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# Observatoire social européen rapport

## Activity Report 2017



European Social Observatory

[www.ose.be](http://www.ose.be)

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## INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 has confirmed the window of opportunity that was announced last year for the EU's social dimension. Following an extensive public consultation, the European Commission published a Recommendation on a 'European Pillar of Social Rights' (EPSR) which was subsequently proclaimed jointly by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council; importantly, the initiative was unanimously endorsed by all Member States (including the UK), thereby exceeding Commission President Juncker's initial political ambitions.

The Pillar has, within a very short time span, relaunched a rather ambitious EU 'Social Agenda' which – through social dialogue and proposed EU legislation – has the potential of creating new rights for EU citizens. The initiatives that have been tabled so far also create a new political momentum in that key issues related to social protection are brought back on the EU agenda. At the same time, the risk is real that these ambitious initiatives will be watered down during the negotiation process, as a result of diverging views, both between the EU social partners and among Member States.

The European Pillar of Social Rights thus represents a real window of opportunity... but one that still needs to be made operational. In the short run, the focus should be on implementing the initiatives that have been tabled. This includes the adoption of the Directive on work-life balance; the endorsement and implementation of the proposed Council Recommendation on social protection for the self-employed and non-standard workers; making the proposed European Labour Authority operational before the 2019 European elections; upgrading the Pillar's Social Scoreboard; and ensuring that in the next EU multi-annual financial framework post-2020 an adequate level of resources is channelled to the implementation of the Pillar.

This new European context is being reflected in the European Social Observatory (OSE) research activity during 2017, which addressed some of the issues that are at the very heart of the current policymaking agenda. As a result of this vibrant activity, the OSE maintained its position among the top 100 social policy think tanks worldwide (<sup>1</sup>), together with renowned institutions such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Brookings Institution.

We are happy to have kick-started several exciting new research projects in the course of 2017, examining the effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights; the impact of digitalisation on the content and quality of jobs in public services; measures taken by EU Member States related to work-life balance; and writing (for the 18th time) the annual 'state of play' of social policy in the EU.

Other projects that we continued developing from last year were the follow-up of EU level developments with an impact on health care systems; research on policies for an aged workforce in the EU; the International Digest for the *Revue Belge de Sécurité Sociale*; and the analysis of the social situation in Belgium.

We continued to cultivate our ties to European research networks, including through the Commission-funded European Social Policy Network (ESPN): the OSE input in 2017 focused on the access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed, as well as on pension adequacy. Research on social investment in human rights and capabilities continued in the context of the RE-InVEST (Horizon 2020) project. We crowned the finalization of the Commission-funded PROWELFARE project with the publication of an

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<sup>1</sup>. Ranking developed by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania.

edited volume which examines the risks, opportunities and social partner involvement in occupational welfare in Europe.

As a result, the OSE's publication record in the past year is again rather impressive. All in all, the nine OSE researchers have been engaged in 12 research projects in 2017, which resulted in 30 publications. The OSE Working Papers published in 2017 have been downloaded more than 2,400 times. All OSE Working Papers taken together (including previously published papers) have been downloaded more than 8,000 times during 2017.

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 trade unions and employers' organisations) and other social stakeholders such as European non-governmental organisations (NGOs):

- The organisation of conferences and seminars: seven events throughout 2017;
- The OSE website, which received on average 8,000 unique visitors every month throughout 2017;
- The OSE Flash News (over 1,460 subscribers in 2017) and the European Health Care News (over 1,190 subscribers) further enlarged our readership in Europe and beyond;
- The use of social media is a new feature in the OSE's disseminations strategy: the OSE Twitter account has well over 1,500 followers, nearly 1,000 persons follow us through LinkedIn;

This 2017 Activity report is organised as follows: Section 1 provides a short presentation of the OSE's goals, resources and organisational structure. Section 2 presents the OSE team in 2017 and describes each of the staff's main tasks and activities. Section 3 describes the projects carried out by the OSE during the past year. Section 4 presents a list of events (co)organised by the OSE during 2017. 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'). Finally, Section 7 shows the full list of publications to which OSE researchers contributed in 2017.

We have considerably strengthened the OSE's institutional capacity during the past year, through the geographical extension and institutional embedding of its governing bodies. Thus, we were happy to welcome Olivier Derruine (European Parliament, Group of the Greens), Petra Völkerer (Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK), Brussels office) and Thiébaud Weber (European Trade Union Confederation) to our Board of Directors. Anke Hassel (Institute of Economic and Social Research (WSI) of the Hans Böckler Foundation), Maria Helena André (Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) of the International Labour Organisation) and Ekaterina Ribarova (Institute for Social and Trade Union Research (ISTUR), Bulgaria) enhanced the OSE General Assembly.

The OSE team underwent several changes in 2017: Stéphanie Coster joined the research team in November 2017 to work on topics such as unemployment, social exclusion and job quality. Elodie Kibendo started working as a secretary, equally since November 2017. These new human resources bolstered our ability to scrutinize the new debates on the European social agenda. New research in 2018 will include the role of national and European trade unions in the EU's economic governance (INVOTUNES), social impact assessment of new EU initiatives (PPMI), the potential of social innovation, public sector trade union involvement in the European Semester (EFISTU), social inequalities in access to health care as well as

challenges in long-term care (ESPN) and last but not least the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

With the EPSR, the political agreement on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive and other recent initiatives, the EU arrived at a crossroads in the social field last year. The year 2018 will show whether the high hopes that have been created in 2017 will finally lead to high yields in EU social policymaking.

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

Bart Vanhercke,  
Director.

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

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. As was the case last year, the OSE was again ranked among the top 100 social policy think tanks worldwide by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania in 2017 <sup>(2)</sup>, together with renowned institutions such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Brookings Institution. The think tanks in this category provide 'superior innovative research and strategic analyses' on topics pertaining to social issues and challenges.

The OSE is a partner organisation in several European Research 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 union movement) and civil society organisations (including the Platform of European Social NGO's and the European Social Network). 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, as well as neighbouring countries;
- Conduct research, formulate policy proposals and produce training toolkits;
- Provide an ongoing platform for discussion for a wide range of stakeholders, especially trade union organisations;
- Widely disseminate the results of our reflections through the website, Newsletters, publications (incl. the annual 'Social Policy in the European Union: State of Play' and the OSE Working Papers), social media, short videos and events.

## 1.2 RESOURCES

The OSE consists of a pluralist, multidisciplinary and multilingual team of nine researchers and analysts, bolstered by a highly efficient administrative back office (four persons), six 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);

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<sup>2.</sup> McGann (2017) 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report.  
[http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=think\\_tanks](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=think_tanks)

- Are able to draw upon a broad-based network of public authorities, (academic and other) researchers, think tanks, European and national social partner representatives and other social stakeholders (especially members of the Social Platform);
- Have more than 20 years of expertise in organising both major conferences and smaller events – amongst other things, within the framework of European Framework Programmes (FP6 and 7; H2020) and other EU-funded research such as PROWELFARE and INVOTUNES.
- Can draw on in-house resources, which include:
  - o 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 [OSE Flash News](#);
  - o the Health Care [Newsletter](#) (in English, French and Dutch) provides regular summaries of current EU developments that might affect national health care systems;
  - o the Working Paper [Series](#) encompasses three different publications – ‘Research’, ‘Briefing’ and ‘Opinion’ papers – written by the OSE researchers as well as our Research Associates and outside scholars;
  - o 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;
  - o the LinkedIn page ([OSE Group](#), nearly 1,000 members) and [Twitter](#) account (@OSE\_be, well over 1,500 followers).

### 1.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The day-to-day management of the OSE lies in the hands of Bart Vanhercke and Françoise Verri. Bart Vanhercke 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). Françoise Verri, Director’s Assistant, conducts the administrative team as well as organisational, budgetary and financial issues and supports the Director for the call for tenders.

Altogether the nine 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; welfare systems and pensions; and governance (European Semester, European Pillar of Social Rights etc.). Each staff member’s golden paragraph can be found in Section 2, while more detailed profiles of all team members (scientific and administrative) 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. We have strengthened the OSE’s institutional capacity during the past year 2017 through the geographical extension and institutional embedding of its governing bodies. Thus, we were happy to welcome Olivier Derruine (Assistant, European Parliament), Petra Völkerer (Senior policy Officer, Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour, AK) and Thiébaud Weber (ETUC Confederal Secretary) to our Board of Directors. Anke Hassel (Academic Director of the WSI of the Hans Böckler Foundation), Maria Helena André (Director at ACTRAV, the International Labour Organisation) and Ekaterina Ribarova (Program Director, ISTUR, Confederation of the Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria) enhanced the OSE General Assembly.

The Scientific Advisory Board provides independent scientific advice from renowned scholars, for example in the context of the peer review of the OSE Working Paper Series and the selection of new researchers.

## 1.4 FUNDING

The diversity of the projects described in Section 3 below demonstrates that the OSE continues to be funded through a variety of sources, which include, in order of importance:

- Research contracts with and subsidies from Belgian federal and regional authorities, including notably (a) the longstanding collaboration with the Belgian national health insurance institute (NIHDI/INAMI/RIZIV); (b) wage subsidies from the Brussels regional employment office (ACTIRIS); and (c) the Dispense partielle de versement du précompte professionnel pour les chercheurs from the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BESLPO). Altogether these national resources represented around 65% of our funding in 2017;
- Contracts with European and international institutions: notably the European Commission, but also the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament: more than 19% of our funding;
- Contracts (especially with the European Trade Union Institute) and subsidies (notably the Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC/ACV) from European and Belgian trade union organisations: these amount to around 15% of the OSE budget in 2017;
- Other resources, including various academic collaborations and consultancy (just over 1% of the budget).

## 2. THE OSE STAFF: GOLDEN PARAGRAPHS

The OSE was made up of 13 staff members during 2017: nine researchers and four administrative staff. Five interns provided important additional human resources in terms of research assistance.

### 2.1 THE SCIENTIFIC TEAM

#### **Rita Baeten – Senior Policy Analyst – Health Care and European Integration**

Rita Baeten, Master in Social Sciences, focuses her OSE research activities (since 1999) on the impact of European integration on national healthcare systems and on their social character. Her research topics include themes such as EU economic governance and health systems; patient mobility in the EU; healthcare services in the internal market; and EU-level co-operation in the field of healthcare. Rita Baeten advises the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI) on EU policy developments with a potential impact on healthcare in Belgium and coordinated the scientific preparation and follow-up of several international and ministerial conferences on EU integration and health systems. She has been work leader for the OSE contribution to several projects financed by the European Commission under its Framework Programmes for Research. These include Re-Invest (2015-2019), ECAB (2010-2013) and 'Europe for patients" (2004-2007).

During 2017 Rita Baeten worked, amongst others, on the influence of EU on regulation of health professions and healthcare services (NIHDI contract), the RE-InVEST project and the preparation of European Social Policy Network (ESPN) work on long-term care for the elderly to take place in 2018.

#### **Cécile Barbier - Senior Researcher – Institutional Developments, Citizenship, Immigration**

Cécile Barbier is a Master in Political Science. Her research activities include institutional developments, citizenship and immigration. Since 1992, she has followed the institutional debates and the consequences of European integration from the federal point of view, including the revision of the European treaties and immigration policies. She is a keen observer of the EU's economic governance and the democratic legitimacy of the newly established framework, which includes a new yet contested



role played by the European Central Bank in containing the euro crisis. She has been teaching initiation to politics (European issues) at the Trade Union School, *Centrale nationale des employés* (CNE) since 2008. She has also done some work at UCL's Open Faculty for Economic and Social Sciences (FOPES). Since 1st January 2017, she is associated researcher at the University of Saint-Louis-Bruxelles, attached to the Institute for European Studies (IES).

**During 2017** she worked, amongst others on the 'European Digest - International Digest' for the quarterly Belgian Review for Social Security (RBSS). Since the second part of 2017, Cecile Barbier teaches 'Critical History of the European Integration' in the framework of the executive Master on European Communication and Policy at the IHECS Academy. She contributed with the 'key events' (chronology) chapter in the OSE/ETUI edited volume on 'Social Policy in the European Union: State of Play 2017'.

### **Dr. Denis Bouget – Senior Scientific Advisor – Social Protection Systems, Social Exclusion, Long-Term Care**

Denis Bouget, PhD in Economics at the University of Rennes (France), was scientific advisor at the OSE in 2017 as well as associate researcher at the European Trade Union Institute. Between 1981 and 2010 he has been lecturer and then professor at the University of Nantes (France), where he is now Emeritus. His main research topics are the long-term care for 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 (RECOWOE) between 2006 and 2011.

During 2017, he worked on a variety of issues – including access to social protection for the self-employed and non-standard workers – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). He was co-editor (with Bart Vanhercke and Sebastiano Sabato) of the OSE's flagship book (EN and FR) on 'Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017'. He also co-authored the Conclusions of this edited volume.

### **Dr. Stéphanie Coster - Researcher – Unemployment, social exclusion, job quality**

Stéphanie Coster is a new researcher at the European Social Observatory since November 2017. She holds a PhD in Economics and Management Sciences and has been a Eurofound National Correspondent since September 2017. She is also a lecturer at the *Université Saint Louis Bruxelles* (FUSL) and at the *Université Catholique de Louvain* (UCL). Her expertise is in the fields of industrial relations and human resource management. Her research interests are mainly related to social exclusion, precariousness, job quality, inequalities and unemployment.

Since November 2017, she has been involved in the project on the impact of digitalisation on job quality in the sectors of home care and public employment services in Europe for the European Public Services Union (EPSU), in collaboration with Ramón Peña-Casas and Dalila Ghailani. She is also contributing to the FPS Social Security project on social indicators and will enhance the ESPN team during 2018.

### **Dalila Ghailani – Senior Researcher – European Law, Employment and Work, Social protection, Gender Equality**

Dalila Ghailani, Master in Law and Advanced Master in European Business Law, has 17 years of experience in monitoring a range of issues related to the social dimension of the EU, including employment policies, social protection, fundamental rights, gender issues, and the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU. She has conducted several studies for EU institutions, including the European Commission (PROWELFARE projects; assessment of the capacity of welfare systems and private enterprises to encourage older workers to stay in the labour market; assessment of the EU legal framework for the coordination of social security schemes and the portability of supplementary pension

rights); the European Parliament (assessment of French and Belgian political parties' policies and strategies for gender balance in the European Parliament, 2015; assessment of the impact of the crisis on Fundamental Rights in Belgium, 2015) and the European Economic and Social Committee (assessing the feasibility of introducing a European instrument relating to non-contributory minimum income schemes for able-bodied persons of working age, 2013).

During 2017, she worked amongst others on policies for an aged workforce in Europe (PAWEU) and the ESPN Synthesis Report on access to social protection for the self-employed and non-standard workers. She also contributed to the ESPN input to the European Commission's Pensions Adequacy Report and the follow up of the proposed work-life balance Directive for ETUC. She has been involved in the project on the impact of digitalisation on job quality in the sectors of home care and public employment services in Europe for EPSU and in the research on the European Pillar of Social Rights (EESC). She also contributed to the OSE annual flagship book 'Social Policy in the European Union: state of play 2017' with a chapter on the migration crisis in the EU.

### **Ramón Peña-Casas - Senior Researcher - Poverty, Social Inclusion, Employment and work, industrial relations**

Ramón Peña-Casas, Master in Social Sciences, joined the OSE team in 2000. He has a background in sociology and extensive expertise in the field of socio-economic analysis gained during previous employment as researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the ULB as well as the Brussels' regional employment office. He has coordinated a many European and national projects on a range of different subjects. His various areas of expertise cover, in particular, the diagnosis and comparative analysis of cross-cutting socio-economic issues affecting the various aspects of the European Union's social dimension: poverty and social exclusion, social assistance and minimum income, quality of employment and work, in-work poverty, insecure employment, working conditions, active labour market policies and activation, flexicurity, restructuring, active ageing and corporate social responsibility. Ramón Peña-Casas is also versed into the development, quality and political use of statistical indicators in OMCs (including employment, social inclusion and pensions). Ramón Peña-Casas is permanent member of several experts groups, including the 'Belgian federal group on social indicators' and the 'Belgian Interdisciplinary Research Network on Poverty' (GIREP). He is also part of the Scientific Committee of the 'Observatoire Girondin de la Pauvreté et Précarité' (Bordeaux - France) and of the 'Belgian Platform on social inclusion'.

During 2017, he led the OSE contribution to an EU project on 'Policies for an aged workforce in Europe' (PAWEU). He is also leading a recurrent project on updating and improving the indicators used in the Belgian National Social Report and the National Reform Program (FPS Social Security). He also contributed to the ESPN input to the European Commission's 2018 Pensions Adequacy Report and to the project on the European Pillar of Social Rights (EESC). He co-authored a chapter, on challenges of active ageing in the EU, for the 'Social Policy in the European Union: State of play 2017' edited volume. He is leading an EU project for the European Public Services Union (EPSU) on the impact of digitalisation on job quality in the sectors of home care and public employment services in Europe.

### **Dr. Sebastiano Sabato - Researcher - European Integration, Policy Learning, Governance**

Sebastiano Sabato holds a PhD in Political Science at the *Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane* (SUM) in Florence with a doctoral thesis (2013) on "The Impact of the Open Method of Coordination on National Policies: an Analysis of the Peer Review meetings in the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion". 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 part-time post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Social and Political Science of the University of Milan and, in 2014-2015, he worked at the Department of Sociology of the Antwerp University. Since February 2014 he has been working as researcher on European Integration at the OSE and has the responsibility of monitoring funding opportunities. Since December 2017 he is co-editor of the OSE Working paper series. Currently, his research interests include EU socio-economic governance,

comparative social policy, social innovation, policy learning and transfer in EU social policy and interest groups.

During 2017 he worked on the involvement of the social partners and local public services in the European Semester (with the European Social Network), social investment, the European Pillar of Social Rights (with the EESC), the RE-InVEST project and social innovation (for PPMI). He has contributed to the annual book 'Social Policy in the European Union: State of Play 2017' as co-editor (together with Bart Vanhercke and Denis Bouget). He co-authored a chapter (with Bart Vanhercke) in this book on the European Pillar of Social Rights as well as the Conclusions (signed by the editors).

### **Dr. Slavina Spasova – Researcher – Social Protection, Social dialogue, Trade Unions, Pension reforms**

Slavina Spasova, PhD in Political Science (September 2015), is a researcher in the area of social protection at the OSE since January 2016 and a Research Associate at the *Centre d'étude de la vie politique* (CEVIPOL), *Université Libre de Bruxelles*. Her work has explored the transformation process of the Bulgarian trade unions since 1989 and their involvement in building social institutions through the mechanisms of international socialisation and 'usages of Europe'. Her research agenda focuses on various social protection and employment related subjects, including systemic pension reforms in Central and Eastern European countries, labour market reforms and social dialogue. Additionally, Slavina has been involved in projects carried out for the Norwegian government and the International Labor Organisation. She followed Belgian social developments for the social monitoring website « Planet Labor » since August 2015.

During 2017, she worked on a variety of issues – including social protection for non-standard workers and the self-employed – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). She was the lead researcher for the ESPN input into the European Commission's 2018 Pensions Adequacy Report (reviewing 35 country reports; writing of several draft sections of the PAR). She equally co-contributed with a chapter in the edited volume 'Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017' on the subject of work-life balance in the EU (with Denis Bouget and Chiara Saraceno).

### **Dr. Bart Vanhercke – Director and Senior Researcher - European Integration, Social Protection and Social Inclusion, Governance**

Bart Vanhercke, PhD in Social Science, has been Director at the European Social Observatory since 2010. He is therefore in charge of the broad research strategy, the internal organisation of the team, managing the budget with Françoise Verri, and overseeing the OSE communication strategy. His current research focuses on the social dimension of European economic governance (including the EU's economic surveillance of national healthcare systems) and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Earlier research experience dealt with the Europeanization of domestic social inclusion, health care and pensions policies through different EU policy instruments and the social challenges of EMU and EU enlargement.

Bart Vanhercke was appointed, for the academic year 2013-2014, Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of the Saint-Louis University (FUSL). In March 2016, he obtained his PhD (cum laude) at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam. He was appointed as Policy Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA Berlin) in November 2015. He was appointed associate academic staff at the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, KULeuven) in June 2016.

During 2017, he worked on a variety of issues – including social protection for non-standard workers and the self-employed – in the context of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN), of which he is Social Protection leader. He was the lead editor of the OSE's flagship book on 'Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017', together with Sebastiano Sabato and Denis Bouget. He also contributed with a chapter (with Sebastiano Sabato) and co-authored the book's Conclusions. He published in *the Journal of European Public Policy* (with Jonathan Zeitlin) as well as the 2017 Yearbook on 'Pauvreté en Belgique' (with Sebastiano Sabato). He also co-authored an OSE Working Paper (with Sebastiano Sabato and Slavina Spasova) on social partners' involvement in the European Semester.

## 2.2 THE OSE BACK OFFICE: THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

### **Benoît Malice - Web Assistant**

Benoit 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 Working 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 as well as the posting of registration forms.

### **Renaud Smoes – Webmaster**

Renaud Smoes manages the IT equipment and security, manages and updates the OSE site, project webpages and contact database. He analyses and implements online working solutions such as Basecamp and Google Drive, which have proved to be an essential tool for managing the constant flow of documents in the European Social Policy Network (ESPN). He manages the OSE Flash News and the ‘European Health Care News’ newsletter (html layout, sending out the letter, mailing list). His other tasks include events organisation (invitations, management of the subscriptions, welcoming, technical support) and generating graphic material for researchers, slides and visual aids for OSE events.

### **Françoise Verri - Director's Assistant**

Françoise Verri works with the OSE Director on calls for tender (e.g. drafting planning tables), manages the administrative team and the finances of the institution, 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, makes payments, is responsible for invoicing and VAT as well as for the organisation and practical coordination of books, papers, programmes and invitations, the revision of notes and reports and managing translations for the various publications. Finally, she draws up the minutes of the key meetings: the Board of directors, General Assembly, and monthly meetings of the research team.

### **Elodie Kibendo – Secretary**

Elodie Kibendo is secretary at the European Social Observatory since November 2017. She works with the administrative and the logistic team and has a support role. Her tasks consist in: the telephone reception, reports of administrative meetings, the reception of the mails, a part of the mailing service. She works and arranges documents with the researcher’s team. She also helps in the organisation of events and in the harmonisation of the OSE Working Paper Series. She is in charge of the management and update of the database of the OSE.

## 2.3 INTERNSHIPS

The OSE concluded internship agreements with the University of Milan as well as with Brigham Young University (Utah, United States). Roskilde University, the University of Amsterdam and the Universities of Florence have been sending students on a regular basis, while we regularly receive direct applications from individuals. As a result, Bachelor and Master students in political science, sociology, economy and law continuously contribute to the OSE research activities. For most OSE interns their stay at the OSE is a mandatory part of their curriculum, for which they receive a scholarship. In 2017, the OSE received five interns from University of Milan and Florence (IT), Brigham University (US), Roskilde University (DK) and the Free University of Brussels (BE) (see table 1).

The OSE provides these students with opportunities to network with top researchers and politicians in various fields, as well as (in case of an outstanding internship) with letters of recommendation that they can take to future job interviews. For many interns 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 employment and social fields. They contribute in the form of drafting minutes of events, qualitative research, editing work, interview transcriptions and translation. Intern's written pieces regularly appear in the final form of some of the OSE's publications, and are acknowledged as such (in several cases, interns have been recognised as co-authors).

**Table 1. OSE internships in 2017**

Name	Duration	Sending Institution
1. <b>Josefine Block</b>	15 September 2016 – 15 January 2017	Roskilde University
2. <b>Alice Perini</b>	6 February – 09 June 2017	University of Florence
3. <b>Shahini Viola</b>	3 April – 30 June 2017	University of Milan
4. <b>Jordana Cashman</b>	16 May – 27 July 2017	Brigham Young University
5. <b>Marcel Muraille</b>	November 2017 – 30 January 2018	Free University of Brussels

### 3. NUTS AND BOLTS: RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2017

This section provides a snapshot overview of the 11 research projects the OSE team managed in 2017. More details on each of them can be found on the Project page of the OSE website (in EN and FR).

In addition to these projects, the OSE, in collaboration with a network of experts (the PPMI group, RAND Europe and KOOP) was awarded a new Framework contract (2017-2020) with the European Commission for the provision of services related to the implementation of better regulation guidelines. The purpose of the multiple framework contracts is to provide access to services for assisting DG EMPL in implementing the Better Regulation Guidelines in the field of its activities. More specifically, these are services supporting DG EMPL on impact assessment, evaluation and monitoring. The framework contracts may also be used by other Commission services when the main focus of their studies is related to employment, social affairs, labour mobility and skills.

#### 3.1 THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2014 – 2018)

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. 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 LISER Research Institute (lead partner, based in Luxembourg), the independent research company APPLICA (Belgium) and the OSE. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Rita Baeten, Denis Bouget, Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas, Slavina Spasova** (lead researcher) and **Bart Vanhercke** (ESPN Social Protection leader).

### 3.2 POLICIES FOR AN AGED WORKFORCE IN THE EU (PAWEU), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015 – 2017)

In spite of the current strong emphasis in all EU countries on means to tackle youth unemployment, the participation of older individuals in the labour market remains a significant policy challenge. This is due to the interplay of the current recession, the ageing of the population and the need to control public welfare spending (pensions, unemployment benefits and social assistance). In this context, the OSE collaborated in a European Commission-funded project, called Policies for an Aged Workforce in the EU (PAWEU). The project was coordinated by the Fondazione G. Brodolini. Other partners were the Italian Social Security Institute and the Romanian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly. This project aimed at comparing and assessing the capacity of welfare systems and private enterprises to encourage older workers (50-69 years old) to stay in work as long as possible, while protecting them against unemployment and social exclusion risks. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas** (lead researcher) and **Slavina Spasova**.

### 3.3 SOCIAL POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: STATE OF PLAY 2017, EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (2016-2017)

The OSE was contracted by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) to conduct research, which resulted in the 18th edition of the joint edited volume. It features renowned academic scholars — Daniel Clegg, Amandine Crespy, Vivien Schmidt and Mario Telò — as well as OSE and ETUI contributors. Editors and contributors: **Bart Vanhercke, Sebastiano Sabato** and **Denis Bouget**. OSE researchers who contributed to the issue: **Rita Baeten, Cécile Barbier, Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas** and **Slavina Spasova**.

The 2017 volume of our book consists of two parts. The first part addresses what we call ‘high-level politics’. Chapter 1 provides the analytical framework for understanding the key dynamics at stake: integration, disintegration and differentiated integration. Chapter 2 deals with Brexit — arguably the key political development in 2016. Chapter 3 addresses the violation of the human rights of refugees. Chapter 4 engages with the European Pillar of Social Rights: a window of opportunity, probably leading to differentiated integration. The second part of the book addresses ‘day to day’ politics. Chapter 5 provides an assessment of key developments in the 2016 cycle of the European Semester. Chapter 6 engages with the ‘re-launched’ European Social Dialogue. Chapter 7 deals with recent EU initiatives seemingly promoting a transition from regulation to voluntary standards in health care. Chapter 8 discusses recent national policies supporting work-life balance, while chapter 9 provides a comparative view with regard to policies and practices targeted at older workers in Europe. The volume ends with a forward-looking reflection on the future of the EU in relation to the integration, disintegration and differentiated integration dynamics. The chronology summarises the key events of 2016 with regard to social and economic matters.

### 3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL SITUATION IN BELGIUM, FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE SOCIAL SECURITY (2014-2018)

The OSE and the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA, University of Leuven) continued conducting 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** (lead researcher) 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 the Crossroads Bank of Social Security.

### **3.5 REBUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, VALUE-BASED EUROPE OF SOLIDARITY AND TRUST THROUGH SOCIAL INVESTMENTS (RE-INVEST), EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015 - 2019)**

In 2013, as a response to rising inequalities, poverty and distrust in the EU, the European Commission launched a major endeavour to rebalance economic and social policies with the Social Investment Package (SIP). Funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme, the RE-InVEST project aims to strengthen the philosophical, institutional and empirical underpinnings of the SIP, based on social investment in human rights and capabilities. The project actively involves European citizens severely affected by the crisis in the co-construction of a more powerful and effective social investment agenda. The OSE contributes to this project by applying the model of social investment to public intervention in the health care sector and in the formulation of policy recommendations. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Rita Baeten** (lead researcher) and **Sebastiano Sabato**.

### **3.6 FOLLOW UP OF EU LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS WITH AN IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS, RIZIV/INAMI (2015-2018)**

Since 2002, the OSE collaborates 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. The 2017 activities included:

- Expert advice on EU policies with a potential impact on health care systems in general and the Belgian health care system in particular;
- The publication of a quarterly electronic newsletter on recent EU development with potential impact on national health care systems;
- The organisation of an international conference ‘Regulating health professions in a European perspective’;
- Research on: (a) Healthcare regulation as an obstacle to cross-border trade in services, (b) health professional mobility and human resources planning in healthcare.

OSE researchers involved in this project: **Rita Baeten** (lead researcher) and **Dalila Ghailani**.

### **3.7 INTERNATIONAL DIGEST: BELGIAN REVIEW FOR SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE SOCIAL SECURITY (2017 -2020)**

The OSE was awarded a new contract with the Belgian Federal Public Service Social Security with a view to writing the ‘International Digest’ for the quarterly Belgian Review for Social Security (RBSS/BTSZ). The digest will continue to provide a regular overview of international developments (EU, OECD, ILO etc.) that have a direct or indirect impact on social protection and social inclusion policies and debates. The RBSS/BTSZ is available online, in French and Dutch. OSE researcher involved in this project: **Cécile Barbier**.

### **3.8 THE IMPACT OF DIGITALISATION ON THE CONTENT AND QUALITY OF JOBS IN PUBLIC SERVICES, THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES (EPSU) (2017-2018)**

What is the concrete impact of the increased use of ICTs in public services on the content and quality of jobs? This is the central question of the research project that the OSE has just begun for the European Federation of Public Services (EPSU). After reviewing the literature and carrying out targeted interviews with sectorial EPSU delegates, the project will focus on reporting the perceptions of workers

themselves about the positive and negative effects of ICT on their work. The effects of digitalisation on the content of work and the organisation of tasks and, more generally, on job quality, are analysed in two specific sectors: home care and public employment services, in four European countries: France, United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. The first results will be presented at a public service congress in Berlin in December 2017, with the final report due in early 2018. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Dalila Ghailani, Stéphanie Coster** (since December 2017) and **Ramón Peña-Casas** (lead researcher).

### **3.9 EUROPEAN SEMESTER REVIEW: WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE? EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK (ESN) (2017)**

With inequality increasing across Europe and the EU not on track to achieve the Europe 2020 social objectives, the UK-based European Social Network (ESN) has again asked the OSE to provide scientific underpinning of its work on the European Semester. The focus was on the impact of austerity policies on public social services management and provision, territorial disparities and evidence-based policy-making. Policy areas covered included children's services, homelessness and housing exclusion, community care and de-institutionalization as well as services to immigrants and refugees. The OSE report provided the substance for ESN's proposals regarding the 2017 Country-specific Recommendations. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Sebastiano Sabato** (lead researcher) and **Bart Vanhercke**.

### **3.10 STUDY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS (EESC) (2017-2018)**

The study on 'How to implement key elements of the European pillar of social rights: what is needed to guarantee a positive social impact' will provide recommendations and proposals for the implementation of the future European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) to the Worker's Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). A particular attention is given to the ways in which social partners and civil society - in particular the EESC - could play an important role in terms of consultation and participation. The study will focus on the three following priority areas: Fair working conditions for all, Collective bargaining and Wages. OSE researchers involved in this project: **Sebastiano Sabato** (lead researcher), **Dalila Ghailani, Ramón Peña-Casas, Slavina Spasova** and **Bart Vanhercke**.

### **3.11 OVERVIEW OF MEASURES RELATED TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (ETUI - ETUC) (2017)**

As part of the follow-up to the European Commission 'New Start' initiative on work-life balance challenges faced by working parents and carers, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) asked the European Social Observatory to provide a brief overview of measures related to work-life balance in the 28 European Union Member States. The focus is put on parental leave and carers' leave as well as flexible working arrangements schemes within the EU. OSE researcher involved in this project: **Dalila Ghailani**.



## 4. THE PLACES TO BE: OSE EVENTS IN SHORT

This section describes the seven events that have been (co-)organised by the OSE throughout 2017. 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 5 ('Up close and Personal').

### **26/01/2017 - Europeanised or European? Representation by civil society organisations in EU policy-making – Brussels - OSE-ETUI lunch Debate**

**Keynote speaker:** Dr. Sandra Kröger, Senior Lecturer, University of Exeter. **Panel discussion:** Gabriele Bischoff, President of the Workers' Group, EESC, Sian Jones, Policy Coordinator, European Anti-Poverty Network, Roman Haken, Member of the EESC (Group III). **Chair:** Bart Vanhercke, OSE Director

The monograph *Europeanised or European? Representation by civil society organisations in EU policy-making (2016)* by Sandra Kröger looks at how agricultural, environmental and anti-poverty organisations engage with EU affairs; the ways they conceive of interest representation and the strategies they choose to represent their constituencies across regional, national and European levels of governance; and how being engaged with the EU affects them, focusing throughout on the perspectives that actors working in these organisations have on the above issues.

During this OSE Lunchtime Session, Sandra Kröger focused on three questions: To what degree are civil society organisations Europeanized? Who are they addressing when they engage in political representation in EU affairs and with which strategies? And what are the incentives and disincentives for civil society organisation to become engaged with EU policy-making? Gabriele Bischoff, Sian Jones and Roman Haken provided critical feedback, after which there was ample time for discussion and questions from the audience.

### **27/02/2017 – Presentation-debate – Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2016 – Brussels**

To mark the 17th edition of this flagship publication, the European Social Observatory and the European Trade Union Institute held a presentation-debate hosted by the Workers' Group - Group II of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

**Keynote Speakers:** Gabriele Bischoff, EESC - Denis Bouget, OSE - Sofia Fernandes, Jacques Delors Institute. **Panel discussion:** Maxime Cerutti, BusinessEurope - Esther Lynch, ETUI - Ruth Owen, FEANTSA - Ruth Paserman, Cabinet of European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen - David Natali, St. Anna School of Advanced Studies - Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, University of Oxford - Philippe Pochet, ETUI - **Bart Vanhercke**, OSE.

The book reports on recent EU and national social policymaking, with contributions from leading scholars pointing to a 'crisis', the best word to characterize 2015. Tensions in the EU reached an unprecedented level: the migration crisis showed the EU the limits of its decision-making capacity, economic weakness continued to prevail, austerity policies and the badly handled socioeconomic Greek crisis turned populations against the EU – and then came the Brexit vote.

## **05/05/2017 – Policies for an aged workforce in Europe (PAWEU) – Stakeholder workshop – Brussels – PAWEU Workshop**

**Chairs:** **Bart Vanhercke**, European Social Observatory - Antonio De Luca, Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale. **Speakers:** **Dalila Ghailani**, European Social Observatory - Michele Raitano, University of Roma La Sapienza - Greet Vermeeylen, Eurofound - Asghar Zaidi, International Social Policy University of Southampton and London School of Economics- **Ramón Peña-Casas**, European Social Observatory - Rebekah Smith, BusinessEurope - Ettore Marchetti, DG EMPL – Laure Batut, European Economic and Social Committee.

In spite of the current strong emphasis in all European countries on means to tackle youth unemployment, the participation of older individuals in the labour market remains a significant policy challenge. The OSE and the Fondazione Brodolini (IT) are involved in a European Commission-funded project on 'Policies for an Aged Workforce in the EU' (PAWEU). This closed stakeholder workshop presented an opportunity for scholars and EU stakeholders to discuss policies and practices allowing older persons to stay longer in employment or re-join the labour force if they have left it.

## **08/06/2017 – Panel Debate – Should the accounting rules of the Stability and Growth Pact on public investment be modified? – Brussels**

**Keynote Speaker:** Ivo Belet, Member of the European Parliament. **Panel discussion:** **Bart Vanhercke**, European Social Observatory - Luc Van Meensel, National Bank of Belgium - Mathieu Meaulle, European Trade Union Confederation.

The German Trade Union Confederation – DGB, the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions – ACV/CSC, the European Christian Democratic Workers – EUCDW, the European Social Observatory – OSE and the Robert Schuman Foundation – RSF.

This panel debate discussed the pros and cons of a new 'EMU-fit' golden rule, introduced via minor changes in the SGP. Serious consideration should be given to the way public investment is handled, and to making its treatment more favourable in order to enable the funding of much needed investments in sustainable public infrastructure. Relying entirely on Public Private Partnerships for these challenges – as does the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – is not a viable way forward.

## **05/09/2017 – Pensions for workers in arduous jobs – Brussels – OSE-ETUI Lunch debate**

**Keynote Speakers:** **Slavina Spasova**, Researcher European Social Observatory and **Bart Vanhercke**, Director European Social Observatory. **Panel discussion:** Philippe Pochet, General director ETUI - Celien Vanmoerkerke, Pension expert ABVV/FGTB - Marie-Noëlle Vanderhoven, Senior adviser dealing with pensions issues at FEB-VBO - Valdis Zagorskis, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission.

Presentation of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) Thematic [Report](#) on Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs and discussion with a variety of researchers and stakeholders.

## **17/11/2017 – Regulating health professions in a European perspective – Brussels**

**Keynote Speakers:** Koen Lenaerts, President of the Court of Justice of the European Union - Gaetan Lafortune, Division de la Santé de l'OCDE - Brigitte Velkeniers, President of the Federal Planning Committee Medical Supply, Belgium - Martin Mc Kee, Professor of European Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom - Kimberley van den Bergen, Consultant Health, Ecorys, Netherlands - Tom Goffin, Project manager for the reform of health professions regulation - Maggie De Block, Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health, Belgium.

**Panel discussion:** **Bart Vanhercke**, Director European Social Observatory - Sarada Das, Comité permanent des médecins européens - Janke de Groot, Institut néerlandais de recherche sur les soins de santé - Bernhard Zaglmayer, DG Marché intérieur - Herwig Ostermann, Institut autrichien de la santé publique - Willy Palm, Senior Advisor, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Belgium - Michel Devriese, Past-President, Belgian Society for Dental Medicine, Belgium - Kitty Mohan, President-Elect, European Junior Doctors, United Kingdom - Herwig Ostermann, Executive Director, Austrian Public Health Institute, Austria - Brigitte Velkeniers, President of the Federal Planning Committee Medical Supply, Belgium - Susan Williams, Senior International Manager, Royal College of Nursing, United Kingdom.

On the occasion of a major reform of the regulatory framework for health professions in Belgium, this conference looked at the experience of other EU Member States and explore in more detail how EU integration affects the organisation and regulation of health professions. Participants discussed the impact of professional mobility on national workforce planning policies and how Member States can ensure quality and patient safety in a European and international context. This event was organised by the Belgian National Institute of Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI), the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, the European Observatory on Health systems and Policies and the OSE.

## **12/12/2017 – Presentation-Debate - Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017 - Brussels**

**Keynote Speakers:** **Bart Vanhercke**, Director European Social Observatory - Gabriele Bischoff, President, Worker's Group (II), European Economic and Social Committee, EES - Philippe Pochet, General Director, European Trade Union Institute, ETUI - **Sebastiano Sabato**, Researcher, OSE - Amandine Crespy, Associate Professor, Institute for European Studies (IEE) and Centre d'Etude de la Vie Politique (CEVIPOL), ULB. **Panel discussion:** Mario Telò, Emeritus President, Institut d'études européennes, ULB - Maxime Cerutti, Director, Social affairs Department, BusinessEurope - Katja Lehto-Komulainen, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation, ETUC - Kelig Puyet, Director, Platform of European Social NGOs - Jeroen Jutte, Head of Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission.

To mark the 18th edition of this flagship publication, the European Social Observatory and the European Trade Union Institute held a presentation-debate hosted by the Workers' Group - Group II of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

## 5. UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL: TEAM MEMBER ACTIVITIES

### **20/01/2017 - Working Group on Aging issues, Social Protection Committee (SPC) –Brussels**

Slavina Spasova and Bart Vanhercke, presentation of the Synthesis report ‘Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs’.

### **2-3/03/2017 - The resilience of national health systems in the face of EU-wide austerity? - Central European University - Budapest**

Rita Baeten did a presentation in a scientific workshop on « *Austerity and the Restructuring of Public Services* », during a session on « *The resilience of national health systems in the face of EU-wide austerity ?* ».

### **21/03/2017 - Social Policy in the European Union: Differentiation against Disintegration – Brussels**

Bart Vanhercke presented the ‘Social Policy in the EU; State of play 2016’ book to the Labour Market Observatory of the European Economic and Social Committee.

### **24/03/2017 - Patiënten zonder grenzen, Barrières wegwerken in de Benelux - Parlement Benelux - La Haye**

Opening speech by Rita Baeten during the plenary meeting of the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council.

### **29/03/2017 - Constitutional challenges in the EMU: the New Instruments of European Economic Governance – Brussels**

Cécile Barbier intervened in the Conference co-organised by the Centre for European Law and the Perelman Centre for Legal Philosophy of the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles.

### **4/05/2017 - Working Group on Aging (WGA) issues, Social Protection Committee - Brussels**

Slavina Spasova and Bart Vanhercke, presentation of the Synthesis report ‘Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed in Europe’ to the SPC.

### **11-12/05/2017: EU’s Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) Network Meeting, La Valetta - Malta**

Slavina Spasova and Bart Vanhercke, presentation of the ESPN Synthesis report ‘Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed in Europe’.

### **23/05/2017 Towards a European Pillar of Social Rights – Brussels**

Bart Vanhercke presented ‘food for thought’ about the European Pillar of Social Rights at the ‘Groupe de Travail Europe’ of the ACV/CSC.

### **30/05/2017 - PAWEU Final Conference – Rome**

Dalila Ghailani presented the employment policies and social protection reforms impacting older workers in the framework of the PAWEU project.

### **6/06/2017 - European Semester and single market legislations – European Parliament – Brussels**

Rita Baeten presented on at the conference « *Business and Health: a dangerous relationship! Commercialisation and privatisation of Health accross Europe* », at the invitation of Philippe Lamberts, Greens/EFA, in cooperation with the European Network against Commercialisation of Health.

**8/06/2017 – Panel Debate – Should the accounting rules of the Stability and Growth Pact on public investment be modified? – Brussels**

Bart Vanhercke moderated this panel debate in the European Parliament.

**9/06/2017 - séminaire « Existe-t-il un futur pour le travail peu qualifié en Europe ? », séminaire co-organisé par le Comité Européen de Coordination (CEC) et le Comité Economique et Social Européen – Brussels**

Ramón Peña-Casas presented the issue of job quality of low skilled workers in Europe during this seminar.

**12/06/2017 - OECD Practice workshop on the future of social protection – Berlin**

Slavina Spasova did a presentation of the Synthesis report ‘Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed in Europe’.

**3-5/07/2017 - 5th Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network, International Labour Office (ILO) – Geneva**

Slavina Spasova and Dalila Ghailani, presentation of the paper ‘Access to social protection for the self-employed: are insurance-based social schemes the Achilles' heel for the self-employed?’.

**6/09/2017 - ETUC Workshop on social protection for self-employed workers - Paris**

Slavina Spasova and Dalila Ghailani, presentation of the Synthesis report ‘Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed in Europe’.

**11/09/2017 – Meeting of the European Social Network’s (ESN) Reference group on the European Semester – Brussels**

Sebastiano Sabato and Bart Vanhercke contributed to the meeting by presenting the findings of a cross-country analysis (2017) and a three-year analysis (2015-2017) on the involvement of local public social services in the European Semester.

**14-16/09/2017 - Convegno delle Societa’ Italiana di Scienze Politiche (SISP) (Annual conference of the Italian Society for Political Sciences) – Urbino**

Sebastiano Sabato presented the paper ‘Social partners’ multi-level involvement in the European Semester’ (written with Bart Vanhercke and Slavina Spasova).

**14-16/09/2017 - 15th ESPAnet Europe Conference – Lisbon**

Slavina Spasova and Dalila Ghailani, presentation of the paper ‘Access to social protection for the self-employed: determined by welfare state regimes?’ (co-authored by Spasova, S., Ghailani, D., Bouget D. and Vanhercke, B.).

**20/09/2017 - Beoordeling van de evenredigheid van nieuwe reglementering van beroepen in de gezondheidszorg – Vlewa – Brussels**

Rita Baeten presented during a training session on EU decision-making organised by the Liaison agency Flanders-Europe (Vlewa).

**26/09/2017 - ESIP Pension Committee meeting – Brussels**

Bart Vanhercke and Sebastiano Sabato presented the key research findings of the EU-funded project on ‘Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe: the Changing Role of Social Partners’ (PROWELFARE) on the occasion of the ESIP Pension Committee meeting.

**09/10/2017- Healthcare regulation as an obstacle to cross-border trade in services – NIC-Brussels**

Presentation and discussion by Rita Baeten during the *Collège intermutualiste national* (CIN) Europe.

**09/10/2017 - ENLIGHTEN Final Forum: ‘Learning the lessons from the fast-burning crisis & challenging the policy blindspots feeding the slow-burning crises’ – Brussels**

Bart Vanhercke participated in a panel discussion on “The Sustainability of European Semester Governance: The devil is in the detail” (with Amandine Crespy and Romana Coman).

**18/10/2017 - Healthcare regulation: an obstacle to cross-border trade in services – Parlement européen – Brussels**

Opening speech by Rita Baeten during the event on « Economics vs Health? EU Proportionality Test for Health Professions », at the invitation of the EPP and ALDE Groups in the European Parliament and organised by the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the Council of European Dentists (CED) and The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU).

**06/11/2017 - The Social Dimension of the EU: Where Are We Heading? Nordic Round Table Discussion – Helsinki**

Bart Vanhercke acted as a keynote speaker to this event, organised by the future Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union with a contribution on “The development of EU social policy within the European Semester”.

**24 /11/2017 - Final conference of the EU project ‘Resources on the European socio-economic model’ (RESuME) – Luxembourg**

Sebastiano Sabato gave a speech on ‘Competitiveness and the Welfare State’.

**28/11/2017 - Challenges for health care in Europe – EPSU – Brussels**

Rita Baeten - Reflexions proposed during the launch of the book ‘*Building the European Public Service Unions, the history of EPSU from 1978 to 2016*’» authored by Carola Fischbach-Pyttel.

**08/12/2017 Midi de l’Europe : « La nouvelle gouvernance économique devant ses juges. Réflexions à partir de l’arrêt de la Cour Constitutionnelle du 28 avril 2016” – Brussels**

Cecile Barbier moderated this panel debate (with Matthias El Berhoumi, Louise Fromont and Etienne Lebeau) at the Institut d’études européennes of the Université Saint-Louis.

**12/12/2017 - Vers l’Europe sociale ? Défis et pistes. Conférence-débat du 14 décembre 2017, LISER – Esch/Belval**

Bart Vanhercke intervened in a panel discussion on « *Débats et réflexions autour du concept d’Europe sociale, des défis représentés et des pistes pour y parvenir* ».

**21/12/2017 - Réglementation des services de santé; un obstacle au commerce transfrontalier des services ? – Federal Public Service Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment – Brussels**

Rita Baeten shared her views during a « lunch and learning » session at the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment.

## 6. OUTPUT DATA: THE OSE'S REACH

### 6.1 PUBLICATIONS

As illustrated in Table 2, the OSE team has produced 30 publications in 2017. This number includes 16 book chapters, 4 journal articles, as well as 3 books/edited volumes, 3 papers and 2 reports. In addition, 2 digests have been written. The details of these OSE publications are given in Section 7 below.

**Table 2. Type and number of OSE publications in 2016**

Type of publication	Number
Articles	4
Papers	3
Reports	2
Book chapters	16
Digest, book review, opinion	2
Edited Volumes/books	3
<b>Total</b>	30

Since 2012, OSE researcher's publications have been cited well over 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 largely 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 publications, as there is a two-month lag between publication and appearance on Google Scholar. Most importantly, such a citation tool obviously obscures 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. some of the deliverables written for the European institutions) are published without the author's name.

### 6.2 THE OSE WEBSITE: STRUCTURE AND VISITORS

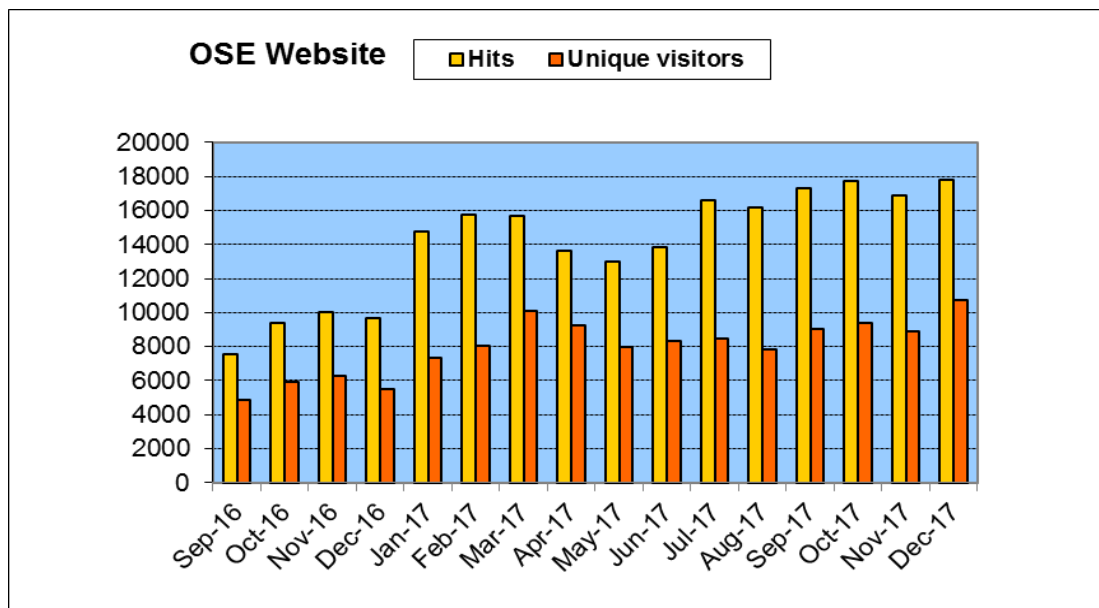
The OSE website, available in [English](#) and [French](#), and it is structured as follows:

- 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 this page;

- Many OSE publications can be accessed through the ‘[Publications](#)’ page, which provides a chronological list of published works by present and past OSE researchers, including the OSE Working 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 ‘project’ page, interested readers can find current and past projects the OSE team participated in with links to key documents and partners in OSE research;
- Finally, the ‘Links’ page is a tool for additional research, as it compiles an extensive list of various NGOs, institutions, organisations, research fields, etc.

As illustrated in Graph 1 and Table 3, the total number of hits on the OSE website varied between 13,000 and 17,800 hits per month in 2017. The number of unique visitors – which are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site – ranges between 7,300 and 10,700 visitors per month: on average, more than 8,000 unique visitors came to visit every month. Put differently: the OSE website attracted on average 280 unique visitors per day (including weekends) throughout 2017, ranging between 235 and 345 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 Flash News publication or new OSE event. 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 2018.



**Table 3: Traffic on the OSE website**

<i>Month</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Unique Visitors</i>
January 2017	14,761	7,308
February 2017	15,723	8,043
March 2017	15,678	10,105
April 2017	13,661	9,263
May 2017	13,000	8,000
June 2017	13,850	8,350
July 2017	16,630	8,460
August 2017	16,190	7,859
September 2017	17,286	9,049
October 2017	17,700	9,400
November 2017	16,900	8,900
December 2017	17,800	10,700
<b>Average</b>	<b>15,764.9</b>	<b>8,786.4</b>

### 6.3 OSE PAPER SERIES: TOPICS AND DOWNLOADS

Taken together, the OSE Paper Series published in 2017 have been downloaded more than **2,400** times (see Table 5).

**Table 4. OSE Working Papers issued in 2017: downloads from Website**

	<i>Number of downloads</i>
Mapelli, L. (2017), 'The Development and Determinants of 'Occupational Welfare' in the Recalibration of European Welfare Regimes: A Comparative Perspective', Working Paper 2WEL 1/2017, Torino/Brussels: Centro Einaudi and European Social Observatory, November 2017, 29p.	587
Baeten R. (2017), Was the exclusion of health care from the Services Directive a pyrrhic victory? A proportionality test on regulation of health professions. OSE Paper Series, Opinion Paper No.18, April 2017, 25p.	980
Sabato S. and Vanhercke B. with Spasova S. (2017), Listened to, but not heard ? Social partners' multilevel involvement in the European Semester OSE Paper Series, Research Paper No.35, March 2017, 46p.	824
Keune M. (2017), Trade unions and the occupational pension alternative: opportunity or threat? OSE Paper Series, Research Paper No.34, January 2017, 18p.	255
Natali D., Sabato S. and Mapelli L. with Vanhercke B. (2017), Governing occupational pensions and unemployment benefits: the state, the market and the social partners in-between? OSE Paper Series, Research Paper No.33, January 2017, 31p.	360

If considering all the Working papers of the [Series](#), the number of downloads during 2017 exceeds 8,000. This figure includes downloads of previously published papers in 2017 (the Series started at the end of 2009). This data indicates that older OSE Papers **continue to be downloaded** in significant numbers in the years after they have been published.

Another indication of the OSE's reach is dissemination of the **ESPN Synthesis Reports** to which the OSE team actively contributes – mostly as (lead) authors – for all issues concerning the broad area of 'Social Protection'. Synthesis reports have been brought to the attention of the Social Protection Committee (In-Depth Reviews-IDR), the Working Group on Ageing of the SPC, the Indicators Subgroup of the SPC, MISSOC meeting, several EU Presidency conferences, the ETUC, European NGO's etc. Synthesis Reports are also featured in the 'Social Europe e-newsletter' (DG EMPL website), as 'Social Developments' News (DG EMPL website), on the OSE and ESPN Web pages, through social media (incl. the ESPN ResearchGate page) etc.

This has resulted in impressive download figures of these Synthesis reports (in bold, data provided by the European Commission, March 2018):

- Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed: 2,493 (Spasova S, Bouget D., Ghailani, D. and Vanhercke B., April 2017)
- 'Retirement regimes for workers in arduous or hazardous jobs in Europe': 1,797 downloads (Natali D., Spasova S. and Vanhercke B., 2016)
- Work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives: 3,191 downloads (Bouget D., Spasova S. and Vanhercke B., 2016)
- Integrated support for the long-term unemployed in Europe: 3,036 downloads (Bouget, D. Frazer H., Marlier E., Peña-Casas R. and Vanhercke B., 2015)
- Social Investment in Europe: 11,249 downloads (Bouget D, Frazer H., Marlier E., Sabato S. and Vanhercke B., 2015).

In addition, it should be noted that ESPN Flash Reports (for which the OSE co-manages the quality control) have been downloaded more than **100,000** times in total (data provided by the European Commission, March 2018).

#### 6.4 OSE NEWSLETTERS

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 over 1,200 for the Health Newsletter (published in three languages) and more than 1,460 for the OSE Newsletter, which was renamed in 2016: '**OSE Flash News**' (see Table 6). Crucially, we have chosen to work with an 'opt-in registration system' for both. This means that the newsletter and Flash News are only sent to persons who decide to subscribe after they received an invitation to do so by e-mail.

The OSE Flash News readership is fairly gender balanced and is located in more than 32 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 organisations. Other Flash News 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: 2017 readership**

	Number of subscribers (opt-in)
OSE Flash News	1,465
European Health Care News	1,196

## 7. FOOD FOR THOUGHT: OSE PUBLICATIONS IN 2017

Baeten R. (2017) 'New draft EU Directive submits the regulation of health professions to a proportionality test', *Eurohealth*, 23 (2), pp. 24-27.

Baeten R. (2017) 'Healthcare regulation: an obstacle to cross-border trade in services? On the muffled application of the EU Single Market Strategy and CETA.' In Vanhercke B., Sabato, S. and Bouget, D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), pp. 133-154.

Baeten R. (2017) 'La réglementation des soins de santé : obstacle au commerce transfrontalier des services ?' In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (eds.) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Bruxelles, Observatoire social européen et Institut syndical européen, pp. 145-169.

Baeten R. (2017) 'Was the exclusion of health care from the Services Directive a pyrrhic victory? A proportionality test on regulation of health professions', *OSE Paper Series, Opinion Paper n°18, avril*, Brussels, European Social Observatory (OSE), 25p.

Barbier C. (2017) 'Digest européen – Digest International', *Revue belge de sécurité sociale*, 16(3) (mis en ligne novembre 2017).

Barbier C. (2017) 'Digest européen – Digest International', *Revue belge de sécurité sociale*, 16(2) (mis en ligne mars 2017).

Barbier C. (2017) 'The European Union in 2016: key event', In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), pp. 215-230.

Barbier C. (2017) 'L'Union européenne en 2016 : les faits marquants', in Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (eds.) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Bruxelles, Observatoire social européen (OSE) et Institut syndical européen (ETU), pp. 235-251.

Bouget D., Saraceno C. and Spasova S. (2017) 'Towards new work-life balance policies for those caring for dependent relatives?' In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), pp. 73-93.

Bouget D., Saraceno C. and Spasova S. (2017) 'Vers de nouvelles politiques de conciliation entre vie professionnelle et vie personnelle pour les aidants de parents dépendants ?' In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (eds.) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Bruxelles, Observatoire social européen (OSE) et Institut syndical européen (ETUI), pp. 171-197.

Ghailani D. (2017) 'Europe and the migration crisis: migrants' rights sacrificed on the altar of security?' In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), pp. 51-66.

Ghailani D. (2017) 'L'Europe face à la crise migratoire : les droits des migrants sacrifiés sur l'autel de la sécurité ?' In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (eds.) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Bruxelles, Observatoire social européen (OSE) et Institut syndical européen (ETUI), pp. 53-75.

Natali D. (2017) '*The new pension mix in Europe: Recent reforms, their distributional effects and political dynamics*', Brussels, Peter Lang, 298p.

Natali D., Sabato S., Mapelli L. and Vanhercke B. (2017) 'Governing occupational pensions and unemployment benefits: the state, the market and the social partners in-between?', *OSE Working Paper Series, Research Paper No.33*, Brussels, European Social Observatory (OSE).

Peña-Casas R. (2017) '*Seminar report: Is there a future for low skilled work in Europe?*', Brussels.

Peña-Casas R. (2017) 'An ageing active population in Europe: challenges, policies and practices', In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Social Observatory (OSE) and European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), pp. 181-193.

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Sabato S., Vanhercke B. and Verschraegen G. (2017) 'Connecting entrepreneurship with policy experimentation? The EU framework for social innovation', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 30 (2), pp. 147-167.

Sabato S. and Vanhercke B. (2017) 'Towards a European Pillar of Social Rights: from a preliminary outline to a Commission Recommendation', In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*, Brussels, European Social Observatory (OSE) and European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), pp. 73-93.

Sabato S. and Vanhercke B. (2017) 'Le socle européen des droits sociaux : d'une première ébauche à une Recommandation de la Commission Européenne', In Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (eds.) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Bruxelles, Observatoire social européen et Institut syndical européen, pp. 77- 103.

Sabato S., Vanhercke B. and Spasova S. (2017) 'Listened to, but not heard? Social partners' multilevel involvement in the European Semester', *OSE Working Paper Series, Research Paper No.35*. European Social Observatory, Brussels, 46 p.

Sabato S. (2017), 'Policy learning in EU Open Coordination Processes: the case of peer reviews', *Rivista Italiana di Politiche Pubbliche*, 2/2017, pp. 221 -248.

Spasova S., Bouget D., Ghailani D. and Vanhercke B. (2017), *Access to social protection for people working on non-standard contracts and as self-employed in Europe. A study of national policies*, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels, European Commission, 100 p.

Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (eds.) (2017a) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2017*. European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), Brussels, 237 p.

Vanhercke B., Sabato S. et Bouget D. (dir.) (2017a) *Bilan social de l'Union européenne 2017*, Observatoire social européen (OSE) et Institut syndical européen (ETUI), Bruxelles, 259 p.

Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (2017b) '*Conclusions. Social policy in the EU: high hopes but low yields*', in Vanhercke B., Sabato S. and Bouget D. (dir.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play*

2017. European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), Brussels, pp. 201-208.

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Vanhercke B. en Sabato S. (2017) 'De Europese Pijler van Sociale Rechten: een nieuwe kans voor de strijd tegen armoede en sociale uitsluiting?', in Lahaye W., Pannecoucke I., Vranken J. en Van Rossem R. (eds), *Armoede in België - Jaarboek 2017*, Hoofdstuk 10.

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