



European Foundation  
for the Improvement  
of Living and Working  
Conditions

The tripartite EU Agency providing knowledge  
to assist in the development of better social,  
employment and work-related policies

## *Towards a more inclusive European Semester*

**“Involvement of national social partners in the European semester”**

**EESC- European Semester Group**

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# Outline

**1** Objectives, scope

**2** Involvement of the SPs in reforms

**3** Involvement in the elaboration of the NRP

**4** Remarks

# Involvement of the SPs in employment and social policy-making: objectives, scope

The EU semester as a whole cycle:

1. ... in the design and implementation of employment, social and, where relevant, economic reforms and policies, either as a consequence of CSRs or following national dynamics
2. ... in the elaboration of the National Reform Programmes

Scope:

- General assessment covering 28 MS + specific in-depth review of 7 countries (EMCO selected)
- Focus on 2018, although relevant info in 2017

# Work method

Collecting views from social partners and government reps. Own assessment provided by the Eurofound national correspondents

141 replies from:

- Employers' organisations (44);
- Trade unions (58);
- Governments (35);
- EU Semester Officers (4)

Complementary information:  
Eurofound Annual Review  
of Working Life 2017



## **2. Involvement of the social partners in the design and implementation of reforms**

# Connection to national social dialogue: involvement of SPs in specific reforms

Main fields of reforms	Linked to CSRs 2017-18	Not linked to CSRs
Pensions reform, early retirement, financial sustainability of pensions	CZ, DE, HR, IE, LT, LU, NL, PL, SI	CY, MT
Taxation, labour costs, competitiveness	FI, FR, LT, LU, LV, SI, SK	AT, CZ
Employment policies	BG, CY, DE, LU, PT	DK, ES, LT, MT, SE
VET, life-long learning, training and apprenticeship	FR, LV, SI, UK	CZ, DK, NL
Minimum wage setting, low wage	AT, BG, PT	ES, MT
Labour market participation	BG, DE, EE, HR, IE, NL, PT, SI, SK, SE	AT, DK, EL, ES
Industrial relations, collective bargaining	RO	AT, EL, PT, SE

# Social partners not involved in relevant reforms

Main fields of reforms	Linked to CSRs	Not linked
Pensions reform, early retirement	RO	ES, IT
Taxation, labour costs	HU	IT,
Employment policies		AT, ES, IT
VET, life-long learning, training and apprenticeship	CY	
Minimum wage setting	RO	
Labour market participation	EL, HU	AT
Industrial relations, collective bargaining	EL	
Social protection and social welfare, social benefits, unemployment subsidies	RO	ES*, IT, PL

# What has changed in the involvement of social partners since 2017

Involvement in a context of effective SD practices



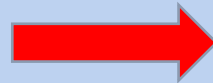
CY, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, IE, LU, MT, NL, SK, SE

Involvement shows some SD gaps



EL, HR, IT, LT, UK

Partial improvement



BG, EE, ES, LV, PT, SI

Emerging concerns reported by SPs



AT, BE, PL

SPs report ineffective involvement



HU, RO

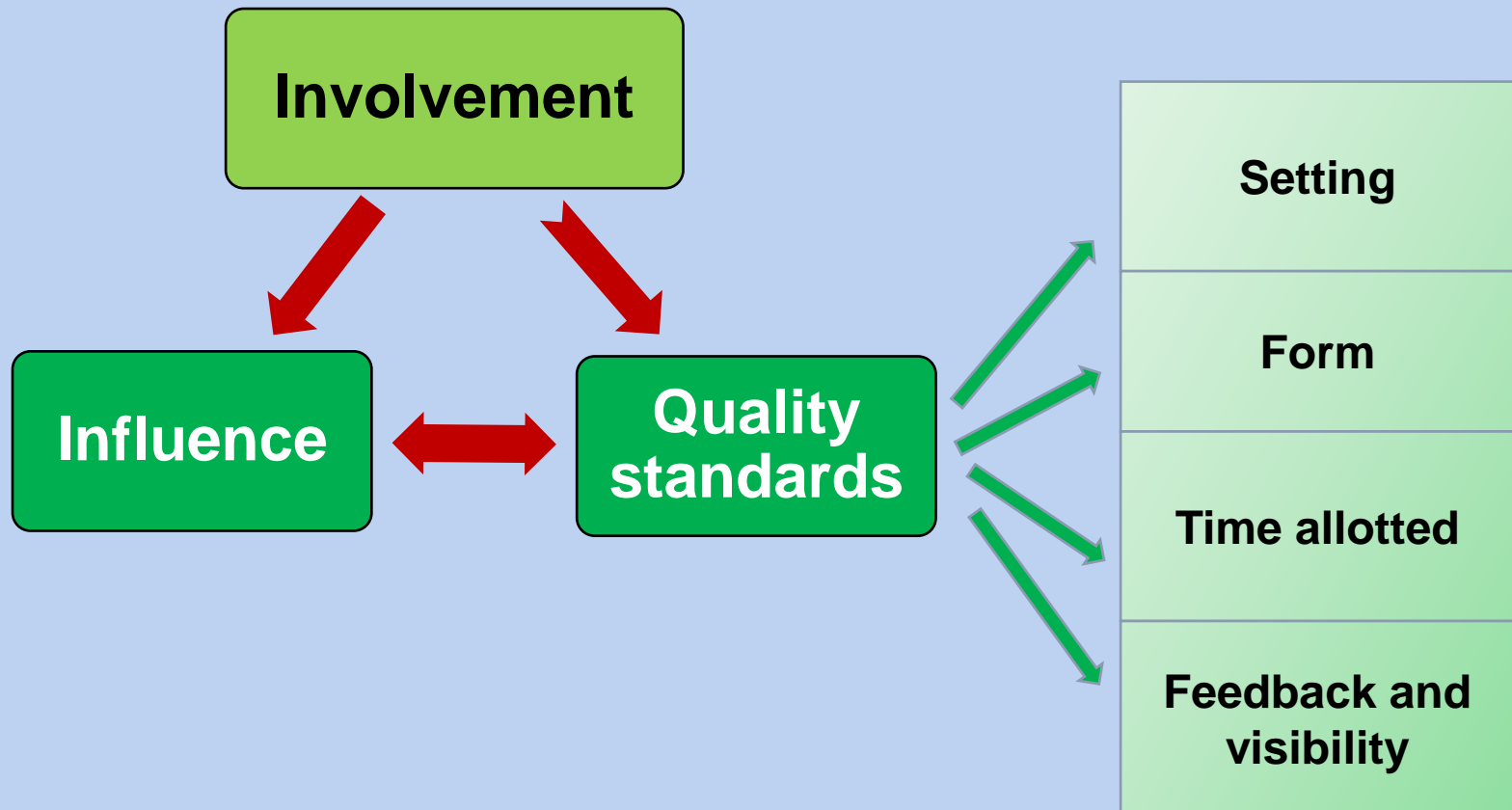


# Overall assessment on the involvement of SPs in reforms and policies

Fully involved and frequently	BE, BG (EO), DK, FI, FR, LU, MT, SK	Frequently and partially	CY, SI
Frequently involved	AT*, CZ, DE, LV, PT, SE, SI, UK (TU)	Fully involved but not meaningfully	EE
Partially involved	AT*, BG (TU), HR (EO), IE, NL, UK,	Partially involved and not meaningfully	EL, ES (TU), PL, RO
Formal involvement, not meaningfully	HR (TU), LT	Usually not involved and only partially	IT
		Usually not involved and not meaningfully	HU

### **3. Involvement of the social partners in the elaboration of the NRP**

# Involvement in the elaboration of the NRP: analytical framework



## Involvement in the elaboration of the NRP: applying quality standards

	Suitable setting	Form/ content	Time allotted	Feedback visibility
<b>Considerable improvement</b>	SI	SI	SI	
<b>Slight improvement</b>	EE, HR, LV, PT (UGT)	CY, EE, IE (IBEC), LV, PT (CCP, UGT)	CY, CZ (SP ČR), EE, HR, LV (LBAS), SE	CZ (SP ČR), EE, LV, SE, SI
<b>Slight deterioration</b>	PL	AT, PL	FR, PL	PL

# Perception of the degree of influence in the NRP

	Significant	Limited	No influence
Employers' organisations (EO)		AT, BE, BG, CY, SK	
Trade unions (TU)		LV, UK	AT (ÖGB), BE (ACV-CSC), BG, CY, ES, FI, SK
EO + TU		CZ, EE, DE, FI, HR, LT, LU, PT, RO, SI	HU, PL
National authorities (NA)	AT, HR, CY, EE, FR, HU, LT, LU, LV, PT, RO, SI	BG, ES, PL, SK	FI
All parties agree	MT, NL	DK, IT	

No replies from EOs in Spain and UK; No replies from NA in BE, CZ, DE, IE, UK; Greece not covered

# Overall assessment of the involvement of SPs in the elaboration of NRP 2018 in comparison to 2017

	Some improvement	Remain stable	Some deterioration
Employers' organisations (EO)	BG, CY, CZ, IE	MT	
Trade unions (TU)	MT, PT (UGT)	BG, CY, CZ, <b>ES</b> , IE	
EO + TU	<b>SI</b>	BE, FR, DE, LU, PL, RO	<b>PL</b>
National authorities (NA)	BG, CY, CZ, <b>ES</b> , FR, LU, RO, SI	MT, <b>PL</b>	
All parties agree	<b>EE, LV</b>	AT, HR, DK, FI, HU, IT, LT, NL, PT*, SK, SE	

No replies from UK; no views from EOs in ES; no views from NAs in BE, DE and IE

# Conclusions

## Overall involvement in reforms

- SPs mostly involved somehow in reforms, but the quality of the involvement hugely varies across countries
- Some overall improvements reported in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain
- Growing tension and divergence of views in Austria, Belgium and Poland

## Involvement in the NRP

- Timely and meaningful involvement of social partners in reforms is not achieved in several countries
- General improvement in in Slovenia and Latvia, and specific aspects in other MS; however, still many complains and particularly, the scarce influence of SPs' views
- The evolution in Hungary and Romania should be particularly monitored

# Final remarks

- Semester as a consolidated process. Uneven quality of the involvement of SPs across MS and IR systems and influenced by political developments
- Trade unions show more criticism than the employers' organisations
- The degree of government's engagement to the Semester influences the degree of involvement of the social partners – and other stakeholders –
- National SD practices are considered to be more important than the involvement in the NRP – even in some countries it is streamlined
- Increasing tendency to focus on social partners capacity issues
- Despite recent improvements, the overall social governance of the ES still needs to be further developed



**Thank you for your attention**

**More information  
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