Milan
2. Francesca CATTARIN	January - March 2014	University of Florence
3. Antonino SORRENTI	March -May 2014	University of Milan, faculty of Economics and Political Science
4. Tiphaine FABRE	April - May 2014	Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications Sociales (IHECS)
5. Alessandro FERRAIOLI	April -July 2014	University of Milan
6. Madeleine READ	May - July 2014	Brigham Young University
7. Fabiana PANIN	June - August 2014	University of Ferrara
8. Monica Murthy	September – December 2014	The American University, Washington DC

3. NUTS AND BOLTS: RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2014

This section provides a snapshot overview of the **14 research projects** the OSE team managed in 2014. More details on each of them can be found on the Project page of the OSE [website](#) (in EN and FR).

3.1 National Health Systems: the European Dimension INAMI (2002 – 2014)

Since 2002, the OSE has collaborated closely with the Belgian National Institute for Health and Invalidity Insurance (NIHDI/INAMI/RIZIV), providing the latter with expertise on EU policies with a potential impact on national health care systems. This includes (1) expert advice on EU policies with a potential impact on health care systems in general and the Belgian health care system in particular; (2) the publication of a quarterly electronic newsletter on recent EU developments with a potential impact on national health care systems; (3) the organisation of conferences and study days; (4) the establishment of international expert networks to carry out research on these topics; (5) the coordination of high level publications related to these topics. Particular attention was given, in 2014, to the increasing place of health care in the EU's new economic governance. OSE team members working on this project: **Rita Baeten** and **Dalila Ghailani**.

3.2 The European Social Policy Network ESPN (2014 – 2015)

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was established in July 2014 on the initiative of the European Commission to provide high quality and timely independent information, advice, analysis and expertise on social policy issues in the European Union and neighbouring countries. In particular, the ESPN is supporting the Commission in monitoring progress towards the EU's social protection and social inclusion objectives. It provides the Commission with a comprehensive overview of policies on

social protection and social inclusion in the countries covered, including their strengths and weaknesses, and identifies areas most in need of further social investment. At the heart of the ESPN are country teams of more than a hundred independent experts on social protection and social inclusion policies. The Network covers 35 countries - the 28 EU Member States plus seven other countries. The ESPN is managed jointly by the CEPS/INSTEAD Research Institute (lead partner, based in Luxembourg), the independent research company APPLICA (Belgium) and the European Social Observatory. OSE team members working on this project: **Bart Vanhercke, Rita Baeten, Denis Bouget, David Natali, Sebastiano Sabato, Ramón Peña-Casas** and **Renaud Smoes**.

3.3 Multiple transitions and the European labour market NEUJOBS (2011 - 2015)

The OSE is a dissemination partner in the five year NEUJOBS Project, funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme. The main objective has been to highlight the opportunities and difficulties that result from the socio-economic and ecological transitions of the labour market. In order to include all stakeholders' positions in the study, social partners have been actively involved. 4 years of research led to the publication of 2 books and more than 100 papers. The OSE contributed to the project with an interactive platform for discussion and debate (NEUJOBS Blog), as well as through the organisation of national workshops with social partners from diverse geographical and intellectual horizons. The OSE organized four events in 2014, including on 'Innovation and Employment: cornerstones of the energy transition' (Paris); 'Neujobs Book Launch - Let's get to Work! The Future of Labour in Europe' (Brussels); 'Ageing Society in Europe and UK: Employment and Policy Challenges' (London); Final Conference 'Green, pink and white: Can Europe still create jobs?' (Brussels). OSE team member working on this project: **Bart Vanhercke** (coordinator), **Denis Bouget, David Natali, Françoise Verri, Renaud Smoes, Benoît Malice**.

3.4 Social developments in the European Union ETUI (2014)

The OSE was contracted by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) to conduct research, which resulted in a book on 'Social developments in the European Union 2013'. The 15th edition of this publication featured authors such as Anton Hemerijck (Fault lines and silver linings in Europe's social market economy), Frank Vandenbroucke, **Bart Vanhercke** and John Morley (A European Social Union), and Ferdinand Fichtner (Euro area-wide unemployment insurance). In the concluding chapter, **David Natali** suggests a new policy package through a new political deal. With a look into such varied fields of enquiry as European social governance (Christophe Degryse, Maria Jepsen and Philippe Pochet), a European minimum income (**Ramón Peña-Casas** and **Denis Bouget**), Gender equality (**Dalila Ghailani**), and working time and atypical forms of work (Carole Lang, Stefan Clauwaert and Isabelle Schömann), the contributors to this research project present a thorough analysis of the main social developments that took place in Europe during the year 2013. The book ends with a chronology of the key events in European social policy (**Cécile Barbier**).

3.5 Analysis of the social situation in Belgium FPS SOCIAL SECURITY (2014-2016)

OSE and the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, University of Leuven) started new research for the Belgian Federal Social Security administration (FPS), with a view to updating and improving the indicators used in the Belgian National Social Report (NSR) and the National Reform Programme (NRP). As part of this research, **Ramón Peña-Casas** provided a detailed picture of (very) low work intensity households in Belgium. He drew on register data available in the 'Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection' (*Datawarehouse marché du travail et protection sociale*), which is managed by Crossroads Bank of Social Security. The research work will be continued in 2015, while the results of this first analysis will be published in an OSE Working Paper.

3.6 Health care reforms and the crisis ETUI (2013-2014)

The OSE was awarded a contract with the European Trade Union Institute to conduct research on health care reforms undertaken during the Great Recession. In a scenario of increasing budget constraints, the health sector has become an attractive target for policymakers seeking to rein in social spending. Whereas the economic policy conditionalities imposed by the Troika on countries such as Greece and Portugal included detailed instructions for health system reform, other governance tools able to reach across EU Member States (e.g. Country-specific recommendations) have also become more widespread and detailed in their requests. Cuts to public spending on health may however come at a time when more resources are required, in order to absorb the consequences of the crisis on citizens and workers. In this project, **Furio Stamati** and **Rita Baeten** developed a critical assessment of the reforms undertaken over the last 5 years in a representative selection of EU health systems. It asks what the recent trends are in the reform of health systems in the EU; and what changing role the state, society, and the market play in their governance, provision, and regulation. The project will result in an ETUI Working paper.

3.7 Fiscal austerity and the welfare state ETUI (2014-2015)

OSE started new research for the European Trade Union Institute at the end of 2015 aimed at developing a critical assessment of the welfare reforms adopted by the Member States in the wake of the economic and fiscal crisis. The research project embraces a larger set of policies: labour market policies, social policies (pensions), education, R&D, and public sector reforms. Some of these areas are typical examples of the so-called 'structural reforms' supported by international organisations and the EU. The project tries to qualify the nature of the reforms introduced so far and their impact on social and employment policies: do they represent a 'race to the bottom' or rather a 'revision' of labour and social policy measures in post-industrial European societies? The project also tackles the question of convergence versus divergence between varieties of welfare capitalisms in the context of the Great Recession. The project will address these questions, providing evidence of the output and outcomes of the reforms in the EU Member States. OSE team members working on this project: **Chiara Agostini, David Natali, Sebastiano Sabato and Ramón Peña-Casas.**

3.8 The Minimum Income Network EMIN (2013-2014)

Funded by the European Commission, the European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) project first built a network of national experts (social and anti-poverty NGOs and people experiencing poverty) with the aim to review and compare national situations of minimum income schemes. Subsequently, it contributed to building a consensus on the necessary steps towards the progressive realisation of adequate and accessible minimum income schemes in EU Member States. The OSE has been asked to provide scientific guidance, and to support the overall project management, which lies with the EAPN, which is in charge of the overall coordination. Thus, the OSE contributed to the drawing up of the guidelines for the case studies (with Anne van Lancker, main consultant of the project) and provides detailed feedback on the draft national and thematic reports. The OSE also assisted with the drafting of EU level documents for discussion at the EU level conferences. Moreover, the OSE has presented the EMIN outcomes at two of the national seminars, in Cyprus and Spain. OSE team member working on this project in 2014: **Ramón Peña-Casas**.

3.9 International Digest: Belgian Review for Social Security FPS Social Security (2012-2015)

In 2012, the OSE was awarded a contract with the Belgian Federal Public Service Social Security with a view to writing an 'International digest' for the quarterly Belgian Review of Social Security (RBSS/BTSZ), which is available online. In the digest **Cécile Barbier** provides a regular overview of the development of the EU's Economic Governance and international developments (including EU, OECD, and ILO) that have a direct or indirect impact on employment, social protection and social inclusion policies and debates.

3.10 Assessing the European Platform against Poverty ETUI (2014)

The OSE was awarded a contract with the European Trade Union Institute, which consists of a contribution to the ETUI Working Paper series. **Sebastiano Sabato** and **Bart Vanhercke** authored a paper 'About the baby and the bathwater: assessing the European Platform against Poverty' (EPAP). The Working Paper provides a qualitative assessment of one of Europe 2020's flagship initiatives and argues that a transformed EPAP has the potential to provide strong added value for the EU's toolbox in the fight against poverty. Rather than throwing out the baby with the bathwater, the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy should be used as a window of opportunity to revamp this tool by addressing its weaknesses. The authors propose three complementary scenarios for boosting, step by step, the effectiveness of the Platform.

3.11 The Impact of the Crisis on Fundamental Rights Milieu Ltd. (2014-2015)

Respect for human rights is a universal value embedded in the European Union Treaties. However, the economic crisis has forced Member States to introduce structural reforms, cutting public expenditure and availability of social benefits, for example in the areas of health and education. In this context, the

European Parliament commissioned Milieu Ltd. (public sector consultancy) to carry out an assessment of the impact of the crisis on fundamental rights across Member States of the European Union. The study looks at seven Member States: Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The focus is on the right to work, the right to healthcare, the right to a pension, and the right to education. **Dalila Ghailani** carried out the Belgian case study while **Bart Vanhercke** contributed to the overall quality control of the project, including the Synthesis Report. The output of the research will be discussed at a public Hearing in the EP in March 2015.

3.12 Socializing the European Semester? SIEPS (2014)

Jonathan Zeitlin (University of Amsterdam) and **Bart Vanhercke** conducted joint work on behalf of the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS) on economic governance and social policy coordination in the European Semester and Europe 2020. In this report, the authors argue that since 2011, there has been a partial but progressive ‘socialization’ of the European Semester. This has led to an increasing emphasis on social objectives in the EU’s priorities and Country-Specific Recommendations. It has also enhanced the role of social and employment policy actors. The report interprets these developments not only as a response by the Commission and other EU institutions to rising social and political discontent with the consequences of post-crisis austerity policies, but also as a product of reflexive learning and creative adaptation to the new institutional conditions of the European Semester.

3.13 Poverty Reduction in Europe IMPROVE FP7 (2014-2015)

The Centre for Social Policy (CSB) and the Centre on Inequality, Poverty, Social Exclusion and the City (OASES) at the University of Antwerp successfully proposed a research project funded under the 7th Framework Programme that addresses key questions such as: *How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro level policies, and vice versa? How can the conditions be improved to move towards the Europe 2020 objectives?* The European Social Observatory more particularly addresses the question of how the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU social agenda and cohesion policy can be brought closer together at EU, national and sub-national levels (i.e. the issue of mainstreaming social innovation under Europe’s new Strategy). **Sebastiano Sabato** is taking the lead on delivering a Discussion Paper on the instruments and resources for implementing the EU framework for Social Innovation in the period 2006-2014; **Bart Vanhercke** is in charge of the overall quality control.

3.14 High Level Group on Social Union Friends of Europe (2014)

The European Union and its Member States are failing to deliver on the fundamental goals of the European project: the simultaneous pursuit of economic progress and social progress, both within countries through the progressive development of welfare states, and between countries through upward convergence across the Union. That is why Friends of Europe has contracted the OSE to write a Background Report on ‘A holistic approach to Europe’s social problems’, under the supervision of Frank Vandenbroucke. The aim is to take the EU’s social dimension out of its ‘specialist-only’ corner and bring these concerns to the top of the political agenda. The final report of the High Level Group

will be produced by the spring of 2015, and will include a set of recommendations for the incoming European Commission and European Parliament, and some ‘tough nuts to crack’ for domestic policymakers. The Background report includes a historical overview of the social acquis (which has developed during the past fifty years through different modes of day-to-day EU social policymaking. OSE team member working on this project: **Bart Vanhercke** and **Sebastiano Sabato**.

4. THE PLACES TO BE: OSE EVENTS IN SHORT

The present list describes the 9 events that have been (co-)organised by the OSE throughout 2014. More details can be found on the *Past Events* [page](#) of the OSE website. An overview of the participation of OSE researchers in events organised by *other* institutions is provided in Section 4 below.

30/01/2014 - The E(M)U in search of compliance: from macroeconomic conditionality to contractual arrangements – Brussels - OSE Lunchtime Session

Keynote speaker: Stijn Verhelst, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations; panelist: José Leandro, Principal Advisor on Economic Affairs, Cabinet of the President of the European Council. Chair: **Bart Vanhercke**.

In EU cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020, ‘macroeconomic conditionality’ is being extended to all funds: the European Commission can ask the Member States to modify their Operational Programmes, and can - as a last resort – suspend funds if Country-Specific recommendations (CSRs) are repeatedly and seriously breached. In a similar vein, the European Council is currently debating whether and how ‘contractual arrangements’ supported by solidarity mechanisms could complement the existing macroeconomic surveillance framework. This OSE Lunchtime Session discussed the risks and opportunities involved in the EU’s renewed search for compliance.

21/03/2014 - The future of social health insurance in Europe: redefining solidarity and responsibility? – Brussels – NIHDI International Conference

Keynote speakers included Martin Seychell, Bruno Palier, Mark Pearson, Ignaas Devisch, Reinhard Busse and Erik Schokkaert. The conference concluded with a panel debate with the CEOs of different European national health insurance funds.

The OSE organised this International Conference together with the European Observatory on Health systems and Policies and the NIHDI on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Belgian Statutory Health Insurance Act. The Belgian system is a typical social health insurance system, characterised by a plurality of actors involved in management and implementation as well as a large degree of therapeutic freedom and consumer choice. The conference aimed to explore where this social health insurance model stands today and how it will evolve in the next 50 years? What challenges will it have to face and how will this affect its approaches to solidarity and the incentives given to encourage accountability?

08/04/2014 - The Role of Ideas in EU Policy Coordination: Social Policy and Education compared – Brussels - OSE Lunchtime Session

Keynote speakers: **Chiara Agostini** (University of Milan) and **David Natali** (University of Bologna and OSE); panelist: Denis Crowley (Head of Unit, DG Education and Culture, European Commission) Chair: **Dalila Ghailani**

The session discussed the different processes of institutionalisation of EU soft coordination in the fields of social and education policy, between 2000 and 2013. The two sectors show different trends: in social policy, institutionalisation has proved mixed and uneven; in education policy, institutionalisation has been full and progressive. These different trends are explained by the key role of ideas, and their interaction with the political dynamics and socio-economic problems experienced by Europe.

12/05/2014 - Innovation and Employment: cornerstones of the energy transition – Paris - NEUJOBS Conference

Keynote speakers included: Olivier Appert, Conseil Français de l'Énergie, Jean-Eudes Moncomble, CFE; Renaud Crassous, Electricité de France, Richard Lavergne, Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable et de l'Énergie (MEDDE), Paul Zagamé, SEURECO, Dominique Auverlot, Commissariat Général à la Stratégie et à la Prospective (CGSP). Chair: **David Natali**.

The conference aimed to gather different views from stakeholders - researchers, practitioners, as well as policy makers - on energy transition, with specific attention to innovation and employment, as these are the main challenges linked to this transition. In a first session, policy implementation plans were analysed in relation to the European context. Then, the second session addressed the key role of innovation during the transition, and its potential to tackle both environmental and employment issues. The day concluded with a round table involving key actors of the transition, who put into perspective the ideas developed during the previous sessions.

04/06/2014 - Towards EU Unemployment Insurance? Comparing Canadian and EU Social Policymaking – Brussels - OSE Lunchtime Session

Keynote speaker: Amy Verdun, Professor of Political Science, Jean Monnet Chair Ad Personam, University of Victoria; panelists: Philippe Pochet, Director, European Trade Union Institute; Thomas Fischer, Executive Director, Bertelsmann Stiftung Brussels Office. Chair: **Bart Vanhercke**.

Ever since the 'Three Presidents' endorsed the introduction of a European unemployment benefit scheme, the idea has gained salience. While the political hurdles are significant, many observers agree that such a scheme (or an interstate insurance variant) is an essential step in the effort to increase the stability of the Eurozone. Professor Amy Verdun presented the findings of a research project comparing social policy coordination in Canada and the EU. This research argues that despite their differences, Canada and the EU actually face many similar challenges in coordinating social policy between different levels of government. An interview with Amy Verdun was featured on [video](#).

01/07/2014 - Social developments in the European Union 2013 - Brussels - OSE-ETUI Conference

Keynote speakers José Leandro, Principal advisor on economic affairs, Cabinet of the President of the European Council; Michele Calandrino, Policy officer, Secretariat-General, European Commission; Sofia Fernandes, Senior research fellow, Notre Europe—Jacques Delors Institute.

To mark the 15th edition of their flagship publication, the OSE and the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) held a conference-debate at the European Economic and Social Committee, bringing together more than 120 EU and national policymakers, stakeholders (social partners and NGOs), researchers and journalists. **Bart Vanhercke** and Philippe Pochet (ETUI) chaired the event, while Georges Dassis (CESE), Freek Spinnewijn (FEANTSA) and Luca Visentini (Confederal Secretary, ETUC) provided essential stakeholder perspectives. **David Natali** presented a wrap up of the event. A short [video](#) was produced with the highlights of the conference.

08/09/2014 - Let's Get to Work! The Future of Labour in Europe - Brussels - Neujobs Book Launch

Keynote speakers: Miroslav Beblavy, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Günther Schmid, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), Gilberto Pelosi, Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU, Tom Bevers, Chairman of the Employment Committee of the European Union.

Work is not only an essential part of our daily lives, but also one of the top policy concerns across Europe. In the context of the NEUJOBS FP7 project, scholars from seven European countries bring together in an edited volume what the research findings from various social sciences mean for the future of labour in Europe. Their findings are addressed not only to policymakers, business persons, fellow academics and journalists, but to anyone interested in the shape, size and character of the labour markets of tomorrow and beyond. A short [video](#) was produced with the highlights of the sold-out book launch.

15/09/2014 - Ageing Society in Europe and UK: Employment and Policy Challenges - London - NEUJOBS Conference

Keynote speakers include: Iain Begg, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, Hilmar Schneider, CEPS/INSTEAD, Luxembourg, Bill Wells, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, United Kingdom, Johannes Geyer, German Institute for Economic Research, Chris Ball, The Age and Employment Network. Chair: **Bart Vanhercke**.

This conference brought together researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to discuss the consequences of ageing on employment, labour demand and supply, skills, working conditions, gender issues, and so forth. It was an opportunity for European scholars and national stakeholders to meet and debate key strategies for dealing with ageing. Leading researchers from the NEUJOBS project presented their understanding of present and future challenges to European labour markets, focusing on the main demographic characteristics of the ageing process in Europe and some expected future trends, including the issue of long-term care and employment of the elderly.

17/09/2014 - Sur l'histoire de l'Europe et ses leçons pour le futur - Brussels - OSE-ETUI Lunchtime Session

Keynote speaker: Robert Salais (IDHES - CNRS), economist, joint founder of the economics of convention, coordinator of European research projects on the capability approach; panelist: Philippe Pochet, Director, ETUI. Chair: **Denis Bouget**.

Historically, the idea of Europe evokes a community of free, equal peoples, passionate about democracy, uniting to shape their own way forward in the world. Such is the official story of the European Project. The historical reality, however, has been quite different: that of a grand project used and betrayed, an act of violence being committed. As the crisis has shown, our Europe is no more than one coin in a neo-liberal, financialised world order centred on money and commerce. During this OSE-ETUI Lunchtime Session, Robert Salais discussed the origins of the EU (marked by the failure of a political community) as well as the paths that could have been followed if Europe had not imprisoned itself in the market.

1-2/12/2014 - Green, pink and white: Can Europe still create jobs? - Brussels - NEUJOBS (FP7) Final Conference

Discussion leaders: Johannes Geyer, The German Institute for Economic Research; Michaela Gstrein, Institute for Advanced Studies – Vienna; Maciej Kucharczyk, AGE Platform Europe; Mattias Maucher, EPSU; Luk Zelderloo, European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (1st Panel). Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, Educational Research Institute, Warsaw; Mary Collins, European Women's Lobby; Claudia Menne, ETUC; Karina Ransby, The Confederation of Danish Employers (2nd Panel). Willi Haas, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt; Christian Kjaer, Faraday Consult and Béla Galgóczi (ETUC) (3rd Panel).

Policy-makers often mention housing, transport and energy as key sectors to foster employment growth. *What are green jobs, and how do they come about? How do companies and organisations cope with the skill challenges of elderly workers? How has skills demand changed and what trends can we predict in the future?* The European Social Observatory was in charge of organising three 'Social Partners' Face-Off sessions (chaired by **Bart Vanhercke**) during the final Conference of the NEUJOBS project on future care needs, women's employment and Europe's green energy transition. A short [video](#) has been produced with the highlights of the conference.

5. UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL: TEAM MEMBER ACTIVITIES

09/2013 - 09/2014 - FUSL - The European Social Model and Employment - Brussels

Bart Vanhercke was appointed, for the academic year 2013-2014, Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of Saint-Louis University (FUSL), where he has been teaching a course on 'The European Social Model and Employment' in the (FR/EN) Master of European Studies, a second cycle programme.

27/1/2014 - Economic governance - Brussels

Cécile Barbier gave a presentation on 'L'état de la question sociale européenne au regard des règles de la « gouvernance économique » IHECS (Executive Master in Communication politique européenne).

10/2/2014 - Healthcare in the European Semester - Brussels

Rita Baeten participated in a panel debate, organised by Confrontations Europe entitled 'Assessing the accomplishment and the challenges of the European Semester - the example of health'.

19/2/2014 - Executive Master in 'Communication politique européenne' of the Brussels School for Journalism & Education

Cécile Barbier participated in the Jury to evaluate the assignments of the students.

27/02/2014 - 4th AGORA@Forum - Institut d'Etudes Européen - Brussels

Sebastiano Sabato attended the 4th AGORA@Forum (organised in the framework of the FP7 programme 'GREEN') and contributed to the event as Rapporteur for the round table 'Evolving EU Modes of Governance: Transformation of European Social Policy Governance'.

17/3/2014 - New directives, new impacts. Will health systems need to adapt? - Venice

Rita Baeten presented on this topic during a workshop organised by *Progetto Mattone Internazionale* on 'Implementing the Cross-border care Directive: Status, implications and regional approaches'.

21/03/2014 - International Conference - Brussels

The future of social health insurance in Europe: redefining solidarity and responsibility? Rita Baeten was Chair on the issue of 'Rebalancing solidarity and responsibility' during the International Conference on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Belgian Statutory Health Insurance Act.

6/5/2014 - European Elections 'We need analysis that goes beyond the European framework' - Brussels

Interview with Cécile Barbier in [Europolitics](#)

19/05/2014 - The Open Method of Coordination on Social Inclusion as 'Laboratory Federalism' - Canada

Bart Vanhercke contributed to a series of workshops on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa as part of the Canada-Europe Transatlantic Dialogue during May 2014 at the invitation of Prof. Amy Verdun and Donna Wood.

05-07/06/2014 - 'Europe 2020 and the strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion: actors' mobilization, problem pressure and the effectiveness of the EU tool-kit' - The Hague

Sebastiano Sabato participated to the 7th Pan-European Conference on the European Union of the European Consortium for Political Science (ECPR) and he presented a paper describing the evolution of the EU tool-kit for combating poverty under Europe 2020 (written with Chiara Agostini and Matteo Jessoula).

18/6/2014 - Assessing the Directive on Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare - Brussels

During a seminar organised by *Public Policy Exchange* on 'Cross-Border Healthcare in Europe: Improving Co-operation to Deliver a Patient-Centred System' Rita Baeten presented an analysis of the Directive and its impact on health systems.

4-5/09/2014 - European Semester's increased target on healthcare reform - Brussels

At EPHA's 5th annual conference, Rita Baeten provided a critical analysis of the EU's economic surveillance of health systems.

4-6/09/2014 - Towards a European instrument for minimum income guarantee. Debates, challenges and opportunities – Norway

During the 12th Annual ESPAnet Conference 'Beyond the crisis in Europe' in Oslo, Sebastiano Sabato presented a paper that aims to discuss the political and legal feasibility of a 'European' instrument for non-contributory minimum income schemes for the working age and able bodied population.

11/09/2014 - The New European Commission - Brussels

Bart Vanhercke was interviewed on radio RTBF (La Première), on the occasion of the assignment of the Employment and Social Affairs Portfolio to Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.

15/09/2014 - The EMIN Project and the EU Roadmap for Adequate Minimum Income Schemes – Spain

In the context of the National Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN Spain) conference, Ramón Peña-Casas presented to a public of various stakeholders the results and roadmap of the European Minimum Income Network (EMIN).

21/09/2014 - Recent EU level developments with an impact on health systems - Brussels

Rita Baeten presented the recent EU level developments with an impact on health systems at the Belgian national health insurance Institute (NIHDI).

23/9/2014 - Health care reforms and the crisis – Brussels

During a meeting of the ETUC working group on social protection, Rita Baeten presented the results of the research project on Health care reforms and the crisis.

26/09/2014 - The EMIN Project and the EU Roadmap for Adequate Minimum Income Schemes – Cyprus

In the context of the National Anti-Poverty Network Cyprus (EAPN Cyprus) conference, Ramón Peña-Casas presented to a public of various stakeholders the results and roadmap of the European Minimum Income Network (EMIN).

03/10/2014 - Can the EU become a 'Social Union'? – Brussels

Bart Vanhercke acted as keynote speaker in the National Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Seminar and Roundtable debate on the issue of 'How will the Europe 2020 Strategy Mid-Term Review reduce poverty and inequality?'

13/10/2014 - Cross-border healthcare in the EU, practices and policies - Leuven

During a conference organised by HIVA, the KU Leuven and the EZA on mobility of workers and pensioners and the coordination of social protection in Europe, Rita Baeten presented on the practices and policies on cross-border healthcare in the EU.

16/10/2014 - The role of EU, Member States/Regions and stakeholders in tackling access barriers to health care for people with RMDs and other chronic diseases - Brussels

Rita Baeten participated in a panel debate on 'Analysing how to reduce the Access Barriers to Health Care for People with Chronic Diseases in Europe', during this conference organised by EULAR

23-24/10/2014 - Strategic positioning and creative solutions: French patient flows to hospitals and polyclinics in the Belgian Ardennes - Venice

During an Italian presidency conference organised by *Progetto Mattone Internazionale* on the 'The cross-border care Directive (2011/24/EU) one year into practice' Rita Baeten presented the results of the case study on cross-border hospital collaboration at the Belgian-French border.

30/10/2014 - The Directive on Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare: Opportunities and challenges for patients and health systems - Copenhagen

During a conference on 'Cross-border healthcare law in the European Union: current status and implications', organised by the university of Copenhagen, Rita Baeten discussed the opportunities and challenges of the Directive on Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare.

14/11/2014 - Investing in Human Capital: A Milestone towards a Social Union - France

Bart Vanhercke was the keynote speaker during the STEPS Cluster Final Event in Lille on 'Unlock human capital - invest in soft skills' (INTERREG 2 Seas Programme).

20/11/2014 - The Value of Health: Delivering better outcomes for sustainable healthcare systems - Brussels

Rita Baeten participated at the discussions during this expert seminar, organised by EBC en FIPRA.

28/11/2014 - Brainstorming: Encouraging cross-border health care collaboration in border-regions: scope and options - Brussels

Rita Baeten participated in a brainstorming meeting to prepare EU action on cross-border health care collaboration in border-regions, organised by the European Commissions' DG SANCO, and the European Observatory on health systems and policies.

02/12/2014 - Conference 'The Ingredients for an Inclusive Jobs, Growth and Investment Agenda' - Brussels

Sebastiano Sabato participated to the high-level debate organized by SOLIDAR giving his contribution to the session 'Together for Social Europe: Investing in Social Progress'.

18/12/2014 - LuxLeaks - Brussels

Cécile Barbier participated in a debate organised in Brussels by Café Roosevelt on '*LuxLeaks. Quelles suites, qui pour harmoniser la fiscalité européenne?*'

6. OUTPUT DATA: THE OSE'S REACH

6.1 Publications

As can be seen from Table 2 below, the OSE team has produced a range of articles (11), book chapters (8) and Papers (10) in 2014, as well as an edited volume. In addition various other contributions have been written, including digests, book reviews and opinions (6). The details of these OSE publications is given in Section 9 below.

Table 2. Type and number of OSE publications in 2014

Type of publication	Number
Articles	11
Papers	10
Book chapters	8
Digest, book review, opinion	6
Edited Volumes	1
Total	36

Since 2007, OSE researcher's publications have been cited approximately **3,000 times** in the scholarly literature, across an array of publishing formats and disciplines (Source: Google Scholar). Google Scholar harvests publications from all across the internet, giving students and researchers easy access to the OSE's work through the familiar format of Google. However, it should be noted that Google Scholar is almost completely limited to English publications, while the OSE continues to publish in French and (occasionally) Dutch. Google Scholar also fails to include the most updated version of OSE publications, as there is a two month lag between publication and appearance on Google Scholar. Most importantly, such a *citation tool* obviously obscure the fact that some OSE publications may not be quoted, but are actively used as background material (e.g. for stakeholders and policymakers) and food for thought for internal discussions (e.g. in European institutions) while other publications (e.g. deliverables written for the European Commission) are published without the author's name.

6.2 The OSE website: structure and visitors

The OSE website, available in [English](#) and [French](#), is structured as follows:

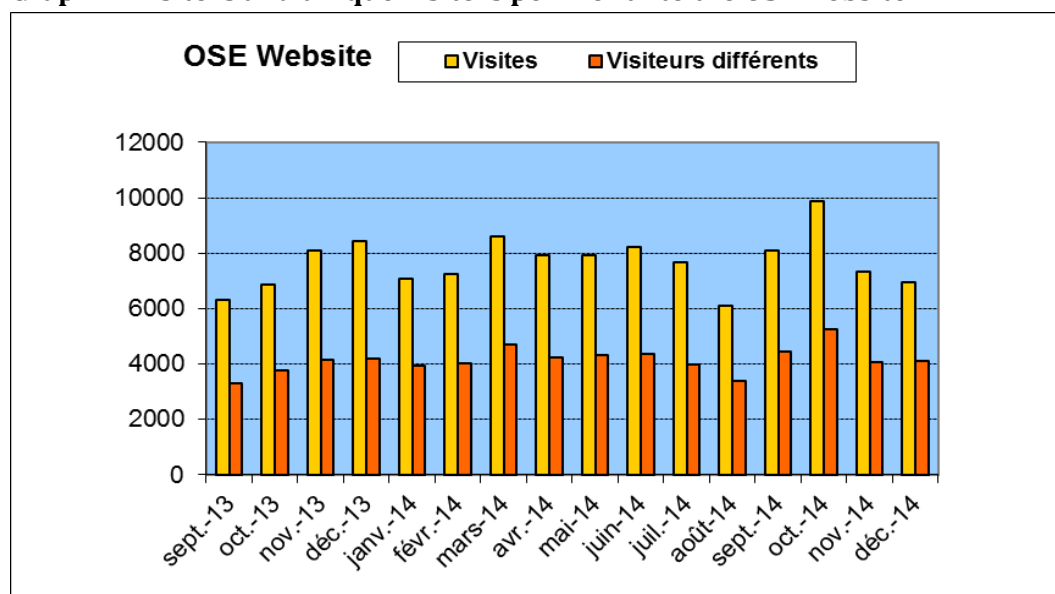
- The *welcome* page highlights the latest news, events, publications, activities, and appearances in the media of the OSE.
- The '*Contact*' page explains how to reach the OSE, both electronically and physically, while the 'Team' page provides information (incl. publications) on most team members.
- The '*Agenda*' section displays upcoming events hosted by the OSE (and affiliates) detailing the event's content, date, location, and contact information, as well as various network activities. Information about *past events* is available through a link on the page.
- Many OSE publications can be accessed through the 'Publications' page, which gives a chronological list of published works by present and past OSE researchers, including the OSE Paper Series. Sorted by year, the prolific 'Publications' section displays the commitment shown

by the OSE researchers to their subjects. Additionally, slides from team members' past presentations can be found on the page under a dedicated '*teaching_tools*' page.

- On the '*Projects*' page, interested readers can find current and past projects the OSE team participated in with links to key documents and partners in OSE research.
- The '*Research_Topics*' section provides an overview of the various research fields the OSE takes part in, and 'Selected Readings' highlights assorted recommended texts.
- Finally, the '*Links*' page works as a tool for additional research as it compiles an extensive list of various NGOs, institutions, organisations, research fields, etc.

As can be seen in Graph 1 and Table 3 below, the *total* number of hits on the OSE website varied between 6,100 and more than 9,900 hits *per month* in 2014. The number of *unique* visitors – which are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site – ranges between 3,300 and 5,200 visitors *per month*: on average more than **4,200 unique visitors** came to visit *every month*. Put differently: the OSE website attracted on average **140 unique visitors per day** (including weekends) throughout 2014, ranging between 106 and 167 visitors.

Graph 1: Visitors and unique visitors per month to the OSE website



Source: AWAT Service linked to web hosting

The OSE website is given a 'light update' on a weekly basis, and is *fully* updated on the occasion of every OSE Newsletter publication or new event. During 2014, we started to work on the new OSE website (using Drupal Open Source content management system), for a better integration of multimedia contents and sharing functions, an easier management of the content, and finally to have an attractive layout on different supports (PC, tablet, smartphone). The new website will be launched in the course of 2015: Renaud Smoes and Benoit Malice followed a series of Drupal training courses by way of preparation.

Table 3: Traffic on the OSE website

<i>Month</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Unique visitors</i>
January 2014	7,070	3,946
February 2014	7,236	4,032
March 2014	8,588	4,690
April 2014	7,903	4,240
May 2014	7,928	4,330
June 2014	8,223	4,367
July 2014	7,687	3,985
August 2014	6,112	3,381
September 2014	8,114	4,439
October 2014	9,883	5,237
November 2014	7,333	4,083
December 2014	6,942	4,100
Average	7,752	4,236

6.3 OSE Paper Series: topics and downloads

Table 4 below provides an overview of the number of downloads of the 5 OSE Working Papers *published in 2014*: this number varies greatly, between 123 (paper published in December 2014) and 1,561 (published in October 2014) per paper. Most papers are downloaded around 400 times from the dedicated web page. Taken together, the OSE Paper Series published in 2014 have been downloaded nearly **3,000** times so far.

Table 4. OSE Working Papers 2014: downloads from website

	<i>Number of Downloads</i>
The cost-effectiveness of pensions and the role of taxation: an emerging European debate Ghailani, D. and Natali, D. with Schavoir, M. (2014) OSE Paper Series, Research Paper Nr 17, December 2014, 32p	123
Comparing (Voluntary) Occupational Welfare in the EU: Evidence from an international research study Natali, D. and Pavolini, E. (2014) OSE Paper Series, Research Paper Nr 16, November 2014, 39p	494
Putting the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the heart of the EU agenda : A contribution to the Mid-Term Review of the Europe 2020 Strategy Frazer, H., Guio, A.-C., Marlier, E., Vanhercke, B. and Ward T. (2014) OSE Paper Series, Research Paper Nr 15, October 2014, 65p.	1,561
Governing the Social Dimension in Canadian Federalism and European Integration Verdun, A. and Wood, D.E. (2014) OSE Paper Series, Research Paper Nr 14, May 2014, 22p.	406

Intergenerational Justice and Public Policy in Europe Vanhuysse, P. (2014) OSE Paper Series, Opinion Paper Nr 16, March 2014, 17p.	324
Total number of 2014 OSE Working Paper downloads:	2,908

If one considers *all* the Working papers of the [Series](#), the number of downloads during 2014 exceeds **8,000**. This figure includes downloads, during 2014, of previously published papers (the Series started at the end of 2009). The implication is that older OSE Papers **continue to be downloaded** in significant numbers in the years after they have been published.

6.4 OSE Newsletters and Podcasts

The OSE Newsletter was launched in September 2009 and the ‘European Health Care News’ in 2006. Both have continuously increased their readership, which has now reached **just over 1,000 for the Health Newsletter** (published in three languages) and nearly **1,300 for the OSE Newsletter** (see Table 5 below). Crucially, we have chosen to work with an ‘opt-in registration system’ for both: these Newsletters are *only* sent to persons who decide to subscribe, after they received an invitation to do so by e-mail.

The OSE Newsletter readership is fairly gender balanced and is located in more than 35 different countries around the world. A majority of readers are from the EU: about half work in and around Brussels, others are from a wide variety of EU Member States. There are a considerable number of readers from national administrations and social partner organizations. Other Newsletter readers are from civil society organisations and European institutions, political parties, professional associations and the media. Such an elaborate and diverse network of readers confirms the embeddedness of the OSE in relevant EU and domestic networks.

Table 5. OSE Newsletters: readership

	<i>Number of subscribers (opt-in)</i>
OSE Newsletter	1,288
European Health Care News	1,051 (FR: 404 ; NL: 395, EN: 266)

Finally the OSE produces audio podcasts and short videos for selected events, or in the framework of interviews by established media. Examples include the July 2014 ‘Social Developments in the EU’ Conference ([video](#)), the June 2014 Lunchtimes session on ‘Towards EU Unemployment Insurance’ (Audio [Podcast](#)), and an [interview](#) at ‘La Première’ (RTBF radio) on the occasion of the assignment of the Employment and Social Affairs Portfolio to Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.

7. FOOD FOR THOUGHT: OSE PUBLICATIONS IN 2014

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Baeten R. (2014) 'Cross-border patient mobility in the European Union: in search of benefits from the new legal framework', *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 19(4), pp. 195-197.

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Baeten R. (2014) 'L'Union européenne: cheval de Troie des systèmes sanitaires nationaux?', *Santé conjugée*, 69, pp. 51-57.

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Barbier C. (2014a) 'Digest européen et international', *Revue belge de sécurité sociale*, 3(2014), pp. 369-397.

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Ghailani D. and Natali D. (with Schavoir M.) (2014) 'The cost-effectiveness of pensions and the role of taxation: an emerging European debate', *OSE Research paper 17, December 2014*, Brussels, European Social Observatory.

Ghailani D. (2014) 'Gender equality, from the Treaty of Rome to the quota debate: between myth and reality', in Natali D. (ed.) *Social developments in the European Union 2013*, Brussels, European Trade Union Institute and European Social Observatory, Brussels, pp. 161-190.

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